



The Journal of Studies in Language, Culture and Society (JSLCS)

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Journal of Studies in Language, Culture and Society (JSLCS) is an academic multidisciplinary open access and peer-reviewed journal that publishes original research that turns around phenomena related to language, culture and society. JSLCS welcomes papers that reflect sound methodologies, updated theoretical analyses and original empirical and practical findings related to various disciplines like linguistics and languages, civilisation and literature, sociology, psychology, translation, anthropology, education, pedagogy, ICT, communication, cultural/inter-cultural studies, philosophy, history, religion, and the like.

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LANGUAGES IN THE DIGITAL AGE: EVIDENCE FROM SMS LANGUAGE IN ALGERIA

Abstract

Communication is an efficient tool used to create efficient contact and maintain strong sociolinguistic ties between the members of any speech community. Technology is one of the most important elements that made communication successful and reliable, and speaking using technology such as chatting and sending SMS are therefore the prominent instances of such use. Henceforth, the sociolinguistic situation in Algeria and the survival of its dialects are conditioned by both their oral and written production. For instance, Tamazight that is used in the Great Kabylia has a considerable record of written literature such as poetry and literature. And SMS is a reflection of such linguistic complexity that will be thoroughly explored, analysed and discussed in this empirical study. The latter is based on SMS analysis. The purpose is therefore to highlight the diversity of languages in Algeria, in this digital age where language overcomes speech to reach the mobile screen. The outcomes focused on the existence of a linguistic accommodation of Algerian speakers to a new technology where formal and informal varieties are mixed up in an unstable diglossic situation leading to texting messages.

Keywords: Digital, language planning, Mobile, SMS texting.

1. Introduction

Algeria is a colourful sociolinguistic mosaic which is characterized by the existence of panoply of languages and varieties of languages, namely Classical Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, Algerian Arabic, French, English and Berber with its regional variations. The Algerian national constitution stipulates that Modern Standard Arabic is the first official language of the nation, and is supposed to be used by all members of the speech community, in addition to Tamazight that was recently recognized as an official language in 2016. After independence, the Algerian linguistic map changed considerably; Algerian planners and decision-makers were extremely eager to promote Arabic as a vivid symbol of Arabic identity and Islamic values, in a country where French had played a major role in communication.

Virtually, the emergence of mobiles in Algeria, by early 2001, is associated with the creation of new language, which is a mixture of the local dialect, more exactly Algerian Arabic, French, Classical Arabic and new abbreviations, which were unexpected and unmeasured by local planners.

It is worth-mentioning that in his 2008 work *Texting: The Gr8 Deb8* (Crystal, 2008) devotes a whole chapter to the hype surrounding texting, noting that, as with the introduction of just about every new technological development

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in communication, critics cry out that texting will bring about the end of writing and of literacy itself. For example, he quotes a 2007 Washington Daily article by Eric Uthus dismissing texters as subpar users of language, "...obsessed with taking the vowels out of words and spelling fonetikally" (Gordon, 2011)

However, other linguists note that texting has brought about the concision and phonetic transparency that has long eluded spelling reformists. Emphasizing that the "notion that a word should always be spelled the same way is a much more recent invention than the language itself," Ammon Shea investigates the links between the phonetic spelling movement and the organic shift toward such spelling in texting. Because "text messaging... comes from the linguistic bottom," it has a better chance of affecting spelling conventions than top-down measures. However, it is important to emphasize that electronic language features are not a simple, uniform condensing of language. The numeric abbreviations and deletions in texting language are largely a response to the inadequacies and inconvenience of the phone interface, and may decrease as more sophisticated technology is developed. Baron adds that "part of the appeal of texting short hands is their novelty, and that that will fade (ibid).

Accordingly, the present article is an empirical investigation, based on the sociolinguistic analysis of SMS messages among Algerian teens from 15 to 20 in Sidi Bel Abbés town. It also examines the orthographic systems devised by Algerian speaking users of mobile.

The problematic raised here, is composed of the following questions:

- How is the Algerian speaker going to use his/her diverse linguistic background, which is basically composed of Algerian Arabic, French and Classical Arabic in order to translate his/her oral speech into written SMS language?

- What is the linguistic distribution of such languages/varieties of language in his/her messages?

- How is the Algerian speaker going to use the mobile's Latin keys in order to send his/her multilingual messages?

- More importantly, what is the role of language planners in the standardisation process of the local varieties, in order to adapt them to this technology, and how can we adopt technology to make it at the service of such dialects?

2. The Languages in Algeria

Language planning is a complex process which has been defined as involving deliberate language change in the systems of language code and/or use by organizations that are established for these purposes (Baldauf, 1989, p. 5). Language planning is a body of ideas, laws and regulations (language policy), change, rules, beliefs and practices intended to achieve a planned change (or to stop change from happening) in language use in one or more communities. That is, language planning involves deliberate, although not always overt, future-oriented change in systems of the language code and/or use in a societal context (Rubin & Jernudd, 1971).

In the simplest sense, language planning is an attempt by someone to modify the linguistic behaviour of some community for some reason. The reasons are complex, ranging from the trivial notion that one does not like the way group talks, to the sophisticated idea that a community can be assisted in preserving its culture by preserving its language. The actors are many, although at the macro-level some element of government is usually involved. The language modifications are also complex, ranging from a desire to modernise language so that it can deal with the vast technological changes that are occurring, to a desire to standardise a language often with an underlying political motivation – for example, in order to achieve unification, so that it can be understood by various sub-groups within a population who may speak different varieties of that language, or perhaps to provide a way of writing a language which has not previously been written.

Virtually, language planning does not take place in a vacuum but considers language facts in their social, political and economic, psychological and demographic contexts. Since all speech communities are continually undergoing changes both in the structure of the language varieties in use and in the functional allocation of varieties, and since the evaluation processes vary from community to community, it follows that language planning activities in any nation for any language will take place in a particular sociolinguistic setting which will, in part, determine their nature and scope (Crystal, 2008).

In Algeria, language planners classified Modern Standard Arabic as the primary language of the nation to be used in education, mass media, law, and – in general – communication. In fact, Modern Standard Arabic is derived from the language of the *Quran* and is a symbolic marker of Arabic identity with a great linguistic heritage and long history behind it. The Arabisation decisions taken immediately after independence were intended to promote this sense of the Arabic language. The oral vernaculars of Algeria have no particular place in the linguistic map, except for Berber, which recently gained important recognition in the language policy of the government. Such oral forms are stigmatized and are not considered useful for domains that, which a priori, require written forms, such as education, physical environment and administration.

When Algeria opened its markets to foreign investments from the early 2000s, a technological boom occurred which saw the establishment of large foreign companies in domains such as petrol, building, computing and telecommunications, including the operation of mobile phone networks. From this time, new technological products have had a considerable impact on the Algerian linguistic situation, and have contributed to the democratisation of the local dialects, which are being increasingly used in public domains especially for advertising, chat and short message service (SMS) text messaging.

3. The Mobile Phone Boom and SMS in Algeria

Until the early 2000s, Postes, Telegraphes et Telecommunications (PTT), a public company, had a monopoly on telephone communication in Algeria. However, following the decade of terrorism (1990–2000), Algeria has tried to refine its international image by opening its doors to the western world and has encouraged foreign investment in all domains.

In telecommunications, for instance, two major international telecommunications companies have been established in Algeria in order to provide competition in the mobile phone market together with the new public telecommunications operator Algérie Telecom, which was created after the restructuring of PTT in August 2000.

The first foreign mobile phone operator in Algeria, the Egyptian company Orascom Telecom got its telecommunications license in 2001 and operates in Algeria under the name of Djezzy. This Egyptian company was followed by the Kuwaiti telecommunications company El Wataniya, which created Nedjma telecommunications in 2003. The existence of commercial competition between these operators led to a fall in the price of mobile phones and mobile phones became accessible to most people. Consequently, Algerians of different ages and socio-economic status have been able to access new or used mobile phones. In the early 2000s, having a mobile was a form of a social demarcation, but now, it has become a general part of life. With the widespread availability of mobile phones, SMS text messaging has become an important part of the way Algerians communicate and nearly a billion text messages are sent in Algeria every month (Les Accros de l'internet, 2008).

Mobile phones are the most widely used communications technology among Algerians and about 92% of the population possess at least one mobile phone (Les accros de l'internet, 2008, statistics from 2007). The emergence of mobile phone communication using text messaging in Algeria is associated with the creation of new forms of language use. In particular, the rise of this new technology has become an important context for the use of Algerian Arabic, which has become the main medium of communication in SMS texts. It has also given rise to hybrid patterns of language use with a mixture of French, Modern Standard Arabic, Algerian Arabic and some English words. This wide range of language mixture used along with abbreviations and new language conventions have not been considered by local language planners. Algerian Arabic evolved outside the parameters of Algerian language planning, having developed independently from language planners' strategies and schedules, but is now playing an important role in new forms of written communication.

4. Some Sociolinguistic Characteristics of SMS Language

SMS language is a 'novice language' (Rafi, 2008, p. 1) which has become an integral part of the communicative repertoire of the multilingual Algerian population. As with much online discourse, SMS retains both written and spoken language characteristics. Some notable features of SMS communication are outlined below.

4.1 Language Forms

SMS communication is characterised by short and often abbreviated syntactic and lexical forms, which save character space or touches of the handset keys compared with using the full forms of words (Doring, 2002, p. 7). This method of text production saves time, money and effort. Because SMS adapts language in this way, the language specific to SMS users often differs from the standard language and thus SMS communication has been considered as a secret code of youth or as a reaction against long sentences (Doring, 2002). SMS users

are very effective in encoding in modified forms of writing what they want their readers to perceive in their messages. Through the new written conventions of SMS, texters have developed a written form that mimics or replaces the ability to hear spoken utterances.

The language used in text messaging has developed its own unique style conventions. Punctuation is often omitted, as the end of a line can signify the end of an utterance. This involves a resourceful use of punctuation as Kortti (1999, p. 15) describes 'constructing paralinguistic markers quite ingeniously as well as breaking orthographical conventions in an inventive manner appears to be a personal stylistic choice'. New written representations of the sounds and compressions of standardised orthographies are a common phenomenon in SMS language. Letters and numbers are also often combined (or used alone) for compression and convenience, so that in English, for example, 'See you' can be texted as 'CU'. One 'spoken' aspect of text messages involves the creation of written representations of non-verbal aspects of face-to-face communication.

Emoticons, such as :-(, :-), and ;-) are a representation of body language which would normally be missing from written communication. These emoticons can be used to change the meaning of a text message just as much as body language can change the meaning of verbal communication in spoken discourse. Texters may also take advantage of phonetic representation of non-speech sounds in order to create different types of verbal effects in their messages such as using 'hehe' to signal laughter. According to Grinter and Eldridge (2001, p. 17), if text messaging shares similar properties to e-mailing, we could expect such innovations in language use to stabilise and become more widely known over a period of time.

4.2 Social Purposes

The most general consequence of SMS is to reduce the degree to which social relationships and social systems are anchored in space. Indeed, SMS provides opportunities to enlarge the number of potential communication partners available at any specific place and moment, and to distance oneself from current informal interaction fields by directing attention to remote partners. It appears that the mobile phone can help to enlarge the most peripheral layer of social relationships: the monarchy of 'weak ties' (Granovetter, 1973) which are activated only under highly specific circumstances, for example, when searching for a job or an apartment (Ling, 2000).

To use Riesman, Denney, and Glazer's (1950) terminology, this capacity makes SMS especially useful for 'other-directed' persons who live in a world of multiple connections and relationships which may also be rather looser and more passing than the smaller number of stronger bonds maintained by more tradition-directed or inner-directed individuals. In contrast to mass media contacts, which typically originate outside the boundaries of primary social relationships, most SMS contacts originate within preceding relationships established through face-to-face interactions. Hence, SMS can be regarded as a technology that empowers such micro-social systems by allowing primary bonds to be continued during periods of spatial separation (Gergen, 2002, p. 237).

5. The Present Study

Given that new dimensions of language use have arisen in the context of SMS communication, the present article aims to provide an empirical investigation of SMS messages. The aim is to survey the language used in SMS messaging and to analyse it linguistically in order to highlight the relationships between such informal language varieties and language planning processes. It seeks to investigate how Algerians use their diverse linguistic repertoires to create written SMS language, to examine the role of Algerian Arabic and the ways in which languages such as Algerian Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic and French are used in SMS communication. It will also consider if there is a role for language planners in the standardisation of local Arabic varieties for use in this technology.

This study is based on the analysis of a total of 50 SMS messages collected from the mobile phones of respondents aged 18–25. This corpus of messages consists of messages they have either sent or received by the respondents. The respondents belong to different socio-economic backgrounds: students, workers and jobless people, and the sample was composed of 28 females and 22 males from different regions of Algeria. In reproducing the texts in printed form, the transcription has attempted to represent them as accurately as possible (i.e. exactly as they appear on the mobile's display screen). In the following messages, elements of messages in Algerian Arabic are written in bold, those in French in italics for texts, those in Modern Standard Arabic in bold italics and those in English are underlined. Each message is followed by its English translation.

5.1 *The Linguistic Aspects of SMS*

This section will deal with examples of the language features found in Algerian SMS texts. The purpose is to examine the language conventions found in mobile phone messages.

5.1.1 *Choice of the Script*

What is striking in the corpus of SMS messages is that, although the mobile phones used in Algeria have the capacity to use the Arabic script, the majority (59/60) of Algerian users preferred to use the Latin alphabet (that is the French language keys). This use of Latin rather than Arabic script is also found in email and Facebook (Rafi, 2008, p. 8). Using the Latin script to write Arabic requires new conventions to be developed as the Arabic script has a larger number of letters than the Latin one. Letters which do not exist in the Latin script are replaced by other symbols (see Table 1 for some common replacements).

I love you 3omri (I love you sweet heart).

In the SMS text above the word [3omri] is Arabic (meaning ‘my love, my heart’) and the writer uses the numeral ‘3’ to represent the Arabic letter, because the latter looks like a mirror image of the former. It should be noted that the Latin letter ‘r’ can replace both the Arabic letters (IPA/r/) and (IPA/ġ/). Similarly, ‘d’ can stand for both (IPA/d/) and (IPA/ /), ‘s’ for (IPA/s/) and (IPA/ /) and ‘t’ for (IPA/t/) and possibly for (IPA/ /). The reader has obviously no difficulties in

distinguishing between the Arabic letters that correspond to the Latin one. These conventions are almost universally understood now by Arabic speakers. This means that a spontaneous form of orthographic development has accompanied the adoption of SMS technologies.

Table 1
Common SMS Latin Script Substitutions for Arabic Script

Arabic letter	Phonetic transcription	Latin script replacement
ا	[ʔ]	[a]
ب	[θ]	[t]
ج	[ʒ]	[j]
ح	[h]	[h]
خ	[x]	[kh]
ز	[z]	[z]
س	[s]	[ch], [sh]
ش	[s]	[s] or [S]
د	[d]	[d], [dh]
ت	[t]	[t] or [T]
ث	[ʔ]	[ʒ]
ر	[r]	[r]
ق	[q]	[q] or [k]
هـ	[h]	[h]
و	[w]	[w], [ou], [u], [oo]

It is not only Arabs but also Russians, Greeks and Serbs who use Latin instead of their native scripts for technology-based forms of communication (Ladefoged & Maddieson, 1996). The difference is that unlike Arabic speakers, the other groups use Latin keys whenever their native language alphabets are not found on the mobile phone keys. However, for the Algerians, even with the existence of an option to switch from Latin to Arabic, they prefer using the Latin alphabet. In this they are unlike their neighbours in the Middle East, who generally seem to use Arabic alphabet. One reason for this choice may lie in the amount of exposure Algerians have to the French language and therefore to the French alphabet, in contrast to Middle Eastern Arabic speakers. Consequently, Algerians seem to feel more comfortable with the Latin alphabet.

5.1.2 Language Choice and Language Mixing

The Algerian texters are multilinguals whose linguistic repertoire includes a range of language and varieties of language namely Classical Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, Algerian Arabic, French and English as well. This diversity is expressed much more at the oral than at the written level, since the latter was much more constrained by the Arabisation process and language planning formulations. The SMS texts reflect well the existing level of diversity in oral language through mixed utterances, which include a priori, sentences or bits of sentences composed of, in order of proportion, Algerian Arabic – the matrix or the base language, French and Modern Standard Arabic. A quantitative analysis of the 50 SMS texts found 29.30% of texts written in pure Algerian Arabic, 21% in pure French and 8% in pure Modern Standard Arabic. The Modern Standard Arabic messages involve more or less religious messages sent during Islamic

events or on occasions such as giving best wishes during the holy fasting month or during Islamic feasts. This, of course, does not exclude the fact that some texters may use Modern Standard Arabic to send their personal messages, as a matter of preference and ease.

The most common messages are written in Algerian Arabic mixed with French or vice versa, depending on the speaker's fluency. The proportion of messages written in Algerian Arabic/French mixed sentences represents 41.5% of the messages as a whole. The rest about 31.50%, are messages written in mixed Modern Standard Arabic and French. English is only present through some tags like 'hi', 'bye' or 'thank you', which represent 0.2% of the overall messages such as in the following examples:

M1: hello,cavakiraki (hi, how are you)

M2: sahatthank you (so thank you)

5.1.3 Reduced Forms

Shortenings (i.e. missing end letters), contractions (i.e. missing middle letters) and clippings and other clippings (i.e. dropping final letter) are common in the texts. For example:

M3: rani nekr3 fk

(I am waiting for you)

In the above message, number '3' is used to express the Arabic letter which does not exist on the Latin mobile keys. The sentences are written as heard, in order to gain space, time and money in writing messages. In M3, vowels [a] and [i] are omitted, in [ani] (I am) and [fik] (for you) which become [rni] and [fk], respectively. Note that there is no general consensus among Algerian and in general, among Arab texts senders about the use of common abbreviations, as it is the case of French or English, where entire Web Pages are devoted to explain the SMS abbreviations used in texting and chatting. This is due to the fact that Arabic abbreviations using Latin keys are still in the process of making. But still, there are some common abbreviations used especially for consonants (see Table 1), but for the vowels, it is up to the users, to or/not omit them in their SMS.

5.1.4 Acronyms, Initialisms and Non-conventional Spellings

Acronyms and initialisms are abbreviations that are formed using the initial components in a phrase or name:

M4: STP stenini

(Please, wait for me)

M5: j besoin 2 toi STP appel moi A+

(I need you please call me see you later)

In M5, the respondent has used 'j', 'STP' and 'A+' instead of 'j'ai (I have), s'ilte plait (please) and a+ (see you later) respectively, in order to shorten the message. The '2' is a non-conventional spelling which equates to French de (of), which is pronounced in the same way as French deux (two). Appel reflects the sound of the French 'appelle' (to call) but is a shortened form. This is phonetically significant since the word is understood as it sounds not as it is written.

5.1.5 Typographic Symbols, Emoticons and Non-Speech Sounds

The text messages have many symbols other than standard letter symbols. The table below is a sample of typographic symbols and emoticons used in order to express particular feelings such as happiness (😊), exclamation (!!!), or just to animate the message and transform it into a more expressive and vivid communication.

Table 2

Some SMS Symbols and Emoticons

Xxx ¼ 443	@ ¼ 20
!! ¼ 35	() ¼ 12
¼ 30	&¼ 255
:-) ¼ 20	§¼14
~ ¼ 11	¥¼ 42
?? ¼ 11	p ¼ 22
..... ¼ 22	l ¼ 44

A total of 90 typographic (that is non-alphabetic) symbols were found in the SMS corpus – almost all of which were kisses (that is x) or exclamation marks, usually in multiple sets (e.g. xxxxxx and !!!!!). There were 30 instances of emoticons – for example,slt 3am sa3id wa 3omron madid. ...!!! (Hi happy new year and long life ...) – and 25 instances of non-speech sounds like onomatopoeic, exclamatory spellings (e.g. haha!, arrrgh!, WOOHOO!, t’ra, Tee Hee, Oioisavaloy!, yeah, yep, yay!, rahh, ahhh, mchwa!, eh?, and woh!) and a couple of other typographical-cum-linguistic devices for adding prosodic impact in Arabic (for example, KHFYYYY KHFYYYY [khaffi] or meaning ‘hurry up!’ in the Algerian Arabic). In this example, the vowel [a] is omitted for the purpose of abbreviation, and the consonant ‘y’ is repeated in order to stress to urgency of the message. Finally there were in fact 52 apostrophes used across the messages (e.g. we’re, she’s, can’t, I’m, it’s) as in sltc’hayat, ¼ salutc’est Hayat, ‘hi it’s Hayat’. In this message, the sender abbreviates c’est (it is) into c’, using apostrophe’.

6. Language Use in Formal SMS

Language is always multifunctional and always dependent on context for its meaning and the types of SMS messages in the corpus ranges from formal to informal. Formal SMS are sent in ‘polite and correct’ forms of language and are usually composed in Algerian Arabic with French tags, or only in French. Formal SMS are less likely to use shortenings and non-speech sounds or emoticons. Since formality involves the use of formal languages, so, SMS texts are often sent in French as in the case of those SMS sent by the mobile operators. They can be also composed of a mixture of French and Algerian Arabic /Modern Standard Arabic. In fact, formality is not opposed to language mixing, which is a very natural and actually being gradually accepted at the political and sociolinguistic spheres. Examples of formal SMS include:

M6: ‘Le 10/03/2009 votre crédit a diminué en dessous de 150 DA. Veuillez recharger votre compte’

(On 03/10/2009 your credit fell below 150 DA (Algerian Dinar) Please recharge your account)

The above is a business SMS sent by mobile company to a customer. In such a kind of formal SMS, the language used is French, with no abbreviations except for the national currency DA (meaning Algerian Dinar):

M7: Merci 2 me donner le Ntel du doyen

(Thank you for giving me the telephone number of the dean)

In message M7, the sender is a teacher who addresses her SMS to her superior; the head of department, asking her the telephone number of the dean. The message contains few abbreviations – N tel‘Numéro de telephone) (phone number) is the only exception– and is written in French, which is a reflection of formality and prestige.

7. Language Planning in Relation to The SMS Language in Algeria

The use of Algerian Arabic as a means of communication in SMS gives a new role and importance to what has been always considered as a stigmatized variety notably Algerian Arabic. The SMS technology has moved written language into the domain of informal, ephemeral and private communication usually associated with spoken language and in so doing has introduced the language varieties normally found in informal spoken contexts into written communication.

The planning process of languages in Algeria has been much more concerned with the regulation of the written forms including Modern Standard Arabic, French, English and Berber and their distribution in various domains such as education, mass media and law. The codification and standardisation of Algerian Arabic has not been of concern for Algerian language planners, since it has been considered only a colloquial and not a written form. Because of the emergence of new means of technological communication, the Algerian Arabic variety has evolved as a new written form for mobile phones. The accommodation has been rapid and widespread and Algerian Arabic speakers have not relied on previously developed linguistic and orthographic norms, but have started creating their own linguistic norms, which include the use of colloquial forms of Arabic and language mixing, the development of a stock of linguistic forms, such abbreviations, acronyms, modified orthographies and representations of non-speech sounds, and the adoption of the Latin script in the place of Arabic script, with new conventions for representing Arabic sounds. The Algerian SMS language as a variety has developed its own conventions in an unplanned way through the establishment of practices of use – it is a form of self-regulating system in which practitioners moderate the conventions rather than conventions being established by language planning agencies. Moreover, it is one which does not orient to any particular language, but to the use of the entire multilingual repertoire of the communicators. In this sense, it is the mobile users who control language planning rules of SMS not the language planners themselves, since they establish their own rules of abbreviations and SMS conventions which, as any language, may change through time and from one generation to another. Such

language planning work has been done in an ad hoc way, without explicitly articulated norms, and is subject to change and on-going evolution.

There are however a few points of intervention where language planning could influence patterns of language use. The fact that Algerians prefer using Latin alphabet instead of Arabic language puts into evidence the importance of French language in the society, and reflects the texters' indifference towards the use of Algerian Arabic as a written form. It would not be appropriate to prevent the use of the Latin alphabet and force the Algerian texters to use Arabic keys in their SMS nor should Arab governments produce mobiles with only Arabic keys, in order to force or at least encourage the texters to use Arabic alphabet. If the Latin script is to be used for writing Algerian Arabic texts, Arab programmers and software engineers could consider the elaboration of common Arabic forms using Latin alphabet, in order to avoid the existence of two or three representations of the same Arabic letter such as the use of 'kh', '7' '5', which all correspond to , and '2', 'q', '8' and '9', which correspond to . Language planners will also need to consider more broadly what language planning work is needed for Algerian Arabic, given the spread of this variety into new domains.

8. Conclusion

The current linguistic situation in Algeria is primarily the outcome of many years of intensive campaigns of Arabisation and major linguistic, political and even financial decisions taken right after independence aimed at promoting the status of Modern Standard Arabic in order to restore to Algeria an 'Arab face' (*visage arabe*) (Grandguillaume, 1983).

French is a second language in Algeria – it is taught starting from the third year primary school – English is a foreign language taught starting from the first year of the middle school and it is actually finding grounds outside the educational institutions. The local dialects of Algerian Arabic are stigmatized varieties used *a priori* in informal settings.

The present analysis of SMS data has revealed the existence of a linguistic accommodation of Algerian speakers to a new technology based on existing practices of oral communication which are now being adapted to writing. It is a language variety which is based on Algerian Arabic rather than the official Modern Standard Arabic used in other written forms.

For the Algerian speakers, using the SMS texts is an innovative step for modernizing the stigmatized colloquial varieties using technologies. Thanks to mobile phones, these local varieties may gain a higher status in the Algerian linguistic ecology and be given more consideration by local language planners and decision-makers. The diglossic situation between Modern Standard Arabic and Algerian Arabic is therefore potentially unstable and it is possible that the Algerian Arabic variety may move from very informal contexts to more formal situations.

Notes

1. Rafi (2008, p. 1) identifies a novice language as one which is characterised by simple sentence structures or communication and has syntactic and lexical choices which resemble child language.
2. To gauge this, we conducted an informal survey among fifteen students from the

Middle East who use Arabic alphabet to send SMS messages, compared with 59 out of 60 Algerian students who use Latin keys for SMS texts. The remaining Algerian texter used both Latin and Arabic alphabets in writing SMS messages.

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SHAKESPEARE'S THE TEMPEST: AN ALTERNATIVE READING

Abstract

This paper intends to offer an alternative reading of Shakespeare's theatre by considering the ambiguous position of this dramatist regarding the relationship that he presents, between the world of "civilization" which supposedly characterizes the West and the periphery of this world, where "barbarity", ignorance and brutality prevail. Shakespeare indeed never reveals a clear position regarding what is now commonly called the "North- South" relationship. Viewpoints that have emerged from "the margins" do revise this position by emphasizing Shakespeare's slighting of the humanity that has developed outside the Western boundaries. For the sake of comparison, I would like to introduce Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*, and how it has been "rewritten" and restyled as *Une Tempête* by the well-known Martiniquan Négritude writer Aimé Césaire, so as to offer a new voice to his Caliban, as a rebel against the hegemonic attitude of the master Prospero.

Keywords: Shakespeare's *The Tempest*; North-South relationship; hegemony; rebellion; Aimé Césaire's *Une Tempête*.

1. Introduction

The theatre of Shakespeare introduces a variety of situations where the exercise of power and the dramatization of conflicting interests constitute the prevalent subject-matter, whether the issues dramatized focus on recognizable historical realities, or belong to the world of fantasy. The purpose of this paper is to show how Shakespeare, in *The Tempest*, deals with inter-cultural exchanges on the basis of clashes of interests, since the seizing of an island from its rightful occupiers is in sight. It also studies the literary response of the well-known Martiniquan Négritude writer Aimé Césaire, as dramatised in his play *Une Tempête*. Indeed, despite opinions minimizing Césaire's hostility towards the Europeans' hegemonic practices, the latter's intent is clearly to "white back" to Shakespeare by pastiching his text. His aim is indeed to restore dignity and agency in the black man, the Caliban who represents his Caribbean ancestry, in the face of the brutal and demeaning attitude of the white Prospero.

Quite markedly, the ambiguity with which Shakespeare considers the relationship between his "civilized" world and the confines of "barbarity" is a cause for concern in parts of his drama, notably in plots where one can note his unease to take a definite position. Apparently, he reveals some pondering over such an issue, as witness the presence, in some of his plays, of characters who represent non-European cultures. We cannot deny the fact that this "universal" dramatist is sensitive to the North- South human interchange, and perhaps to the

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hegemonic position openly taken by the West towards people with lesser power. But the position is that these characters are made peripheral in substance and in conduct, and they are short of articulating their sensibilities and worldviews through him. In *the Tempest*, which was completed in 1611, we see the role of the non-white Caliban confined to a peripheral claim for existence, and dispossessed of his island by Prospero, the white nobleman who then also becomes his master.

2. Foregrounding the Issues: Caliban as Side Actor in the Drama.

The central subject of the play is not so much about the issue of territorial dispossession of Caliban with the use of force by a better armed invader as it is about a rivalry over the duchy of Milan, a dispute which is “exported” to an island of the South Seas and settled in this place. The scenario of an island occupation is itself inspired from pastorals of the Italian *Commedia Dell’Arte*, and supplemented by the story of a shipwreck that took place in 1601, during a passage on a ship owned by a George Somer, bound for the New World, whereupon her passengers were safely landed on an island of the Bermudas.

In the play, there is also a shipwreck, which is provoked by Prospero, the rightful duke of Milan, who is gifted with magical powers. The fact is that Prospero had been wrongly accused of practicing sorcery in Milan for evil purposes and condemned to live in exile in a distant tropical island. The plotting against him had been masterminded by Antonio, his brother, so that he could replace him as Duke of Milan, with the support of Alonso, King of Naples. Marooned in this island with his daughter Miranda for twelve years, Prospero decides to use his magic to attract his tormentors to his island by provoking a shipwreck. He is helped in so doing by Ariel, an airy spirit that he has delivered from the tree where Caliban’s mother, Sycorax, had held him prisoner by a spell. Antonio, the “usurping Duke of Milan“, is onboard the ship that is brought to sink. He is in the company of other authorities, i.e. Alonso, the King of Naples, with Sebastian, his brother, and Ferdinand, his son, as well as Gonzalo, an “honest old counselor”. All have safely escaped and been cast upon Prospero’s island, and settled in different parts of this place.

Shakespeare adds the figure of Caliban, an inhabitant of the island, enslaved by Prospero, and whose origins are located in Argier (to be understood as Algiers). As said, the island that he had inherited from his mother Sycorax, is now under Prospero’s control. In the second scene of act 1, Prospero reveals to Miranda why he provoked the shipwreck and why he wanted to take his revenge against his brother by attracting to the island such company of noblemen. Other people, Trinculo, a jester and Stephano, a drunken butler, are also introduced as men who wanted to betray Prospero by planning to end his possession of the island, with Caliban’s help. We suspect here that Shakespeare is vilifying his non-white character, who then becomes a character to be condemned just because he dreams of recovering his sovereignty over the island. The project is foiled by Prospero, who nonetheless appears later as an all-forgiving master. Besides, Prospero even allows his daughter Miranda to choose Ferdinand as future husband, so that Alonso in the end regrets having supported Antonio in taking the dukedom of Milan. Thanks to Prospero’s magic manipulations,

Alonso recognizes that the Duchy of Milan should be returned to Prospero. And so, as Alfred Rotschild (in Campbell et al., 1964, p. 4) writes, the wedding brings in “the reunion of the Prince with his father, the forgiveness of his enemies and Prospero’s recovery of his Duchy.

However, as said, Shakespeare produces no compelling portrait of the “peripheral” figure of Caliban; the latter is characterized by an unshapely body and a language made up of babbling; as the Kenyan writer and scholar Ngugi Wa Thiong’o declares in an essay: “Note the assumption that Caliban’s language was mere gabble. Caliban, if you remember, answers not by reminding Prospero that he too had a language, but by showing him the usage to which he has put his knowledge of Prospero’s tongue.

You taught me language; and my profit on’t it
Is, I know how to curse. The Red Plague rid you
For learning me your language” (Ngugi, 1998, p. 15).

Such a statement is evidence of Shakespeare’s awareness of the need to put into play inter-cultural relations, and to analyse the possible perversion that can accompany the colonizer’s language. Even if *The Tempest* is mostly considered as a piece of entertainment to cater for different audiences coming from different layers of Elizabethan society, Shakespeare’s sense of cosmopolitanism is brought to general attention. This dramatist was responding to the growing popular need for exotica, a salient feature of the collective consciousness of the early seventeenth century in England. For the common people, Algiers and Algeria were not locations which connoted civilization; the play conveys effectively this common feeling, and furthermore, it introduces another North African spot, Tunis, as a strange place where uncivilized people live; but the fact is that Claribel, Alonso’s daughter, is “Queen of Tunis, married to its king; so she is heir of Naples”, as Sebastian exclaims, and this makes Antonio echo in pejorative terms: “How shall that Claribel measure us back to Naples? Keep in Tunis and let Sebastian wake” (line 257-269).

As a man clearly Euro centered, and unwilling to accept intercultural alliances, Sebastian is clearly dubbed to be the rightful successor to the throne of Naples. Whether such xenophobic remarks convey also the opinion of Shakespeare in such matters is open to question; nevertheless, one can observe that the playwright is not insensitive to the tensions arising out of vying intercultural relationships. This can be seen in other plays by him, such as *The Merchant of Venice* where Shylok, the Jewish merchant, is portrayed as a pitiless usurer who seeks revenge from the racist humiliation he suffers from Antonio; or *Othello* in the eponymous play, where the drama is around the Moor, characterized by sanguine and “primitive” instincts that lead him to kill his Christian wife, Desdemona, following the slandering of this young lady by the malignant Iago, who has accused her of deceiving him.

3. The Prospero/Caliban Dichotomy

Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* brings us to consider the non-white “other” as being mostly patronized and dehumanized by European civilization, at least in the way he is treated by white characters. The Prospero-Caliban dichotomy has

been widely debated by academia, particularly within the framework of “deconstruction” and revision of positions, as seen in various studies. In Oscar James Campbell’s introduction to the play, Caliban is presented as a kind of satyr, or “ravisher of women”, and given “a monstrous shape”. But he adds that “this spirit of the earth”, with his “brutish matter”, is not devoid of all civilized impulses. The music with which Ariel fills the island to overflowing amazes him” (Campbell et al., 1964, p. 10). At the same time, he is also “a fragment of popular superstition- a moon-calf, the offspring of a witch like Sycorax and the devil” (ibid, p. 10).

Taking clearly a clearly different standpoint, the Kenyan Ngugi Wa Thiong’o analyses *The Tempest* as follows:

The play is interesting in that it has all the images that are later to be reworked into a racist tradition particularly in popular European literature about the colonized peoples: the savage as a rapist, lazy, a lover of whisky, stupid, cannibalistic. But the main thing is that Shakespeare does give the capacity to say ‘no’. Caliban is invested with energy (Ngugi, 1993, p. 15).

This is quite apparent in the dialogue in which Caliban expresses his revolt and his recriminations towards his “master”:

This island is mine, by Sycorax my mother
Which you takest from me. When you camest
Thou strokedst me and madest much of me (lines 331-333).

Caliban keeps repeating that this island has been unduly taken from him by Prospero, though the latter brutally reminds him of his savage ‘condition’, and as Ngugi aptly reminds us, is made consistent with popular culture in Europe. Prospero answers Caliban’s recriminations with the following:

Abhorred slave,
Which any spirit of goodness will take,
Being capable of all ill! I pitied thee,
Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour
One thing or other. When thou didst not, savage,
Know thine own meaning but would gabble like a thing
Most brutish...(lines 352-358).

The cliché of the savage blighted by uncontrollable sensuousness and evil impulses is not to be missed in this play. It reflects a conscious shelving of some human beings of distant lands as uncontrollable and prone to viciousness. Another non-white character introduced, Ariel, who represents a more pliable and obedient subject, since he does not question the white man’s authority. He indeed accepts Prospero’s domination under the light and evasive promise that he will be liberated by his master in due course. This psychological disposition could give a preview of the future period of colonization in which some colonized subjects accept their condition and collaborate with the master, as denounced in so many creative works by Caribbean and African writers. Edward Said, following George Lamming, would tell us for his part that “Caliban has a history capable of development, as part of a process of work, growth and maturity to which only Europeans seemed entitled” (Said, 1993, p. 257). But I doubt whether this capacity for development is granted by Shakespeare to this

alien slave in *The Tempest*. One can remember such demeaning words as “thing”, “savage” and “brutish” affixed to the black man, and notably taken up by Joseph Conrad in his novella, *Heart of Darkness* (1902). And even when Caliban is granted forgiveness by Alonso for plotting against him, still no humanity is recognized in him:

ALONSO (pointing to Caliban)

This is a strange thing as e'er I looked on.

PROSPERO

He is as disproportioned in his manners

As in his shape

(To Caliban) Go, sirrah, to my cell;

Take with you your companions; as you look

To have my pardon, trim it handsomely.

Prospero's attitude towards Caliban is to admonish him as a child who would have meddled in mischievous actions, but who is forgiven after expressing his regret, and who would behave properly henceforth.

The attitude of the white *doxa*, through the characters' discourse put on stage here, is duly analysed by the Martiniquan poet, dramatist and essayist Aimé Césaire. It has made him “rewrite” and “revise” Shakespeare's play as *Une Tempête*, later translated into English as *A Tempest* by Richard Miller (2002). Césaire indeed “writes back” to Shakespeare with Caliban given a sense of justice and rebellion, and refusing the white man's xenophobic clichés. His dialogues with Prospero reveal a more assertive posture of the latter. When the master asks: “what would you be without me?”, the slave answers: “Without you? I'd be the king of this island given me by my mother Sycorax”(Césaire, 2002,p. 17). Consistent with his rebellion and his desire to reject the name he was given, the Caliban of Césaire wants his master to simply call him X: “That would be best. Like a man without a name. Or, to be precise, a man whose name has been stolen (...) Every time you summon me, it reminds me of a basic fact, the fact that you have stolen everything from me, even my identity! Uhuru!” (ibid. p. 12). The Swahili term “uhuru”, imported into Césaire's play, is to remind the audience of the need to grant freedom to all the people enslaved and/or colonized as part of his agenda.

Thus, far from Shakespeare's portrait of Caliban as a brutish savage, Aimé Césaire connects his ‘revision’ of the play to a militant programme of the ‘Négritude’ movement. As he claims in other works by him, including his long poem *Cahiers d'un retour au pays natal* (1939) and his essay *Discourse on Colonialism*(1955) the black man is to retrieve his aura, his worth and dignity, and he will not accept any subaltern position as in the posture of an Ariel who remains subjugated. When the latter comes to ask him to end his rebellion against his powerful master Prospero, Caliban rejects the warning and refuses obedience. This is to demonstrate clearly where Césaire stands: he intends to deconstruct the well-meaning program of help and instruction that Europe purports to dispense to so-called ‘backward’ peoples.

Perhaps one could agree with Edward Said when he says that “the core of Aimé Césaire's Caribbean *Une Tempête* is not *ressentiment*, but an affectionate

contention with Shakespeare for the right to represent the Caribbean. That impulse to contend is part of a grander effort to discover the basis of an integral identity that is different from the formerly dependent, derivative one” (Said, 1993, p. 256). In clearer terms, Césaire’s Caliban should be considered as a man, not just a Caribbean, as Said writes, in fact any man subjected to racism and exploitation. Césaire belongs to the militant branch of the ‘Négritude’ cultural movement, and his intention of terminating the slave- and- master relationship is clearly articulated by his Caliban. Césaire indeed has in mind to break Hegel’s theory that each one-both the slave and the master- needs the other one while remaining in the fixity of his status (one dominant and one dominated).

Even when his protagonist’s plan to revolt against his master is discovered and the man gets captured with the other rebels, the discourse of liberation is still proffered by him:

For years I took it, all of it-
Your insults, your ingratiated—
And worst of all, more degrading than all the rest
Your condescension
But now it’s all over (Césaire, 2002, p. 62).

This is in line with what Césaire wrote in his famous Cahiers, *Return to my native land*, asking black men to stand

Upright in the cabins
Upright on the bridge
Upright in the wind
Upright under the sun
Upright in the Blood (Césaire, 1939, p. 148).

One can surely agree with Edward Said’s warnings against the dangers of “chauvinism and xenophobia” in expressing commitment to the renaissance of the black race, adding that “it is best when Caliban sees his own history as a history of all subjugated men and women, and comprehend the complex truth of his own social and historical situation” (Said, 1993, p. 258). And this appears to be Césaire’s policy in his project to “write back” to the “metropolitan centre”.

4. Conclusion

As seen, the Prospero-Caliban dichotomy has led to various responses and interpretations, because of the ambiguity and “in-between-ness” with which Shakespeare presents it. The postcolonial scholarship and readership has actually responded by examining the interstices of Western creative works which present characters in elision or in absentia. For instance, J. M. Coetzee’s novel, *Foe*, revises Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* and makes the slave Friday a man whose tongue has been cut by his master, so that he can express no feelings or ideas. Let us mention also the novel of the Dominican Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, where a mulatto girl is unhappily married to an English nobleman. She happens to be in Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*, the “madwoman in the attic”, the strange lady locked up by Rochester, and whom he won’t allow to see anyone.

Those are instances of “revisions” of canonical works where marginalized characters are brought to “centre- stage” by other texts.

In Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, as in his other plays, the concern is mostly about providing entertainment to different kinds of spectators of the Elizabethan period, and keeping the promise of dramatizing unusual situations. So the element of fantasy is indeed important in this play, with the supplement of magic and the presence of spiritual beings. On the other hand, the issues raised by him exhibit his awareness of a changing world, and imply the need to examine relations globally in terms of trade and politics, this being induced by an increase in navigation routes. It is in this way that Shakespeare attempted to sensitize his contemporaries to the existence of other cultures and modes of life, even if this mode of representation remains perfunctory and Euro-centred. Aimé Césaire has judiciously remedied the "lack of informative elements" of Shakespeare's play by revising it as *Une Tempête*.

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RETHINKING LEARNER AUTONOMY AND ACADEMIC ACCULTURATION AS AGENCY

Abstract

Foreign language learner autonomy has become a widespread concept within the field of education. There are, however, certain constraints when implementing learner autonomy in practice. The present article tackles exactly this issue by taking a closer look at the nexus between foreign language learner autonomy and academic acculturation. Closely related to this, the idea of empowering language learners will also be discussed, mainly arguing that developing learner autonomy can only work if (foreign language) learners are successfully acculturated into their academic community. Although this paper is of a more theoretical nature, the article is informed by recent empirical findings by one of the authors.

Key words: autonomy, academic acculturation, empowerment.

1. Introduction

Learner autonomy is one of the buzz concepts in contemporary foreign language learning research. In daily classroom practice many teachers are convinced that incorporating principles of learner autonomy can have a positive impact on learning. Yet, in addition to the multiple philosophical, pedagogical and practical reasons for incorporating learner autonomy (cf. Cotterall, 1995), many definitions have been associated with the term since it was first coined in the context of foreign language learning by Henri Holec in 1979 (cited here as Holec, 1981). This is not least due to the fact that autonomy relies on a number of foundational sources or, in Benson's words (2011), dimensions like political philosophy (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Jean Paul Sartre), developmental psychology (Lev Vygotsky), and educational reform movements (John Dewey, Paulo Freire, & Ivan Illich). In addition to this, autonomy can “take numerous different forms, depending on their [the learners'] age, how far they have progressed with their learning, what they perceive their immediate learning needs to be, and so on” (Little, 1991, p. 4). Little's quote suggests that the development of learner autonomy has to be looked at within the particular context in which it takes place and which in this case is academic acculturation.

The concept of acculturation has traditionally been connected to the integration of (foreign exchange) students and staff acculturated into the academic practice of a culture different from their own. Yet, acculturation is anything but restricted to an intercultural (or interlanguage) experience, since it also alludes to the transition from one school type to another or from secondary school to university which “is not just a change of physical environment, but [...] also a change of culture” (Gasiorek & Van de Poel, 2012, p. 58). Concerning the latter, students have to acculturate into a community with established rituals which requires them to “interact with their community through the reigning

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academic discourse, i.e., they must learn this community's communicative currency: the norms, standards, procedures and linguistic forms that constitute academic discourse" (Gasiorek & Van de Poel, 2012, p. 58). However, (academic) acculturation is not a one-way, but a deeply reciprocal process as the acculturated not completely loses the experiences and expertise from his old life, but most likely also exerts influence on the host group he has become a part of (Berry, 2002).

The aim of this article is to have a closer look at the nexus between learner autonomy and academic acculturation. We assume that language learning in higher education goes beyond 'filling' learners with linguistic knowledge and that universities create an educational environment which functions as a political and psychological tool for learner empowerment and, in addition to this, intends to equip learners with the necessary skills and competences to become aware of and actively pursue the path of life-long (foreign language) learning. Using the term 'empowerment' in an article on learner autonomy at first glance appears to be problematic as both are often being used as synonymous and share common aims, but do not exactly mean the same. Yet, in the context of academic acculturation, understanding empowerment as "the process of helping learners become aware that they can have an impact on their environment, and can exert some control over their circumstances" (Shrader, 2003) is exactly what we mean when talking about learner autonomy in higher education and language learning. By pinpointing selected areas of learner autonomy and embedding them in the process of acculturation we will show that learners can only develop into proactive agents of their own learning and learning environment if successfully acculturated into the community within which they are expected to develop and (ideally) act their autonomy as lifelong members of this particular community, e.g. as part of an alumni network. Even though we will maintain a strong perspective on the learner, the teacher will also have to be incorporated into the discussion, for which we rely on empirical data showing that students mainly blame their faculties for not communicating their expectations clearly enough.

2. Learner Autonomy – Exploring the Concept

In a similar vein, Houser and Frymier (2009, p. 36) define an empowered learner as someone who is "motivated to perform tasks, and more specifically an empowered person finds the tasks meaningful, feels competent to perform them, and feels his/her efforts have an impact on the scheme of things". Houser and Frymier (2009, p. 36) suggest distinguishing between 'empowered' and 'empowering'. While they view 'being empowered' as an internal condition, they refer to 'empowering' as an external condition which allows learners to gradually experience the feeling of becoming and being 'empowered'. In current foreign language theory and practice, an abundance of understandings of and approaches to learner autonomy can be found. This requires us to rethink the idea (still promoted as utopian) of one unique all-encompassing definition of autonomy which can be applied to the diverse contexts in which foreign language learning takes place today (c.f. Everhard, 2004). In answer to this, at first glance, problematic reality, Oxford (2008, p. 49) suggests to abandon the notion of 'one autonomy' to the benefit of multiple autonomies. In the following, we will review some of the conceptualisations of autonomy and propose an

understanding of multiple tailored autonomies in a true constructivist or learner-centred tradition.

One of the earliest and most prominent definitions of the term is the one provided by Henri Holec (1981, p. 3) for the Council of Europe, which construes autonomy as:

[...] the ability to take charge of one's own learning, to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of the learning which means [...]:

- Determining the objectives;
- Defining the contents and progressions;
- Selecting methods and techniques to be used;
- Monitoring the procedure of acquisition properly speaking (rhythm, time, place, etc.);
- Evaluating what has been acquired.

Holec's (1988) apprehension emphasises the managerial aspect of autonomy understood as a learner's ability to organise ('manage') his own learning. This ability is not inborn but must be acquired either by 'natural' means or by formal learning, i.e. in a systematic, deliberate way" (ibid.). Building on this, Little understands autonomy not simply as an ability, but also as a matter of the learner's psychological relation to the process (engagement) and content of learning. Thus, he underlines the cognitive side (capacity) of autonomy which Holec was not completely unaware of, but simply did not consider central to his understanding of the concept. Little (1991, p.4) states:

Essentially, autonomy is a capacity – for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action. It presupposes, but also entails, that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning. The capacity for autonomy will be displayed both in the way the learner learns and in the way he or she transfers what has been learned to wider contexts.

A few years after his 1981 definition, Holec (1988, p. 8) defines 'capacity' in the following way: "just as the ability to drive a motor vehicle does not necessarily mean that whenever one gets into a car one is obliged to take the wheel, similarly the autonomous learner is not automatically obliged to self-direct his learning either totally or even partially. The learner will make use of his ability to do this only if he so wishes and if he is permitted to do so by the material, social and psychological constraints to which he is subjected." Benson holds that Holec's (management) and Little's (capacity) understandings of autonomy "underplayed a third dimension concerned with control over the content of learning" (Benson, 2013, pp. 60-61). One example of Benson's notion of control is Dam's classroom model of autonomy which she describes as a "learner-directed learning environment with a focus on learning [...]" (2008, p. 14) in which learners and teachers plan, evaluate and undertake new plannings in a constant process of negotiation and dialogue. Dam's model deriving from

many years of classroom work in Danish comprehensive schools, makes clear that developing autonomy is inherently social and involves learners and teachers to enter a constant process of negotiation over short- and long-term goals, content and materials (see Benson, 2013, . 60). No matter whether we believe that learners are born as autonomous individuals whose capacity to act autonomously is regressed and whose agency is developed as a product of instruction or that learners are already autonomous and education has to co-create together “with students optimal conditions for the exercise of their autonomy” (Smith, 2003, pp. 130-132), the key challenges connected to developing learner autonomy such as critical educational authorities, curricular constraints and teachers hesitant to hand over control as much as learners unwilling to accept it, remain the same.

3. Academic Acculturation

Learners, and language learners in particular, are in an almost constant transit between phases and stages of learning during which they engage in a process of adjusting to a new (learning) environment, its culture, its customs and its behaviours (Skinner, 2002). Adjusting to new communities and environments on a sociological, psychological, or even language level, can be unsettling and distressing for groups of individuals (Berry, 1997). In the context of education, the transition between secondary and tertiary education exemplifies this process of adjustment and is referred to as academic acculturation (Gee, 1996; Ivanic, 2006; Purves, 1986; Van de Poel & Gasiorek, 2012). Instances of academic acculturation as a socio-psychological process have been studied by, among others, Cheng and Fox (2008) and Van de Poel and Gasiorek (2012) who state that learners entering higher education 'struggle' to adjust to the new educational and social environment or more specifically, to the new academic demands and expectations. In order to successfully grow in their studies and professional lives, learners have to become comfortable with the discourse, as well as goals and objectives of the new academic context (cf. Hayes, 2004; Van de Poel & Gasiorek, 2012). In order to academically acculturate, learners have to become academically literate (Hyland, 2009: p. ix) which means that they have to acquire "the competence and range of skills [needed] not only to read and write texts, but also to understand, interact, and communicate with members of their academic community" (Van de Poel & Gasiorek, 2012, p.296). However, students entering higher education do not find this plain sailing or self-evident and it is increasingly acknowledged that they should be encouraged and guided in their acculturation process.

Thus, if learners are to successfully participate in their learning and grow as individuals with a healthy sense of self and self-direction, they have to adapt or accommodate to their communicative environment (Hyland, 2006) or, in other words, become socialized into the academic practices of their disciplines (Hyland, 2009, p.5), which entails that they will have to deliberately manage their learning, so they become adequately empowered to also engage in it. Despite a growing interest in the field, still little is known about what makes acculturation successful, or which variables influence the process of accommodation to encourage academic acculturation.

4. Engaging with a Community of Practice

Learning is not an ‘autistic venture’ as interaction and learning from one another are basic human conditions (cf. Little, 1991). Thus, developing autonomy does not require learners to deprive themselves from contact with other groups and individuals but, quite in contrast, becoming autonomous depends on social interaction (cf. Dam, 1990; Little, 2009). In short, learning entails establishing common goals and collectively finding ways to achieve these goals, including the overall aim of becoming more autonomous. In order to make this possible, teachers are stipulated to create and maintain a learning environment which facilitates/enables autonomy and encourages learners to be open and willing to enter a community of practice. Such a community can be defined as a group who shares a genuine interest in a topic and has a need to jointly multiply their group and individual knowledge in a subject area of common interest for situations in real life by exchanging texts. Since meaning is construed in interaction, the members of the community will make choices depending on the purpose(s), channel, code, wider context(s) and audience of their message. Once again, this process does not occur in a vacuum and choices will be influenced by the interactants' experiences and expectations (cf. Hyland, 2009).

Yet, for learners entering a new community of practice and becoming members of a (future) expert group on their subject area can be incredibly challenging as all of them have experienced different degrees of autonomy, might have different (cultural) interpretations of learner autonomy and differ in the degree to which they are able to act autonomously. Furthermore, the notion of autonomy of their institution (the community of practice in the widest sense) might also radically differ from what learners and teachers consider autonomy. Thus, learners need to be empowered to actively shape the community and ‘put their own stamp’ on it in order to conceive it as authentic and vital to their own learning and success.

5. Curriculum and Syllabus Design

Discussions on the topic often exclusively concentrate on the theoretical foundations of learner autonomy and the role of affective variables such as attitudes and beliefs (Cotterall, 1999) ignoring that successfully developing autonomy also needs to be embedded in (innovative) syllabus and curriculum design. In the following we will argue that when the curriculum and syllabus are systematically designed (following Brown, 1995), they will support the learners en route to becoming more autonomous because the design process reflects and closely follows the process of autonomy (see Holec's 1981 definition above). Today, the Common European Framework of References (CEFR) can be considered one of the most vital documents in foreign language education, as, apart from setting minimum foreign language requirements, it is also widely used in curriculum planning. According to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, p.174), a curriculum is defined as “the path travelled by a learner through a sequence of educational experiences, whether under the control of an institution or not”. If we understand the CEFR as a guide towards life-long learning “then a curriculum does not end with leaving school [or university], but continues in

some way or other thereafter in a process of life-long learning” (Council of Europe, 2001, p.174). This broader notion of curriculum as a life-long path of learning requires us to rethink our perception of curricula as collections of pre-defined learning goals.

For initial full-time education, the impression of separate units of education and learning is neither possible nor desirable. One might expect that with entering university the idea of life-long learning takes on more prominence while fixed curricula and syllabi create a contrary impression. In other words, university education should give students (and teachers) space to take an active role in designing their curricula and syllabi. While the fact that curricular guidelines in higher education *prima facie* may appear non-modifiable, the same argument does not hold true for course and syllabus design even within the constraints of subject or departmental curriculum demands. In order to achieve this, Trim (1978, p.1) suggests to make the process of language learning more democratic by providing the conceptual tools for the planning, construction and conduct of courses closely geared to the needs, motivations and characteristics of the learner and enabling him so far as possible to steer and control his own progress.

By doing so, students and teachers refrain from achieving curricular goals which are superimposed and not the learners’ own. Thus, they can enter a process of deeper and more authentic learning which, at the same time, turns the aforementioned community of practice into a community which not simply seeks to achieve the pre-determined goals of the syllabus, but sets these goals and then collaboratively finds ways to realise them. Yet, collaborative curriculum and syllabus design should not be limited to specific language goals or skills, but also integrate and thus offer space for acculturation. By doing so, students will become responsible citizens who are “capable of responding rapidly and effectively to environmental changes of all kinds” (Trim, 1978, p.226), changes similar to the ones they encountered when entering university.

In summary, we can say that there should be space within curriculum and syllabus design for learners to gradually become proactive autonomous learners who regulate not only the activity but also the direction of the activity (Littlewood, 1999). Yet, when creating these spaces we also need to bear in mind that there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to learner autonomy (Smith, 2003, p. 256). As learners are different in their opinions and beliefs about the process of learning and their ability to manage the process, they also differ in their readiness for, and interpretations of, learner autonomy. In this context, “language can be one of the most powerful tools for initiating and guiding change” (Shrader, 2003, n.p.) and for integrating those personal experiences which are important for learners. Thus, teachers should value what learners have to say and give them the opportunity to communicate about it at an appropriate (language) and managerial level which will ensure the implementation of their needs. By sharing the responsibility to find the right topics, content and learning routes and routines, teachers become instructors and managers who encourage their learners to see the relevance and importance of learning tasks.

6. Learner/Teacher Role

A perception of curricula and syllabi not as constraints but as part of open autonomous learning environments embedded in institutionalised and formal contexts should ideally leave room for learners to create spaces for learning in which

[a]ims and learning targets, course content, learning tasks, and the assessment of learner achievement must all be negotiated; and the basis of this negotiation must be recognition that in the pedagogical process, teachers as well as students can learn, and students as well as learners can teach (Little, 1995, p. 180).

Despite the increasing appreciation of the interrelationship between developing learner autonomy and the required changes on the side of teacher (cf. Reinders & Balçikanli, 2011, p.15), learner autonomy is still often misinterpreted as a teacher-directed method or exclusively seen from the perspective of the learner (cf. Merten & Ritter, 2012, p.93ff; Smith, Barkhuizen & Vieira, 2013) as the responsibility of the learner. Yet, quite in contrast, developing autonomy is a gradual process in which both teacher and learner are involved and which must move at a pace that both can manage (Camilleri, 1997).

Models of teacher autonomy are as ambiguous as models of learner autonomy and reach from understandings that emphasise a teacher's right to "freedom from control" (Benson, 2000) to models which highlight the role of the teacher as a learning-manager in classroom-related decisions (cf. Aoki, 1999). What many models have in common is that autonomous settings require teachers not simply to support learners in finding solutions to more specific set tasks but to scaffold their learning. There is also broad consensus that teachers need to accept knowledge gaps not only on the part of the learners but also on the part of themselves as the classroom environment is designed in such a way that it offers meaningful and available options which are co-determined by teacher and learners. This can only be successful if teachers and learners accept that everyone in the classroom has to be open and at the same time responsible for peer support (cf. Benson, 2013). Entering a new community always requires new members to figure out their position within its social hierarchy. This process of finding your place within a new –established– community is further complicated because the strongly hierarchical structures in higher education (most likely) radically differ from the structures learners are used to from secondary education.

The atmosphere of the autonomous classroom requires teachers and learners to enter into a process of constant negotiations. The question remains in which 'language' –in its 'real' and metaphorical sense– these negotiations are conducted. Researchers in the field seem to agree that the target language plays a vital role in all parts of the learning process and that it is imperative in "developing agency in sociocultural settings" (Toohey & Norton, 2003). In an evaluation of Dam's classroom model, Little, for example, states that "the target language in its metacognitive as well as its communicative function was the channel through which the learners' agency was required to flow" (Little, 2013, n.p.). Therefore, in the next section we will discuss the role of the target language in developing learner autonomy.

7. The Role of the ‘Target’ Language

Second language acquisition research emphasises the relevance of the target language as an authentic medium in the foreign language classroom. As far as learner autonomy is concerned, language use in general is shaped by the increasing achievement of ownership by the students which results in a learning situation in which the “[t]eacher no longer knows all the answers, meaning that communication in the FL classroom becomes authentic and the language becomes the means, as well as the goal” (Lacey, 2014, n.p.). In a similar vein, Dam, Little & Timmer (1998) view the autonomous classroom as a community of teachers and learners in which the target language is one of the principal tools by which the collaborative process is shaped. Building on this, we suggest that the community is not only shaped by target language use but also strengthens it and presents one of the foundational objectives that learners and teachers pursue together and which is never questioned. This however means that the scope of learner autonomy is to a certain extent constrained by what the learner can do in the target language or domain of the target language under consideration, i.e. the language of the community he desires to be a part of, but it does not constrain the learner in being confronted with materials of a higher order or aspiring to master them. In other words, the target language can be viewed as the ‘currency’ of the community which, similar to autonomy itself, is prerequisite and ultimate aim at the same time. The teacher and more knowledgeable learners model the use of the target language and constantly motivate peers to do the same. Since language and culture are two sides of the same coin, by ‘adopting’ the target language the learner will also ‘adapt’ to the target culture and gradually embrace it to become a comfortable coat. Thus, becoming acculturated will also entail becoming autonomous which will gradually become a less risky undertaking. This is a process which gets to the learners’ sense of self.

8. Learners’ Sense of Self

The acquisition of skills and competences plays a central role in foreign language learning. Yet, in second language acquisition processes attention should also be paid to the affective components such as the learner’s selves and identities which according to van Lier (2007, p.58) are defined as “ways of relating self to world”. In neo-Vygotskian terms, foreign language learning is a deeply social process in “which the subject constitutes itself at the intersection between self and other” (Tschurtschenthaler, 2013: 103; Gasiorek & Van de Poel, 2014). Drawing on Kristeva’s *subject en procès* (1977), Kramsch points out that the “subject is continuously involved in the struggle between the symbolic and the symbiotic” (Tschurtschenthaler, 2013, p.103). In Kramsch’s view, language learning is “another way of creating, conveying and exchanging signs, not primarily of acquiring new grammatical and lexical tools” (2000: 139-140), a task which learners approach as “both private, individual and public, social sign makers” (Kramsch, 2000, p.151). Thus, learning a foreign language requires learners to enter a continuous process of questioning, transforming and reshaping the sense of their ‘unstable’ self which can be considered as a work in progress (cf. Bruner, 2002; as cited in Murray, 2011, p.6). We concur with Murray (2011, p.6) who construes self or learners’ sense of self as their understanding of who they are as a person which draws on their agency, their perceptions and

memories of their life experiences and social interactions, as well as their hopes and dreams of the person they would like to become.

The traditional closed foreign language classroom often simply requires learners to explore their sense of self as a “language learner or user in relation to a particular linguistic community or learning context” (Mercer, 2012, p.12) ignoring their understanding of who they are as a person formed by experiences mainly made outside the classroom and hopes and dreams of the person they would like to become in their life after higher education. We argue that students who feel empowered by a sense of autonomy are far more likely to use their past and future life experiences not only to enhance learning but to make their language learning a part of these experiences by incorporating topics which are personally relevant –Bruner’s capacity to develop a sense of self “to control and select knowledge as needed” (1986, p.84)– and about which they have been, presently are or will be engaged.

9. Conclusion

Acculturation is a complicated and multi-faceted process which encompasses the struggles learners experience when entering higher education as their new educational and –at the same time– social environment with its own academic demands and expectations. The aim of this article was to review some of the core elements of learner autonomy and to explore some of its nexuses with acculturation. Where autonomy means that learners deliberately engage with their environment, but to a certain extent still decide on how and with whom to engage to what degree, acculturation portends that learners internalise the environment. They aspire to become one of the voices of the academic community and may –depending on their degree of acculturation– even become a persona.

While through becoming increasingly autonomous the learner has an increased impact on the learning environment and outcome provided that the environment allows the learner this freedom, in the process of acculturation the environment has an ever-increasing impact on the learner (which in the nexus autonomy-acculturation becomes a two way exchange). Therefore, in this article, we have tried to explain some of the cornerstones of both autonomy and acculturation. Moreover, we have revisited some key elements essential for an optimal nexus autonomy-acculturation in order to understand the nexus better.

In order to successfully acculturate, all stakeholders involved in the process, i.e. educational authorities, teachers and learners, as well the academic community at large, will have to abandon the conviction that higher education is an entity detached from past and future learning and will have to accept that it should provide space for incorporating past (and future) experiences of learning and individual perceptions and experiences of learner autonomy. This can only happen successfully if the discourse learners participate in is their own and is conducted in a language they understand and have active knowledge of. Moreover, curricula and syllabi which almost exclusively rely on prescribed content, skills and competences will not comply with this goal. In order to successfully grow in their studies and professional lives, learners not only have to become comfortable with the discourse, but also with the goals and objectives

of the new academic context (cf. Hayes, 2004; Van de Poel & Gasiorek, 2012). In order to give learners more genuine room to build a community of practice and to act as agents who construct the terms and conditions of their learning within this community, 'open' curricula and syllabi are vital. Closely connected to this, is the development and acknowledgement of self which, according to van Lier (2010; as cited in Murray 2011: 6) must be accompanied by an explanation of agency which he states "refers to the ways in which, and the extents to which, the person (self, identities and all) is compelled to, motivated to, allowed to, and coerced to, act".

Moreover, while it is increasingly acknowledged that learners should be encouraged and guided in their acculturation process, the role of the guide should not be reduced to the teacher but also include the learners' peers within and even outside the academic community of practice. If we take the overall goal of life-long learning seriously, acculturation has to make sure that the experiences made during the process are transferrable to other contexts and this includes, apart from defining one's aims and content of learning, also selecting one's sources and companions en route.

In sum, successful acculturation requires learners to be autonomous to such an extent that they can pro-actively enter their new community of practice. Yet, autonomy should not simply be viewed as a prerequisite for successful acculturation as, even more importantly, autonomy should be fostered as a source for designing acculturation processes as well as the outcome of this lifelong learning process.

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IMPROVING ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDENTS' ORAL FLUENCY THROUGH YOUTUBE NON-FICTION VIDEOS

Abstract

Success in English language teaching and learning depends on the use of effective approaches, methods and strategies. Nevertheless, with the proliferation of new technological tools, a shift from teacher-centeredness to learner-based is necessary to promote a learning climate and reflective practice in higher education. In light of this, the present article probed the effect of using YouTube non-fiction videos as pedagogical tools on the development of English language students' oral fluency. The aim is to change the traditional way of teaching the speaking skill, and move into a more dynamic and creative classroom atmosphere. To reach this purpose, the authors relied on a mixed-methods approach using four data collection tools, which consist of: teachers and students' questionnaires, students' evaluation checklist, unstructured interview as well as classroom observation. The sample is composed of third year Literature and Civilisation students, teachers of oral expression and teachers of civilisation, at the department of English, University of Bejaia. The results showed students and teachers' positive attitudes towards YouTube non-fiction videos in oral expression. In addition, they revealed that the use of YouTube videos as pedagogical tools implies three stages which are: pre-viewing, while-viewing, and after-viewing. Some insightful implications have been provided for further research.

Keywords: English Language Students, Oral Fluency, Pedagogical Tools, Training Program, YouTube Non-fiction Videos.

1. Introduction

In the twenty first century, English has become the language of global enterprise, democratic reform, and economic growth (Pennycook, 2017). This is why, the implementation of digital media and technology is seen beneficial for enhancing the quality of English language teaching and learning. The technological tools should be regarded as a medium for communication exchange between students and their instructors rather than an ultimate source for content delivering. To avoid the misuse of ICTs in EFL classes, on-going training and institutional support are highly required. To this end, the authors of the present article examined the use of YouTube non-fiction videos as pedagogical tools on the development of students' oral fluency. Many researchers proved the efficiency of such tools (For example, Kabooha, 2016; Kabooha and Elyas, 2018). The aim behind the choice of this medium is to assist students in understanding the way native speakers use English language in a

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genuine context. We believe that, instead of spoiling time and papers in EFL classes, encouraging a large scale of technological bases to be part of an effective communicative community is much more interesting and likely to lead to academic achievement and developmental growth. In fact, in higher education, the important devotion is not to fill students with useless content as receptacles, but to intelligently find ways to enable them speak, participate, share, and create an atmosphere where the target language is used correctly and purposefully.

This study is significant because of the following reasons:

- It will attract teachers' attention and interest toward the use of technological tools in their profession.
- The readers will gain knowledge of the techniques and activities that can be used with videos in FLT.
- They will understand speaking skill in general and oral fluency in particular.
- It will raise students' awareness of the importance of speaking skill in their professional life.
- It will act as a beneficial and instructive work for future researchers.

2. Review of Literature

Before reviewing the concept 'oral fluency', we think that it is noteworthy to present first a brief background of speaking skill in English Language Teaching (ELT). According to Richard and Rogers (1986), the teaching of speaking was not considered as important as reading and writing in the Latin and Greek period. The reason is that the purpose for learning a language at that time was mainly to be able to read and write literature. They added that the approach adopted was called Grammar Translation Method (GTM), which focused on the study of grammatical aspects of language and the use of translation as a means for comprehension. However, they pointed out that speaking gained its importance in ELT during the direct method era. In this period, it was believed that the primary goal for learning a language was to be able to speak and think in that language with no use of the mother tongue. More importantly, speaking was also emphasised during the Audio-lingual Method Era but it was criticised because students could not transfer the things they knew to other contexts and situations. However, with the emergence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in 1970s, speaking was based on functions and notions.

2.1. Oral fluency

According to Richards and Schmidt (2002), oral fluency refers to the ability to communicate ideas effectively with continuous speech and without causing comprehension difficulties. This means that a fluent speaker is the one who knows how to make his or her speech understood to others, and this is what English language students should be aware of when integrating themselves in communication. In turn, Thornbury (2005) reports that spoken fluency requires the capacity to have a store of memorised lexical chunks and a degree of automaticity. Hedge (1993) states that the term fluency gained two different meanings in ELT. The first is similar to the one given by Chambers Concise Dictionary, which defines fluency as '*the ability to speak and write a particular language competently and with ease*'. The second is defined as '*the ability to link*

units of speech together with facility and without strain, inappropriate slowness or undue hesitation' (p. 275). In other words, the first definition has a direct relation with language production, i.e. both speaking and writing are involved; whereas, the second is restricted to only speaking which is our main concern.

2.2. *Importance of Speaking for English Language Students*

Since English language nowadays has gained an outstanding status in the world because of many reasons such as commerce and technology, the need to master it has become more demanding. The followings show other elements that make speaking important in English language classrooms. According to Hasan (2014, p. 251), *'speaking skill when it is mastered, helps individuals promote their feelings, self-esteem and realisation as they feel happy when they realise that their messages have gone through'*. We do agree with this, because when students have a knowledge repertoire at their disposal, and do practice them in different contexts and situations, they will become more fluent and will develop a sense of achievement, confidence and joy.

In addition, Egan (1999) asserts that speaking can help students perceive, persuade, hypothesise and interpret messages. This is also a very crucial point because it allows them to integrate in real- life situations such as intervening in a conference, debate, participating in the classroom and so on, as well as gain the attention of the listeners. This can be supported by Wisker (2005) who says that, students who can communicate effectively in English, will have opportunities to take part in problem solving and creative thinking skills (cited in Singh, 2013). Furthermore, as stated by Baker and Westrup (2003, p.5), *'students who can speak English well may have greater chance for further education, of finding employment and gaining promotion'*. This is what we have noticed in some students in the setting under investigation. They could carry on their studies abroad because their potential in English as a foreign language was quite appreciated. Besides, Richards (2008) argues that students judge their success in learning through their evaluation about their improvement in speaking. Truly, by doing so, learning a foreign language will then become an active process. The students' awareness about the importance of this skill, will likely pave the way to more fruitful results.

From the aforementioned comments, arguments and real situational proofs, we recognise with emphasis how important the speaking skill is. This is why, according to all foreign language practitioners, it should be given many concerns and insights.

2.3. *YouTube Videos as Pedagogical Tools: Advantages and Problems*

A body of research revealed that videos in English language classrooms create an enjoyable and motivating atmosphere which can help students not only contribute the in-class discussions but also be the motive to attendance as the teaching-learning environment becomes more salient and sounder. As an example, one compelling study by Ljubojevic, Vaskovic, Stankovic and Vaskovic (2014) used videos during four minutes in order to develop the efficiency of learning. They found that the videos had positive effects on students' perception towards using new and varied teaching and learning tools as videos and on motivation. As these researchers focused on learning in general,

we however, as a limited research field, emphasise more on oral fluency which is one of the variables in this investigation demonstrating that short sequences of videos can bring great advantages for the students. Alimemaj (2010) argued that videos provide an authentic language used by native speakers, as well as all language genres (songs, debates, talks, poems...). This of course can be considered as a good way in order to learn a great deal of vocabulary, which is important for developing one's oral fluency. In addition, Burt (1999, p. 2) said that, '*videos present real language that is not simplified and is spoken at a normal speed with genuine accent*'. In this case, students will know how to react to the difficulties they encounter in speaking by getting used to hearing what native speakers use in their daily life.

Furthermore, Meyers (1999) claimed that seeing language in use spurs students' oral production and confidence in their speech (cited in York, 2011). Similarly, Richards and Renandya (2002) pointed out that by watching videos, students will know how people initiate, develop and end up their conversations. The lack of knowledge of these concepts impinges students to be fluent in the target language. In addition to seeing language in use, videos also develop students' cultural awareness of the target language. This can be confirmed by Stempleski (1987, p. 6) who pointed out that, '*through videos, students can see how people in the target culture live, their values, customs, clothing, food and how people in that culture interact with one another*'. Besides, watching videos can motivate students to engage in different tasks. Yassaei (2012) stated that videos can be effective tools for breaking up the routine and incline the students to study the English language.

Despite the aforementioned advantages, we admittedly agree that any technological tool is drawbacks free. According to Puhfahl and Rhodes (2003) using videos in EFL classroom is time consuming. Another disadvantage of videos as cited by Allan (1985) is the limitation of the software. In a similar vein, Brophy (2007) stated that using videos can result in a passive learning process. We think that this can happen if the students are not aware about the purpose of watching the video. Hence, it is up to the teacher to make his or her students understand the fact that watching a video at home is not the same as in the classroom. According to Davies and Pearse (2000, p.13), '*if learners are to participate willingly in class, they must understand what is expected from them*'. In this case, they will be ready both cognitively and linguistically for the task they are assigned to accomplish.

Methodology

2.4. Context

The study took place at the University of Abderrahmane Mira-Bejaia (Algeria) during the academic year 2014-2015. This University was created in 1983 as an Institute of Higher Education. Then, it was transformed into a University in 1998 and was named under the Martyr 'Abderrahmane Mira'. The campus of Aboudau was opened in 2003; it contains five faculties. For instance, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Economics, Management, and Business Studies,

Faculty of Human and Social Sciences, Faculty of Languages, and Faculty of Medicine.

As far as this research is concerned, the authors seek to answer the following **questions**:

1. Is speaking difficult to acquire? If yes, what makes it difficult?
2. How can YouTube non-fiction videos boost students' oral fluency?
3. Has this strategy proved beneficial?
4. What are the attitudes of both teachers and students towards using it in the oral expression session?

By asking these questions, the present article aims at investigating whether the use of YouTube non-fiction videos is an effective tool in oral expression session or not. In addition, it attempts to find out the strategies that can be followed to support the implementation of this tool (i.e. YouTube videos) in oral classes.

2.5. *Participants*

The participants of the present study consist of third year LLCE students, teachers of oral expression and teachers of civilisation, at the department of English, University of Bejaia. Concerning the students, they were divided into two groups (Group1=32 students, group2=33 students), which means the population contains 65 students. In our random sampling, we have two subgroups composed of subgroup A, group 1 (12 students), and subgroup B, group 2 (12 students). The first is the control group, and the second is the experimental. To remind our readers, the participants' age and gender were not taken into account because the researcher focused only on the most important elements that tackle the objectives of the present study. Below is a description of the participants' profiles:

2.5.1. *Teachers (Teaching experiences)*

Teachers of Oral Expression (8 participants)	Teachers of Civilisation (2 participants)
1-10 years	10-16 ears

Students (Levels in English)

Variables	Respondents/24	%
Very good.	3	12.5
Good.	11	45.83
Average.	8	33.33
Need work.	2	8.33
No answer	0	0
Total	24	100

2.6. *Procedures*

2.6.1. *Research approach, tools and data analysis*

The present article is based on a mixed-methods approach, using four data collection tools. The latter consist of observation, questionnaires, interview (unstructured) and students' evaluation checklist. These tools helped the authors

gain a greater insight concerning the students and teachers' perceptions towards videos in EFL classes. The data were analysed using frequencies, percentages and descriptive statistics.

Description and aim of teachers' questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire is composed of five sections. The first section gathers general information about the respondents, and contains four questions; one open and three close-ended questions. The second is entitled students' oral skills and difficulties, and comprises four close-ended questions. The third displays the teachers' attitudes and reactions towards their students' oral development, and consists of seven questions; one open, and six close-ended. The fourth is related with new technological tools in oral expression session, and has four questions; one open and three close-ended. The last one is about teachers' suggestions and recommendations. Our main objective in using this questionnaire is to evaluate the attitudes of teachers towards the new strategy in oral session.

Description and aim of teachers' interview

The teachers' interview contains three main sections. We have summarised them as follows:

- **Section One:** General questions (comprises three questions).
- **Section Two:** Teachers' experiences in using YouTube videos to teach civilisation (includes seven questions).
- **Section Three:** Teachers' suggestions and recommendations (contains one question).

The aim of the interview is to report the teachers' experiences with the use of YouTube videos in their teaching of civilisation.

Description and aim of students' questionnaire

The questionnaire is divided into four major sections. The first gives a general information/personal evaluation about the students, and it contains six questions; three close and three open-ended questions. The second depicts the students' view of oral expression session, and it comprises four close-ended questions. The third is about students' attitudes towards the use of YouTube videos in oral session, and it consists only of one close-ended question. The fourth section reports students' suggestions and recommendations. Our aim behind this questionnaire is to examine the reasons behind students' difficulties in speaking as well as their attitudes towards using YouTube videos in oral session.

Description and aim of classroom observation

In the present study, we conducted both a pre and post-observation. First, the pre-observation was carried out during the first semester of the academic year (2014-2015). We relied on an observation grid to record the data, and the main criteria that we evaluated were: students' oral participation, the way they answered, the amount of pauses and hesitations they made, repetitions, reformulations, false starts, mistakes/errors and finally self/peers' corrections. These criteria were based according to the dependent variable (oral fluency). Some of them were designed by the researcher; whereas, the other criteria like repetition, reformulation and false starts were extracted from the book of Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005, p.157), '**Analysing Learner Language**'. Second, the

post-observation took only three weeks and at the end of each session. We gave students an evaluation checklist to assess the videos and their speaking as well as their opinion towards the use of the new strategy in oral session. The aim of the observation was to compare between the control group and experimental one before and after the implementation of YouTube videos to highlight whether there is a change in terms of students' participation and the way of speaking or not.

Description and aim of students' evaluation checklists

The students' evaluation checklist is divided into three outstanding elements. The students are asked to answer with yes or no to each question. The first element examines students' evaluation of the video; it comprises 5 questions. The second element is about students' evaluation of their speaking; it contains only one question and the justification is required. The last element reports students' opinions towards the use of YouTube non-fiction videos in oral session, and it consists also of one question. Our aim was to make a gradual evaluation of the effect of the suggested hypothesis on the experimental group and examine whether there will be a change in terms of students' attitudes towards the new strategy or not.

2.6.2. The training programme

The experiment took only three weeks because of many constraints that we encountered. The authors followed three stages. In the first stage (**pre-viewing**), we explained the objective behind watching the video. In the second stage (**while-viewing**), students were required to listen carefully and take notes as a way to prepare themselves for oral practice. In the last stage (**post-viewing**), it was a whole class discussion and debate, and then a role play was also used as another technique to create an enjoyable learning atmosphere. At the end of each session, students were given an evaluation checklist to evaluate the video, their speaking and their opinion about its use in oral session. The first video was about obesity in America; it took only 7 minutes and 56 seconds so as to allow the students have a great deal of discussion. The second video was about stronger self-esteem; it took 8 minutes and 3 seconds. The third video was about immigration in America; it lasted 5 minutes and 49 seconds. The choice of the themes was made by asking some students in the experimental group (informally) about the videos they like and the majority of them prefer videos on social issues.

3. Results and Discussion

Question 1: Is speaking a difficult skill? If yes, what makes it difficult?

To this question, we can say '**Yes**' and the things that make it difficult were being reported by our respondents (LLCE students and teachers of oral expression) like: students' psychological factors and disabilities, students' cultural differences, interests and level, lack of pedagogical equipment and tools and linguistics incompetence. We do consider the participants' position in regard to this question, and their answers go straightforward into our expectations. All the reasons mentioned can be overcome if students practise speaking inside and outside the classroom regularly, as well as encouraged to participate and perform various and rich tasks using motivated techniques and strategies. In addition, we

think that in the classroom, there should be more practice of output than input. In fact, knowledge is everywhere not just at school. There are books, internet and different means, which students can rely on to cultivate and enrich their culture of the language. What they really need is the application of knowledge in real-life actions.

Question 2: How can YouTube non-fiction videos boost EFL students' oral fluency?

We have obtained an answer to this question thanks to the teachers' interview in which we arrived at an understanding that the strategy can develop students' oral fluency by following the three stages of viewing: **pre-viewing**; **while-viewing** and **post-viewing**. In the last stage, students were required to personalise the topic by relating it to their life experiences and background knowledge. In addition, more practice should be devoted at this stage to allow students practise more their speaking. For example, making the whole class to discuss about the video, doing pair/group work and role-plays. Moreover, the objective of watching a video should also be emphasised in order to make students ready for oral practice. To illustrate, Altman (1989, p.110) states that, '*Video materials must be chosen not primarily for their inherent artistic value but for their ability to fulfil a particular function in a particular course*'. To interpret it in another way, we can say that YouTube videos can enhance students' oral fluency through the design of effective communicative activities with the statement of specific objectives and classroom management. Similarly, Gezegin (2014) says that for video materials to be used successfully to promote students' oral fluency, teachers have to use them creatively.

Question 3: Has this strategy proved beneficial?

To some extent, '**Yes**' and this has been confirmed by the students' evaluation checklists, the teachers' interview as well as the teacher's comments while doing the experiment. Also, we find it beneficial since it has enriched our knowledge of how to implement the suggested hypothesis in oral session. More importantly, we developed a positive attitude towards the use of technology in education in which we hope it will be a part of the syllabus in all the modules so as to motivate the students and create a better learning environment. Our view is shared by (Bajrami & Ismaili, 2016; Kaboocha, 2016; Nova, 2017; Kaboocha and Elyas, 2018) who admitted that their students find learning English language with YouTube videos more useful and constructive.

Question 4: What are the students and teachers' attitudes towards using it in the oral expression session?

Concerning the students and teachers of civilisation, they all had a positive attitude; whereas, for the teachers of oral expression, only one of them who expressed a negative opinion because this teacher thinks they are not useful. We think that, in order to judge whether a given material is good or not, it has to be first experimented to see if it has attained the wanted objective or not. Actually, a language is better fostered when it is accompanied by both sound and picture, and this is what we have been able to reach and demonstrate throughout our

literature review. This must be understood: we are living in an era of technology, revolutionised materials and digitalised tools. In the moment when all the world education institutions are launching electronic platforms for distance education, when the teachers are ‘tutors’ and ‘virtual’, it is, according to us, a critical situation to mention audio-tapes which have vanished according to our investigations.

In a nutshell, we expected such results in the present study because we believe that in any research, the researcher may not always achieve the exact results he/she wants; there are always extraneous variables which maybe encountered.

4. Conclusion

The present study investigated the effect of using YouTube non-fiction videos as pedagogical tools on the development of English language students’ oral fluency. A mixed-methods approach, using four tools of data collection were adopted. Findings showed that students, teachers of oral expression (except for one), and teachers of civilisation expressed a positive attitude towards the new strategy we implemented. In addition to this, students’ evaluation checklist revealed that this type of technology helped them develop their oral fluency. For the implications, teachers need to design various and meaningful communicative activities; set the goals behind using YouTube non-fiction videos in oral session; guide students with video teaching instructions; encourage them to watch the video before coming to the classroom; raise their motivation and self-esteem, and give them opportunities to expose projects in the auditorium. The new strategy we implemented would be more successful if it was carried out for a longer period of time. Thus, we suggest future researchers to lengthen the duration of the experiment for at least a whole year to have time to analyse and interpret the data.

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Video Websites

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=obesity+in+america

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Stronger+self-esteem

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Comming+to+America%3A+immigration

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GENDER-IDENTITY FORMATION IN THE ALGERIAN SECOND GENERATION ELT MATERIALS: THE CASE OF MY BOOK OF ENGLISH MIDDLE SCHOOL YEAR ONE

Abstract

Scholars in the field of education stress the importance of gender equality in children textbooks for the negative impact of sexism on learners from both sexes. As the title implies, the present paper attempts to qualitatively and quantitatively examine “My Book of English Middle School Year One” in order to find out whether or not gender biases issue is avoided in the textbook. Based on the results of previous studies conducted in the field of textbooks analysis, which had revealed a considerable amount of sexism being imbedded in the First Generation EFL textbooks, it was hypothesized that the currently used textbook, which was recently produced with the implementation of the Second Generation of the Algerian Educational System, also incorporates gender stereotyping. We used Michel’s (1986) criteria of analysis to investigate the way males and females are represented in the meant textbook. Analysis results indicated that gender bias still exists in the Algerian ELT materials.

Key words: Second generation program, ELT textbook; young learners; social values

1. Theoretical Framework

Postmodern workplaces and social organizations need new kinds of workers and citizens: and these in turn call for new forms of schooling, new types of leadership and new ways of teaching. At the same time, issues of gender that had long been ignored in educational policy research have moved increasingly into the mainstream. (Blackmore: 2005, p. 180)

1.1 Introduction

According to Brugeilles and Cromer (2009, p. 14), textbooks do not only provide learners with the needed linguistic competencies, but they also transmit the social behaviours, norms and values one should have. Similarly, Kalmus (2004, p. 470) regards it as being an effective means for transmitting the various social values. Consequently, textbook analysis has been the scope of many studies in many countries. In fact, many applied linguists stress the necessity of textbook evaluation to indicate its strengths and weaknesses (Cunningsworth 1995, p. 14). Ellis (1997) also points to “the urgent need for the empirical evaluation of teaching materials” (p. 41). Weir and Roberts (1994, p. 11) argue that evaluation helps teacher decides if the textbook is suitable for learners.

Gender bias and sexism are among the main items of textbooks evaluation. Gender is defined by Healy (2009) as “what society expects and molds of each person into what is accepted and thought of as being feminine or masculine in her part” Michel (1986) in her part explains sexism as “practices, prejudices and ideologies that treat one sex as inferior to the other in worth and status” (p 11).

Historically speaking, Talvik (2014, p. 11) states that the study of gender stereotyping started as early as the 40's of the past century and among those who were interested in this field are Child, Potter and Levine. Since then, Talvik adds, investigation on sexism has been receiving more and more attention from academics (Talvik, p. 20). However, researchers in the area of sociology argue that gender stereotyping has its roots in history prior to the twentieth century. Michel (1986, pp. 17-18) traces it back into the emergence of the bourgeois family in the fourteenth century in France where the father was exclusively pointed as manager of the family financial affairs as woman was viewed as incompetent. Michel further explains that this gender bias was legalized on the strength of a roman law known as *fragilitas sexus* or the weaker sex. With Capitalism, Michel goes on, sexism against women was so strengthened that they were labeled housewives. Gender bias still exists till now in developed and developing countries as well. Accordingly, Pakuta, Pawelczyk and Sunderland (2015) state: "Gender stereotyping appears to be still alive and (fairly) well. There is progress, but there are also sticking points" (p. 95).

In the educational context, gender stereotyping might be conveyed through teaching materials used at school which is just a part of the society (Pakuta, el., 2015, p. 25). Michel further explains that sexism can be transmitted through textbook's illustrations and texts which unequally depict man and woman in social, familial and professional roles (Pakuta et al., p. 27). Florent and Walter (1989, p. 182) also hold the same view. They argue that textbooks may convey sexism through texts and visuals. Moreover, Miroiu (2004) clearly indicates: "Textbooks are a stronger promoter of the gender stereotypes than curriculum, which is rather gender neutral" (p. 99). These claims are supported by the findings of several studies carried out in Algeria and abroad, which reveal a considerable amount of sexism being imbedded in the tackled textbooks. Using the content method analysis, Porreca (1984) examined ESL textbooks used at school in the USA with regard to gender discrimination. She examined the representation of females in texts and images, occupations, male and female nouns frequency, firstness, the types of adjectives used for males and females and their frequencies generic masculine nouns (man) and pronouns (he). She found that "sexism continues to flourish in ESL textbooks" (Porreca 1984, p. 718).

As for the Algerian case, Boukheddad (2011) carried out an evaluating study which involves the three EFL textbooks intended for the secondary level. The results of the study reveal that the used textbooks are biased in terms of all the dimensions picked to evaluation. EFL textbooks incorporate prejudicial representation against females, ethnic groups and elders. Additionally, such aspects as occupations and personal traits are stereotyped. In his study, Selama (2016) qualitatively and quantitatively examined the four EFL textbooks used at the Algerian Middle School in terms of gender presentation through the textbooks' texts and visuals. Research findings prove that the four textbooks analysed foster gender stereotyping in several levels through texts and illustrations.

To sum up, textbooks transmit diverse social values and norms and therefore if the authors are not aware of sexism then the textbooks they write may carry gendered presentations that may pave the way for learners to treat people on the basis of gender discriminations, which may, in turn, hinder their educational and professional achievements.

1.2 Why Investigating Gender Bias in Textbooks?

Sunderland (1992, pp. 86-87) maintains that the convincing reason for change in materials that must be given to the authors has nothing to do with teachers but with learners who use and learn from the textbook and therefore get affected by its gender discrimination. Textbook, Sunderland explains, influences learners in three ways:

One: considering the fact that such tools of socialisation as TV, games, newspapers... affect people's perception, EFL textbooks can also do the same to learners. Hence, female learners are not cognitively and communicatively empowered if they are unconsciously affected by the textbooks' characters who are stereotypically depicted as having limited social and linguistic roles. Second: if female learners notice that their textbooks portray females less frequently in proportion to males and that they play restricted roles and, eventually lack motivation to study, their learning will be hindered rather than facilitated. Third: if textbooks corporate dialogues which are frequently initiated by male characters, they, in fact, give "the whole class a model of conversational discourse characterized by 'male firstness'". There is a high probability that this model of conversation will be adopted and later on applied in and outside the classroom.

Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus and Young (2006, p. 757) also explain that the unequal treatment of female characters in textbooks has a negative effect not only on learners' educational achievements but they also "contribute negatively to children's development, limit their career aspirations, frame their attitudes about their future roles as parents, and even influence their personality characteristics". Furthermore, Michel (1986, p. 23) argues that gender stereotyping has negative influence on both sexes. She believes that the stereotyped portrayals of male characters as dominant on roles related to strength and competition may result in "cutting boys and men off from their emotions and natural feelings". Michel even asserts that the cruelty of nowadays world might be the consequence of "one-dimensional socialization of boys and men in the mould of harshness, competitiveness, aggressiveness and insensitivity".

It is clear from the above mentioned stances that the way characters are presented in textbooks may affect learners in the educational, professional and social levels. Hence, revealing sexist manifestations in textbooks might be a vital step to abolish them for promoting gender equality in the Algerian school.

2. Methodological Framework

2.1 Corpus

The material tackled in this study is the Second Generation EFL textbook designed for learners of the middle school first grade. The textbook is entitled:

My Book of English Middle School Year One, written by Algerian authors. Two males; HAMMOUDI Abdelhak and SAMARA Abdelhakim and one female writer; BOUKRI Nabila. The head of project is also a male; TAMRABET Lounis. The textbook consists of five sequences. Each sequence encompasses communicative objectives and linguistic objectives.

2.2 Objectives of the Study

This study aims at checking if the recently authored EFL textbook promotes gender stereotypes. The prime objective is to increase Algerian EFL teachers' awareness of the gender stereotyped presentations in the textbook to help them deal with the issue since they use the textbook in teaching. Needless to say, the findings might be used to revise, update and improve the textbook.

2.3 Research Questions

This paper addresses the following questions:

1- What are the differences and similarities between the First and the Second Generation EFL textbooks in terms of gender stereotyping?

2- How are male and female characters verbally and visually depicted in My Book of English Middle School Year One?

3- To what extent does My Book of English Middle School Year One reinforce gender bias?

2.4 Data Analysis Procedures

This study is primarily a quantitative content analysis. The analysis was done throughout both texts and visuals to reveal any imbalance in a) the proportion of roles attributed to male and female characters, b) the frequency of male and female characters appearance. Such method of analysis is supported by Pakuta, Pawelczyk and Sunderland (2015) who claim that: "If there is a quantitative imbalance of represented girls and boys, women and men, in language textbooks, this may adversely affect students' self-image" (p.13). Gender inequality analysis was carried out based on Michel's (1986) criteria. She outlines three categories to be used in the examination of gender bias. These categories are:

a- Analysis of sexism in the social references to male and female characters, in both texts and illustrations; this category involves many items but only three were found in the tackled textbooks. The three items are family status, occupation and level of employment.

b- Analysis of sexism in the activities of male and female characters; this heading also includes many items but only two were presented in the textbook. They are leisure activities and sportive activities.

c- Comparing the number of male and female characters who appear both in the body of the text and its illustrations. (Michel, pp. 49-52)

3. Results

The findings are presented in tables along with their descriptions. The frequencies are shown by means of numbers and sometimes percentages to give a clearer overview of the results. The following is a presentation of the findings of the content analysis of the textbook.

3.1 Results of Analysing Sexism in the Social References to Male and Female Characters, in Both Texts and Illustrations

Table 01:

The Social References to Male and Female Characters offered in My Book of English Middle School Year One

Category	Page	Variety of features contributed to male characters		Frequency	Variety of features Contributed to female characters		Frequency
		Text	Visual		Text	Visual	
<i>Family Status</i>	9	Father	Father	2	Mother	Mother	2
	48	/	Father/ grandfather	2	/	Mother/grandmother	2
	49	/	Father/ grandfather	2	/	Mother/ grandmother	2
	51	/	grandfather	1	/	/	/
	53	/	/	/	/	Grandmother	1
	61	/	Father/ grandfather	2		Mother/ grandmother	2
	65	/	Father/ grandfather	2	/	Mother/ grandmother	2
	66	/	Father	4	/	Mother	4
	67	Father	Father	3	Mother	Mother	3
	68	/	Grandfather	1	/	Grandmother	1
	152		/		Mother	/	3
	156	Father	/	1	/	/	/
	158	/	/	1	Mother	/	1
	Total			21			23
<i>Occupation</i>	6	/	/	/	/	Teacher	1
	7	/	Architect/carpenter	2	/	/	/
	8	/	/	/	/	Teacher	1
	15	/	/	/	/	Nationalist	1
	16	/	Football player	1	/	/	/

	19	/	/	/	/	Teacher	1
	20	/	/	/	/	Teacher	1
	24	/	/	/	/	Teacher	1
	34	/	/	/	/	Teacher	1
	39	/	/	/	/	Teacher	1
	47	/	Teacher	1	/	/	/
	50	/	Surgeon/ doctor/mechanic/ vet/ electrician/ lawyer/ carpenter/ dustman/ farmer	11	/	Painter/ nurse/	3
	51	/	Architect/ teacher/ farmer	3	/	Nurse	1
	56	/	/	/	/	Teacher	1
	68	/	Architect/ carpenter/ electrician/ farmer/ lawyer/ mechanic/ painter	7	/	Nurse	1
	69	/	Teacher/ vet	2	/	/	/
	79	/	/	/	/	Teacher	1
	113	/	/	/	/	Teacher	1
	115	/	Thinker	1	/	/	/
	116	/	Thinker/ nationalist	2	/	Nationalist	1
	117	/	Thinker/ nationalist	2	/	Nationalist	1
	137	/	/	/	/	Teacher	1
	Total		<u>13</u>	<u>32</u>		<u>4</u>	<u>19</u>
<i>Level of employment</i>	62.74%			37.25%			

According to the findings presented in table 01, My Book of English Middle School Year One equally portrays male and female characters as father and mother.. Male characters are presented as fathers or grandfathers twenty-one (21) times while the depiction of women as mothers or grandmothers occurs twenty-three (23) times. As far as occupation is concerned, we could notice that the male dominance is obvious. Almost two-thirds (62.74%) of the textbook's working population are male characters. Moreover, female characters are

attributed with only four (4) types of occupation while male characters are given thirteen (13) varieties of jobs, which means three times more than the kinds of jobs given to females.

3.2 Results of Analysing Sexism in the Activities of Male and Female Characters

Table 02:

The Activities of Male and Female Characters in My Book of English Middle School Year One

Traits	age	P	Variety of features Contributing to male character	Frequency	Variety of features Contributing to female characters	Frequency
<i>Leisure activities</i>	4	2	/	/	Singing	1
	0	3	/	/	Playing	1
	10	1	Singing	1		
	Total	T		1		2
<i>Sports</i>	16		Football	1		
	55		Basketball	1		
	69		Swimming	1		
	70		Handball	2	Handball	2
	Total		4	5	1	2

As illustrated in table 02, results of content analysis indicate that though the tackled EFL textbook does not depict characters of both sexes in leisure activities so much, yet they are presented in a stereotyped way. The textbook portrays one female character singing and another character playing whereas it depicts only one male character singing. The findings indicate also that the textbook exhibits sexism in sportive activities. It visually presents five (5) male practicing four (4) types of sports while only two (2) females are depicted playing only one kind of sports. To sum up, sportive activities in My Book of English Middle School Year One are stereotypically presented as being practiced by male characters.

3.3 Results of Comparing the Number of Male and Female Characters who Appear Both in the Body of the Text and its Illustrations

Table 03:

Male and Female Characters Presence in Texts in My Book of English Middle School Year One

Unit	Pronouns		Total	Proper nouns			
	He	She		Masculine nouns	Total	Feminine nouns	Total
One	/	/	/	Djemal, Akram, Rafik, Younes.	<u>4</u>	Meriem, Rania, Razane, Lina, Rania, Margaret, Houda, Diana, Maria, Susan.	<u>10</u>
Two	16	15	<u>31</u>	Omar, Peter, Khaled, Yacine, Mustapha, Kamel, Jack.	<u>7</u>	Leila, Soraya, Sara, Adaku.	<u>4</u>
Three	5	17	<u>22</u>	/	/	Amel.	<u>1</u>
Four	3	6	<u>9</u>	Abdelhamid.	<u>1</u>	Amira.	<u>1</u>
Five	7	7	<u>14</u>	Amine, Chen, Steve, Michel, Arlos, Santos, Harry.	<u>7</u>	Kathleen, Bonnie, Annitah.	<u>3</u>
Total	<u>31</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>76</u>	Total	<u>19</u>	<u>19</u>	
Percentage	<u>40%</u>	<u>60%</u>	<u>100%</u>		<u>38</u>		

Results shown in table 03 indicate that women visibility is balanced to that of men through the tacked textbook's texts, women are even more present than men through pronouns. The textbook includes seventy-six (76) pronouns forty-five (45) of which are the feminine pronoun "she" while thirty-one (41) present the masculine pronoun "he". As far as proper nouns are concerned, the textbooks contains 38 names, nineteen (19) are male and the other nineteen (19) are female nouns.

Table 04:

Characters' Presence through Visuals My Book of English Middle School Year One

Unit	Pictures			Photographs		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
One	57	48	<u>105</u>	2	2	<u>4</u>
Two	77	50	<u>127</u>	4	1	<u>5</u>
Three	30	2	<u>32</u>	6	3	<u>9</u>
Four	65	33	<u>98</u>	9	7	<u>16</u>
Five	9	4	<u>13</u>	1	3	<u>4</u>
Total	<u>238</u>	<u>137</u>	<u>375</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>38</u>
Percentage	<u>63.46%</u>	<u>36.53%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>57.89%</u>	<u>42.10%</u>	<u>100%</u>

As indicated in table 04 the proportions of males and females in the visuals are rather different to those in the texts. Throughout the textbooks' illustrations, female characters appear less frequently than their male peers do. Concerning pictures, the textbook contains three hundred and seventy-five (375). Two hundred and thirty-eight (238) of them are male characters whereas one hundred and thirty-seven (137) are female characters. In photographs, we can see the same trend as in picture. The textbook includes thirty-eight (38) photographs, twenty-two (22) of which present male characters and sixteen (16) depict female characters.

4. Discussion

The textbook is an essential tool of educating and socializing, in that it transmits linguistic knowledge as well as cultural and social values. Thus, it is expected to be neutral when presenting the roles and responsibilities that males and females share in a society. This paper, therefore, aims at investigating the depiction of gender in the Second Generation EFL textbook designed for Algerian learners of the middle school year one. To achieve this objective, the textbook was quantitatively analysed using Michel' (1986) criteria which involve three categories: analysis of sexism in the social references to male and female characters, in both texts and illustrations; analysis of sexism in the activities of male and female characters and comparing the number of male and female characters who appear both in the body of the text and its illustrations.

Based on the analysis results displayed in table 01, it can be noticed that the males are equal to females in terms of family status. Man has been verbally identified as a father three (3) times and has been visually presented as father or

grandfather eighteen (18) times. In the same vein, the word mother is mentioned four (4) times and the visuals, which depict mother or grandmother, count for twenty-three (23). Overall, we can conclude that compared to men, women in My Book of English Middle School Year One have been fairly depicted in family status as mothers or grandmothers. However, when it comes to the area of occupation, we notice that men outnumber women thirty-two (32) to nineteen (19). Moreover, male characters in this domain have stereotypically portrayed as having thirteen (13) varieties of jobs: they are architect, carpenter, football player, surgeon, doctor, mechanic, vet, electrician, lawyer, nationalist ... But, jobs distributed to female characters fall in four (4) categories: teacher, painter, nurse and nationalist. This suggests that My Book of English Middle School Year One illustrates female characters with very restricted roles which may, as already mentioned, negatively affect the female learners' careers aspirations. These results do not contradict the findings of the several studies that have found "few references to the changes taking place in woman's roles" (Burstyn and Corrigan 1974, p.11). As far as level of employment is concerned, the obtained data indicate that male characters present 62.74% that is almost two thirds of the working population of the textbook. These statistics suggest that the EFL textbook analysed does not reflect the development of society towards equality between men and women.

After the analysis of sexism in the activities of male and female characters, we noticed that the textbook includes two (2) female characters and one (1) male character engaged in leisure activities. These findings prove that the gender differences are too small to be significant. The sportive activities in which male and female characters are portrayed were also analysed. The analysis results indicate that the proportion of male characters is higher than that of female characters in all the sportive activities suggested in the textbook. As shown in table 02, five (5) male characters are depicted practicing four (4) types of sports: football, basketball, swimming and handball, whereas only two (2) females are portrayed participating in one type of sports which is handball. These findings are in line with the study conducted by Ingeborg Bjerke et al where they conclude that "there clear tendency to show only men in by far the majority of sports, not only in weight-lifting but also in such disciplines as running and long-jumping" (Ingeborg Bjerke et al., 1983 cited in Michel 1986, p. 27). Based on these findings, we can conclude that the impression My Book of English Middle School Year One may give is that sport is a masculine domain.

As far visibility is concerned, we notice that the visibility proportion of males to females is equal throughout the textbook's texts, but great imbalance in appearance was detected in the visuals. Concerning appearance in texts, the obtained data show that of the seventy-six (76) third singular pronouns, forty-five (45) are feminine and thirty-one (31). In other words, the pronoun "she" constitutes 60% of all the third singular pronouns mentioned in the textbook. As for proper nouns, the textbook incorporates thirty-eight names. They are equally divided between both sexes: nineteen (19) are male nouns and the other nineteen (19) names are female. However, male characters are still the majority throughout the textbook's visuals. The number of pictures, which portray males,

amounts to two hundred and thirty-eight (238) that is 63.46% of the whole pictures included in the textbook depict male characters. In addition, there are thirty-eight (38) photographs; twenty-two (22) of them present males while sixteen (16) portray females. Previous studies in this regard show similar results. Miroiu (2004), for example, found that “The percentage of pictures illustrating girls/women are very low: 12.8%” (p.91).

All in all, the tackled textbook includes four hundred and thirteen (413) visuals; two hundred and sixty (260) are males whereas only one hundred and fifty-three (153) are females. To sum up there is more gender equality in the texts than in the images in terms of male and female characters visibility.

5. Conclusion

Previous studies in the field of gender presentation in teaching materials proved that gender stereotyping is verbally and visually reinforced in textbooks in Algeria and abroad which would lead us to hypothesize that the newly designed EFL textbook My Book of English Middle School Year One still, in a way or another, foster gender inequality. To test this hypothesis, a content analysis was carried out to determine the way male and female characters are treated in the tackled textbook. The findings are in support of the hypothesis that the content of the EFL textbook examined contains gender biased in many contexts. It was found that male characters are exclusively shown in domains such as agriculture, surgery, engineering and they are more frequently portrayed practicing sports than their female counterparts. Women are mainly engaged in teaching. Similarly, the results indicate that despite the fact that there is gender equality in the texts, with regard to the visuals, however, males count account for the larger proportion. To conclude, Burstyn and Corrigan (1974) insist that textbooks “provide one means of judging what a society wishes to pass on to its children” (p. 1). Hence, the question that could be raised here is: what sociocultural values shall we hand out to the next generation through teaching materials.

6. Recommendations

As previously mentioned, the underrepresentation of females in textbooks has a negative impact on the female learners who are always exposed to these textbooks. Therefore, recommendations are to be made to:

- One: textbooks writers. Incorporating more female references in all the economic, social, and political fields. Moreover, male and female characters should be equally depicted as having occupational roles. Last but not least, visibility proportions of males and females should be balanced in both texts and visuals.
- Two: teachers who should critically assess the contents of the textbooks they use and take into consideration the issue of gender representation.
- Three: researchers. This study covers only a content analysis which is based on scrutinizing texts and illustrations to discover the visibility and presentation of both sexes in the domain suggested in the textbook. Therefore, a further

research is needed through adopting other criteria of analysis with the focus on other aspects of sexism which were not encompassed in this paper.

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THE INCLUSION OF CULTURAL CONTENT IN CIVILIZATION COURSE CLASSES:
A PROCEDURE TO MOTIVATE STUDENTS OR FRUSTRATE THEM?

Abstract

The use of cultural content in EFL classes has recently driven a rising interest among language instructors. Yet, there are conflicting attitudes about the appropriate teaching strategies and classroom activities designed for classes as such. 67% of EFL instructors see these classes are mere attempts to develop linguistic competency while the rest, university lecturers particularly, see that a laser focus should be on cultural knowledge. They do believe that the mastery of language is secondary compared to critical thinking and textual analyzing making EFL classes more than a language hub for developing reading, writing and speaking. This eventually calls the content of culture-based lessons together with the relevant teaching techniques to inquiries. The course of civilization has incited talks about what relevant topics and teaching practices can help achieve the objectives of this course. The concern of this paper is to bridge the gap between the teachers' attitudes on what final objectives this course should target: developing the learners' linguistic ability, enriching their cultural knowledge or both. It aspires to refine the content of the course and share some of the best teaching practices. Surveying some education scholars' recommendations together with the latest teaching practices suitable for this kind of classes might help speculate what might wholly turn civilization class around. A survey is additionally conducted to find out what might make civilization course very appealing. This attempt is significant in the sense it pinpoints the importance of cultural content in teaching English as an international language, and its pivotal role in diversifying teaching materials and motivating learners if handled appropriately.

Key words: Cultural Content; ELT material; Linguistic skills; teaching strategies.

1. Introduction

In many departments of English, the course of civilization is theoretically meant to develop the learners' cultural and linguistic skills. Learners are supposed to acquire English and explore its culture dealing with a range of topics and tasks using a blend of teaching practices. Yet, the scope of the course and the way it is taught are still unclear. Many lecturers undermine language usage despite the fact that culture and language are inseparable. Working on the same

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topics and tasks made EFL classes more challenging in the sense that these classes lack variety. In the case of *British civilization course*, the whole content is limited to historical events making the course less varied and less captivating. More than that, classes as these provide few opportunities for students to harness their language skills. In this vein, some EFL instructors noticed that teaching the history of Britain would neither develop the students' language skills nor provide a broad image of English culture for a number of reasons. Thus, it is high time to rethink of motivation, classroom activities, classroom settings and more specifically textual selections. It is worth mentioning that historical textual analyses without language tasks remain insufficient for meeting the final outcomes of the course. Furthermore, EFL instructors, mainly non-native speaker teachers, are not there to reinforce foreign values; they are not there to foster British cultural ideals among their students, but teach English and its culture in context (Kachru, 1992). The scope of the course seems inappropriate. Professionals are therefore invited to define what final objectives the content should arrive at and what effective teaching methods should be used to anticipate and motivate students.

Culture is a rich outlet of teaching resources that language instructors and syllabus designers often focus on. Its mutual connection to human behavior, the realm of ideas, beliefs and attitudes make it a solid platform for variety and motivation. It acts as a powerful magnet that still drives the learners' interests and gets them immensely involved into learning (Brown, 1994, p.165) Topics of all kinds and for all grades can adequately offer all that instructors are looking for to achieve their objectives. Learners of English are no exception; they are exposed to diverse situations, which can help them explore different language exponents and cultural elements. Lessons about people, history, geography, education, work, science, technology, nature, economy, art and many others are all meant to broaden the learners' cultural knowledge. Thus, teaching culture becomes inevitable, exciting and above all rewarding, mainly when teaching practices are appropriately implemented. Yet, *British civilization course* is utterly mishandled due to the absence of a clear assumption about the way to use cultural content as well as the relevant methodology.

As far the results of the questionnaire are concerned, the challenges above can be rendered to the term "**culture**" itself. The vagueness of culture, as a term, makes it a bit hard to incorporate cultural information into EFL classes. Many EFL instructors, non-native speaker ones in this case, are running into obstacles that they cannot easily get over. Their students are often uncooperative and unable to respond to their drills and attempts to engage them because of many reasons, particularly instructional. In fact, teachers are encouraged to adopt change in their classes, to make use of a variety of activities, but a lot of them undermine those recommendations. More specifically, their objectives are too

general, if not inaccurate; their classroom activities are usually not varied, if not ill planned. This made *civilization course* plainly overwhelming. Eventually, there are slim chances to develop language skills. More than that, there is no space for assessing the learners' progress despite the fact that they are learning a foreign language carrying with it a cultural dimension. It could be assumed that the learners' reluctance to cooperate in some *civilization course* classes results from the conflicting styles used in teaching culture. It's true that the students' limited vocabulary, grammar unawareness, difficulties in writing and many other language disabilities is another contributing factor to their reluctance, but EFL teachers need to be aware of the effective styles in teaching culture. In fact, the focus on history, narration and storytelling style left no space for assessing the students' linguistic abilities. Thus, it is very important to consider these challenges so as to avoid frustration among learners. It is needed to consider the concept of culture, its indispensable role in class and more importantly, the useful techniques to assemble culture and language in *civilization course* turning these classes into vibrant cultural and linguistic meetings.

2. Literature Review

A review of literature has shown that there is a common agreement upon the usefulness of cultural content in EFL classrooms. In fact, there is a bet on how mutual culture and language are related making "culture" more than a fifth skill (Kramsch, 1993). Claire Kramsch, for instance, vigorously argues that cultural information is inevitable when it comes to learning a new language. The review has also shown that "teaching English" doesn't mean teaching British or American culture; hence, there is no need to internalize the cultural norms of native speakers of the language (Kachru, 1992). EFL instructors are therefore encouraged to handle "culture" sensitively and appropriately in favour of linguistic and cultural competencies taking into account local culture. In the same sense, "culture" should be seen as a rich outlet of all that might contribute to both variety and motivation. Another review has revealed that it's necessary to tailor teaching techniques according to broad objectives. Sandra Lee Mckay insists on rethinking of both tasks and goals, which serve mutual understanding, accommodation, cultural tolerance and other broad objectives (Mckay, 2003). It therefore becomes advisable to refine the teaching practices to boost EFL instructors' awareness of what current strategies, procedures, if not relevant tasks, are ideal for culture-based courses.

3. Methodology

For the methodology, this paper is utterly based on content analyses. This means that any statement will be drawn from academic works that are relevant to the topic of this study. With this analytical approach, I did proceed by identifying what is wrong with the teaching of civilization course at the *University of Laghouat, in Algeria*, making a great emphasis on the complexities of culture-

based lessons as well as the teaching strategies, which are common among the lecturers at this university. This research involves talking to in-service lecturers about ways to incorporate cultural information into ELT materials, gathering ministerial documents or the department's manuals related to the teaching of this course, and reading some the lecturers' handouts meant to support the students' understanding. The major part of this research was a questionnaire given to forty students from two different groups. They were of different linguistic and cultural abilities, but they all attended civilization course at *the University of Laghouat*. As for additional instruments of this research, I converted the collected data and results into pie charts and bar graphs to have a comprehensive view of what made civilization courses less engaging. Describing facts might additionally help figure out the chief defects that EFL instructors have to avoid when integrating cultural content to their classroom tasks.

4. Results

Based on the findings of the survey, this research reveals that there a misconception of the term "culture" the fact that made EFL materials less varied and less engaging. The bulk of EFL teachers affirm that culture and language are complementary in EFL classrooms, but they neither diversify their topics nor their classroom tasks. Cultural content is central to motivation and variety for the wide range of both topics and activities it can offer to EFL materials. Yet, it is worth mentioning that the complexity of culture can pose certain difficulties or rather challenges that educators, professionals and particularly EFL teachers need to mind when integrating culture into classes. EFL instructors are no longer language facilitators, but mediators between languages and cultures. In this vein, they need to fully comprehend what culture is, what measures and implications cultural content can bring to their EFL classrooms. They need to rethink of varied tasks and set broad objectives as tolerating differences, mutual understanding, accommodation and so forth.

The findings of the survey have also shown the effects of misunderstanding the way culture based courses are treated. The superiority of English and its culture can be plainly seen in most of ELT materials giving less chance for local cultural content in both topics and classroom activities. Smith maintains that in the acquisition of an international language, the goal of learning is to enable learning to communicate their ideas and culture effectively. It is therefore advisable to be aware of recent strategies that properly serve the objectives described above. Being familiar with new arrangements in class, planning for new activities and using different aids, particularly those which are part of the learners' cultural knowledge, would certainly help meet better results. Cultural content is therefore so sensitive that it needs careful treatment, mainly in non-native speaker contexts. EFL teachers are not supposed to focus on narration and story-telling; they need to diversify and tailor their activities according to

local culture as they are increasingly becoming mediators more than language facilitators. Cultural content should serve broad objectives as breaking stereotypes and fostering mutual understanding.

5. Discussion

Discussing the teaching of British civilization, *at the University of Laghouat*, required me to focus on three main ideas, namely the nature of the cultural content, the challenges of incorporating cultural information, particularly in non-native speaker context, and the remedies, which might turn this class around.

5.1. An Overview on Language and Culture in EFL Classrooms

In the last decades of the twentieth century, English has exceptionally generated the features of an international language that has triumphed the remaining languages of the globe: it has been on a march to victory thanks to couple of incentives (Graddol, 2006, p.58). The increasing number of its users explains its giant leap towards linguistic superiority making excellence in English a must to get ahead not only in the realm of academia, but in life as well. After years of learning, a lot managed to gain a complete command of grammar rules and syntactic structures; they have remarkably developed a degree of proficiency, which becomes no longer determined by birth, but rather by the fact of being able to use language effectively (Mckay, 2003). In addition to colleges and universities, where English is adopted as a compulsory course or a language of instruction, English has dominated the scene of institutional platforms, scientific research, travel tours, commercial deals and many other industrial activities demonstrating its necessity for achievements in different sectors. Recently, it stepped to another phase of superiority when learners extended their interests to more than grammar and syntax. Learners become eager to know about beliefs, festivals, lifestyles and all that concerns English culture asserting that learning language cannot be disassociated from culture (Byram, 1999). In other words, the cumulative exposure to English being spoken or written has worked its way on learners' needs and turned their concern to exploring beliefs, thoughts and manners rather than pure linguistic skills.

In EFL classrooms, instructors are becoming more concerned about the form and the content of their teaching materials. In many Algerian universities, courses such as *British civilization* tend to develop the students' linguistic abilities through a variety of language tasks, particularly reading and writing. Besides language skills, these courses tend to enrich the students' cultural knowledge: Learners are supposed to know about Britain's physical features, historical key events, the country's system of government, celebrations, festivals and many other topics providing a high potential in developing a thorough vision about the UK. They might additionally come across numerous idioms, slangs and even details only the natives know. By the end of these sessions, learners might

become linguistically and culturally aware of what to say or how to act in a given situation though they have never been to the UK realizing the broadest objective of teaching culture: Awareness and understanding. “A *super goal for the teaching of culture is that all students will develop the cultural understanding, attitudes, and performance skills needed to function appropriately within a segment of another society and to communicate with people socialized in that culture*” (Steely, 2003, p.29). Yet, misinterpreting what culture is and mishandling the techniques used in integrating culture in classes have caused a number of challenges among students, mainly cultural. The misuse of teaching styles has additionally influenced the whole learning process making students wholly frustrated and less productive. Thus, it is high time to see culture related courses in the same context as teaching language. In other words, there should be strong emphasis on careful plans with a variety of activities giving learners more opportunities to practice and produce. Accordingly, teachers need to be appealing to their students and more exactly, what might go in accordance with the local culture.

To examine the way *British civilization* course is handled, I conducted a survey on the contents of the course as well as the tasks planned to meet the students’ needs. In 2011, due to several changes, both internal and external, the ministerial committees opted for the installment of LMD system in Algerian universities. An overall curriculum was subsequently introduced bringing a set of transformations in terms of courses, their objectives and even their content, but it’s worth mentioning that they were too vague. There is some evidence that the teaching of *British civilization course* is a bit overwhelming as neither its content nor the practices used in teaching it seem to be appropriate. Some EFL instructors are teaching British culture in context without veiling linguistic skills in English. Their great awareness of various teaching styles and more importantly, how to incorporate culture in class helped their students enhance their cultural and linguistic skills. For them, meaningful structures, communicative procedures and manageable quantities are important to proceed a culture-based lesson. Other EFL instructors, on the other hand, believe that *British civilization course* should meet pure cultural endings. In fact, they prioritize the development of critical thinking and deep understanding although they undermine language usage. They often dominate all that happens in class making little chance for students to produce. More than that, students might be asked to undertake assessments that evaluate their language skills rather than their cultural knowledge the thing that seems paradoxical. These conflicting teaching styles have certainly set the ground for refining the way *British civilization course* should be taught thinking of balance between linguistic competency and cultural knowledge. In regards to the students’ expectations, I asked 40 students to find out what makes this course captivating. This might also

lead to refining ELT materials or adopting new teaching styles. 59% of the students asserted that they expected a content that would develop their English and help explore British culture at the same time. They reported that cultural knowledge and language competence should go hand in hand in this class (See **Figure one**). This advocates that cultural information is central to engaging students into the learning process. Hence, EFL instructors are invited to adjust the content of this course to appeal for their students' interests. More importantly, they need to view culture in its broadest meaning and as a rich outlet for teaching resources.



Figure 1:
Linguistic Skills versus Cultural Knowledge

Being unaware of the teaching practices relevant to teaching culture and having a broad vision about the concept of “culture” might not help turn the course of *British civilization* around. The survey has shown that “*history*” dominates most of teachers’ lectures, *at the University of Laghouat*. Nowadays, many EFL teachers use “culture” in its limited description: historical events and biographies. They do usually provide students with a series of facts without giving a reason behind their selection of texts or tasks. Additionally, these tasks often undermine language usage making little or no focus on grammar rules, pronunciation and writing styles though practice is efficient for language learners. The teaching style has frustrated many students. It’s high time to see “Culture” from another perspective to serve the cultural and linguistic affinities language learners are looking for. Culture is about symbolic and learned aspects of human society. This includes language, custom, conventions and all that might distinguish human behaviour from other primates. Differences in beliefs, attitudes, tastes, dress, manners and practices can help distinguish certain social groups from certain others stating that culture is a way of life too (Hill and

Tuner, 2006, p.92). In EFL contexts, a selection of topics and a variety of are needed to motivate students. *“When teaching English as an international language, educators should recognize the value of including topics that deal with the local culture, support the selection of a methodology that is appropriate to the local educational context, and recognize the strengths of bilingual teachers of English”* (Mckay, 2003). I additionally tried to see whether developing cultural knowledge is important or learning British history is. 80% of the participants answered that it history is less important than developing cultural knowledge. (See Figure 2). This is another call for reviewing the content of the course in a way to meet the students’ cultural and linguistic interests. The variety of themes and topics can undoubtedly contribute the objectives above.

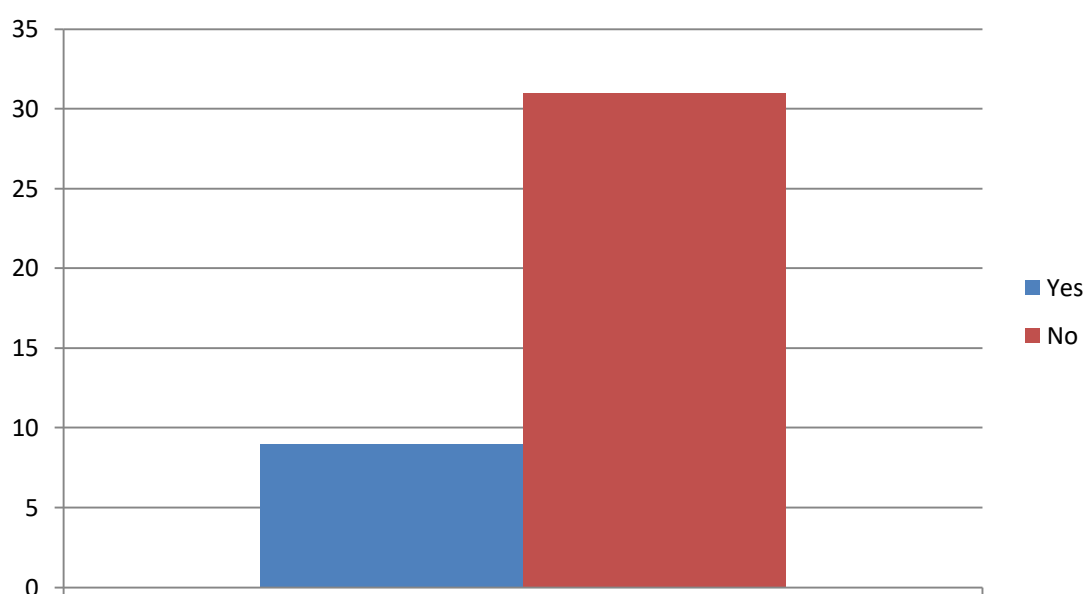


Figure 2: British Civilisation Course and British History

5.2. Cultural Information and the Learners’ Skills:

Teaching culture to EFL learners plays a major role in meeting the ever-increasing interests of learners. If used conveniently, cultural content can be of a paramount importance for the learning process. In fact, it supplies the teachers’ needs for resources, classroom tasks and activities. Culture is a reliable source of motivation in the sense that it exhibits a host of themes, thoughts and even products. Considering language teaching, it stimulates the learners’ production, or rather language expression (Sun, 2013, 371). Learners can discuss, compare, express their views, illustrate and defend their ideas having a bunch of ways and means to do so. Accordingly, the potential to enhance the students’ linguistic ability is incidentally considerable. For these reasons, EFL teachers are invited to

teach culture in context. They are supposed to blur that overwhelming line between teaching culture and teaching language taking into account appropriate teaching styles, cultural background of language usage as well as culturally based linguistic differences to avoid any sort of misunderstanding or prejudices (Alptekin, 2002). In the case of *British civilization course*, understanding British culture rests upon varied topics and activities to let students communicate their ideas and culture to others effectively (Smith, 1976). I tried to understand what matters in British civilization course: cultural knowledge or linguistic ability. 65% of the respondents reported that they strongly agree and that culture and language are closely entwined with one another (See **Figure three**).

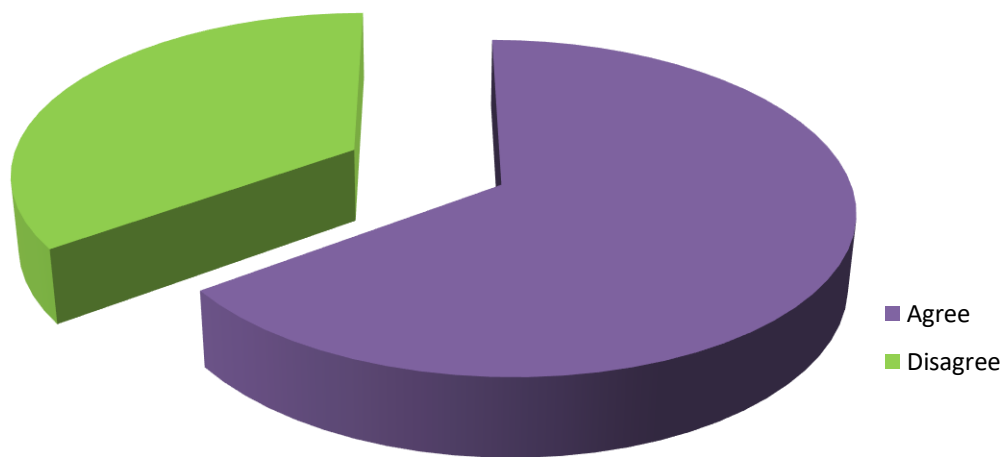


Figure3:
Linguistic Performance and Cultural knowledge are of Equal Importance.

Apart from its contribution to the learning process, in general, and the variety of the ELT materials, in particular, the inclusion of cultural content can help achieve broad objectives. Learning a foreign language means crossing borders and exploring regional differences, new tastes and values (Bailey, 1991). Teaching culture should be tailored for promoting bi-cultural and multi-cultural understanding. Cultural content should appeal for tolerance, mutual appreciation and honourable co-existence for peace, harmony, progress and prosperity. These conventional cultural values should be pinpointed to woo and convince learners across language communities that the main objective of teaching culture understanding. Students would progressively learn new patterns of judgments about the appropriateness and rightness of native ways; they would develop the

necessary skills to evaluate, organize information, refine generalizations and feed their intellectual curiosity. They would become aware of what is acceptable, what is not, what is conventional, what is rude in other cultures and so forth. Cultural content is so vital that it helps bridge the gap between cultures and breaks stereotypes. It helps broaden the learners' assumptions when they correct or assert their convictions. "*One culture may determine that snapping fingers to call a waiter is appropriate, whereas another may consider this gesture rude*" (Levine, 1993). Yet, cultural content, though vital, may pose a couple of challenges very hard to overcome. Things might go wrong when incorporating culture into classroom activities if being unaware of teaching methods, language usage, regional cultural paradigms and other related issues (Kramsch, 1998).

This research has unfortunately shown that the common teaching model used in this course is teacher centered style. This kind of instruction does not allow students control or direct their own learning. As for classroom management, final objectives aren't clearly stated and tasks are partly irrelevant. Learners, in classes like these, spend hours listening to their teachers with little or no chance to respond or reflect on the tasks. More than that, their learning experiences are not assessed allowing less chance to measure their success or failure. I tried to find out whether *British civilization course* needs new adjustments or not. 62.25% did affirm that their challenges or rather difficulties are particularly rendered to the teaching styles used. In fact, they collectively agreed on the necessity to amend (**See Figure Four**). Without proper teaching styles, cultural content can be less engaging, if not frustrating. This necessitates EFL instructors and lecturers to rethink of both strategies and materials to heighten their learners' motivation.

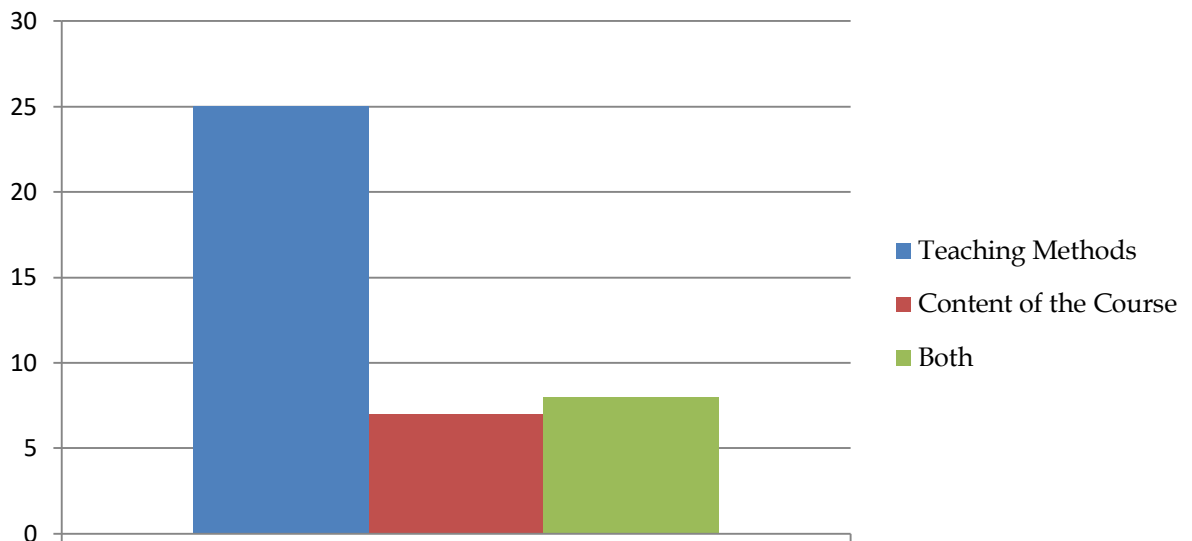


Figure 4: The kind of Changes British Civilisation Course needs

5.3 Refining Culture-based Courses

Reviewing ELT materials should be an on-going habit among EFL instructors. This helps spot what might go wrong with the teachers' selections in terms of both topics and tasks. When integrating cultural content, EFL instructors are supposed to be very selective. They need to be aware of how appropriate their cultural content is. Clarity means having a full image of what cultural backgrounds they belong to, what might offend or awaken their interest, as Englebert describes: "...to teach a foreign language is also to teach a foreign culture, and it is important to be sensitive to the fact that our students, our colleagues, our administrators do not share all of our cultural paradigms." (Engelbert, 2004). Topics of random choice such as politics, religion, sex, social class and many others might not be of a great interest; they may violate the ideals of some learners unlike others; they may cause hurt and misunderstanding (Patricia, 1997). They might cause reluctance to cooperate with the teacher's cues, questions and attempts to engage students. Thus, teachers are expected to be well informed about the cultural information they want incorporate into their material: its compliance with the students' local culture, its value for their knowledge and the way it would serve the final outcomes of the lesson. Teachers are invited to pre-teach culture and predict what might hinder the progress of their lectures before starting their classes. This often includes thinking of the main phases of lessons, the resources to be used and the procedures they will perform.

Teaching English culture in context should go in harmony with teaching English. EFL teachers should adopt the appropriate teaching strategies to proceed culture related lessons, and here is a number of common styles. The **PPP**¹ type of lessons goes through three phases that explain all that occurs in class. After short presentations, students are given the chance to practice and express their ideas; they then start working on the language with their teacher or their peers. Yet, there are some limitations when it comes to culture based lessons. Though widely used, this type of lessons doesn't appeal to humanistic or learner-centered needs. It starts from no knowledge, through highly restricted sentence-based utterances and on to immediate production the thing that makes the whole process partly unsuitable for teaching culture.” (Harmer, 2007, p.64). Students can do nothing without their teachers; they remain helpless, especially adequate guidance is often missing. Students need to understand the procedures they would go through and the objectives they would achieve in reference to the new language exponents. Instead, other alternatives to the **PPP** framework are suggested to remedy these defects. The “*deep end strategy*” turns the whole procedure on its head as if you, as a teacher, throw your students at a deep end. Doing so, teachers encourage their students to produce; they will clearly identify the kind of problems their learners are having, and then return to either presentation or practice phases. There are still other variations and alternatives as **ESA**² and **TPR**³, which tend to enable students acquire new items, carry out commands and, may be, go on advanced activities. These aim at developing different skills when interacting with peers or solving problems. However, the use of these strategies would not work perfectly unless procedures are explained meticulously.

True that being aware of teaching strategies is highly recommended, but additional managerial tips might introduce positive changes to this kind of classes. This includes thinking of interesting topics, engaging tasks and appropriate arrangements. At first, the incorporation of recent topics addressing the learners' interests is a key to motivation. Undoubtedly, varied themes such as traveling, immigration, leadership, talents, sporting events, stories, famous figures and many others would engage students and allow them act their age. Then, thinking of new arrangements in class is of a great value for the progress of lesson phases. Group or pair work can help students explore differences,

¹ A teaching procedure which grew out of structural- situational teaching in which the teacher presents a situation and the language. The students then practice the new language, before they go to produce the language for themselves. Harmer, J. (2007). *How to Teach English*. Harlow, England: Pearson Longman

² Stands for Engage, Study and Activate: The three elements that should be present in a teaching sequence.

³ Total physical response is a language teaching method based on the coordination of language and physical movement. In TPR, instructors give commands to students in the target language, and students respond with whole-body actions. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Total_physical_response

similarities and compare their newly established sets within the safety of the group. Culture assimilators, newspaper articles, projected media, drama and other procedures would motivate students and help them consolidate several skills, especially if given the chance to reflect and evaluate the learning experience. These teaching techniques might help lessen challenges and difficulties that characterize this kind of classes, but it doesn't mean that they are ideal because the term "culture" is too complex. Language teachers cannot teach culture only when proper training in instructional methods is fully understood (Hughes, 1986). Briefly, it could be said that successful culture-based lessons rest upon a combination of practices: Careful planning, engaging content and more importantly, great awareness of useful instructional strategies and techniques.

5. Conclusion

English has ultimately triumphed several languages of the world as it becomes no longer connected to English speaking countries (Cook, 1999). Individuals from different parts of the world became keenly interested in learning the language for academic, economic and even cultural factors. A lot want to have access to science, get ahead in business, travel and explore the mysteries of other cultures. These factors, and indubitably many others, revived EFL industry, in general. They transformed the content of courses in a way to appeal for the students' interests. Yet, English has worked its way on the learners' mindset, and a lot of them extended their interests to more than pure linguistic affinities. Many students became really into learning new sets of cultural values, ideals and pattern of judgments that belong to target culture. In fact, culture becomes an important outlet of resources, tasks and all that might be useful for the learning process making it a vital part of EFL classes. These changes in interests influenced the way some culture based courses are taught; they called the content of tasks and strategies used in these EFL classes to inquiries. Some EFL instructors put the emphasis on linguistic competencies unlike many others who deliberately ignore language usage and then prioritize cultural awareness. Teaching culture might be demanding and frustrating in some settings. This might occur only when teachers mishandle the concept of culture or the way it should be taught. Recently, culture based courses are under constant reviews and changes that aim at nothing, but engaging students and developing their skills making the inclusion of cultural content in EFL classes so sensitive.

When incorporating cultural information, teachers have to think of tasks and activities that involve the learners as doers in the learning process. *Participatory learning* is arguably the best approach to making culture more appealing to learners of English as a Foreign Language. This could involve engaging activities as culture assimilators, culture capsule projected media and

many other different tasks. In the same vein, learners can be given practical assignments for class demonstration, open discussion and other group work tasks, which would turn culture based class around. A variety of procedures can serve both cultural and linguistic outcomes. This could involve careful selection of what is conventional, interesting and ideal for the students'. In the case of **British studies course**, the topic of history is only one part of culture, and there should be additional themes and tasks that anticipate students as it is methodologically wrong to use one theme and one type of activities the whole academic year. It is also important to mind that teaching culture is a bit hard, mainly when it comes to two cultures: target and local. Without any doubt, the learners' culture must be brought to the fore. This is very necessary because the misuse of terms or patterns in describing any form of the learner's culture could result in unpalatable experience. Balance is therefore needed. Taboos, social class and sex are often non-starters. They are sure-fire ways to cause misunderstandings and hurt feelings. Instead, teachers should carefully choose their topics; they should not advocate foreign values or focus on target culture. They are supposed to involve themes and tasks that address the students' cultural background and let them compare, contrast, reflect, analyze and think critically. It is agreed that when learners participate actively in the learning process, learning becomes very exciting and rewarding. In the end, **British civilization class** will be a true chance for students to develop different individual skills if teaching strategies are used appropriately and cultural content is handled conveniently.

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**CRITICS' RECEPTION AND READERS' RESPONSE TO WILLIAM FAULKNER'S
ABSALOM, ABSALOM! AND MARGARET MITCHELL'S *GONE WITH THE WIND*****Abstract**

This paper goes back to the first half of the twentieth century aiming to trace the novelistic representations of one of America's most memorable wars: the Civil War. In William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* and Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind*, the antebellum south is depicted domestically, culturally and historically in ways that simultaneously evoke and contradict each other. By contrasting the two novels' conceptualizations of the Old South, the present research examines how this factor contributed_ if not determined_ their dissimilar receptions by critics and readers as well. Thus, it is concerned with the literary history of the two works and it namely relies on Hans Robert Jauss' concepts of "horizon of expectations" and "horizontal change" in its interpretation of readers' and critics' reactions towards the two novels.

Keywords: Antebellum South, Margaret Mitchell, Reader-response, Reception, William Faulkner.

1. Introduction

The South, with its visions, tales and myths, was _and still is_ a dominant subject in the American culture. Southern literature, standing in equal height to history, contributed in shaping and maintaining this mystic preoccupation with a region that has arguably claimed an up-high stature along the centuries. The year 1936 is a monumental mark in the history of regional_ and maybe universal_ literature thanks to the publishing of two distinguished novels. Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind* is one of the most popular novels that came out of the South. It was published in June and it immediately became the public's favorite, selling over a million copies by the end of the year. A few months later, William Faulkner witnessed the release of his *Absalom, Absalom!* which was to become one of the most critically-acclaimed literary creations of the whole renaissance. Astoundingly, both novels position the Antebellum South and the Civil War at the very core of their concerns; yet, the responses they evoked seem to suggest the very opposite. Their receptions could not be more different.

While *Gone With the Wind* enjoyed unparalleled boosting popularity that broke many sale records, *Absalom, Absalom!* went out of print. But while renowned critics (with their essays appearing in famous literary journals such as New York Review of Books, American Literature, etc.) were attempting to come up with satisfactory analyses of Faulkner's much-discussed work, these same critics would not even stop to credit Mitchell the honor of producing a highbrow literature. One novel received thick analytical volumes in response the other was

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welcomed with heated public applause. Mitchell's epic novel is one of "the country's most celebrated and widely adored—and, in some cases, thoroughly reviled—literary phenomena" but *Absalom, Absalom!* is considered as Faulkner's "most brilliant achievement" whereby he was proved "a master of the tragic" (Ryan, 2008, p. 1; Brooks, 1978, p. 265; Jacobs, 1973, p. 318). On the one hand, Richard H. King when asked to name "the leading Southern historian", though he had read W. J. Cash and C. Vann Woodward, his immediate reply was "William Faulkner" (King, 1980, p.vii). This denotes Faulkner's renowned position as a novelist who contributed to the shaping and preserving of the Southern collective memory. On the other hand, Don H. Doyle asserts that "against a mountain of journals, books, conference papers, and courses on the history of the American South, Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind*, has arguably done far more to shape popular understanding, or misunderstanding, of the South and its past" (Doyle, 2015, p.79). So obviously, both productions have a huge impact on the perception of the Southern history and the understanding of its past. However, their standings are not identical. In this regard, Malcolm Cowley denotes *Gone With the Wind* as "an encyclopedia of the plantation legend" (Cowley, 1999, p. 314). Mitchell's work is "regarded as the undisputed Ur-text"; in other words, it is hard to evade because it "has influenced the form, the conventions, the archetypes, and the themes" of many subsequent portrayals of the Old South (Ryan, 2008, p. 186). Equally, Douglas L. Mitchell states that "Faulkner challenged the plantation legend by creating a different sort of planter archetype" (Mitchell D. 2008, p.140). This leads one to assume, as Hobson did, that the two works had a "dramatically different" fate though they were "set in the same time period, and treating many of the same subjects, including the Civil War, the plantation South, and decline and fall" (Hobson, 2003, p. 5). Carolyn Porter's article, which is a landmark commentary on the reception of the two novels, considers this paradox. In her concluding words, she states: "whereas Mitchell's popularity reflects how she turned her story of the South into an American romance, Faulkner's novel turned the American success story of Sutpen into a racial tragedy that few foresaw in 1936 as a national dilemma" (Porter, 2009, p. 710). This encapsulates the stark contrast between the two novels. Though many studies were devoted to compare the two texts, none contrasted their reception with reference to their different conceptualizations of the Antebellum South. The case being so opens a wide gate for investigating the hows and whys behind such problematic.

The present research deals with the reception of *Absalom, Absalom!* and *Gone With the Wind* by critics and readers. It analyses the responses of readers and critics in the light of Hans Robert Jauss' Aesthetics of Reception. It begins with a synoptic overview of the literary context in which the two novels have been received *i.e.* the horizon of expectations. So, it provides an account of the conventions and norms that prevailed literary works and established the so-called "myth of the Old South" or "Plantation Legend". Besides, it relates this "horizon of expectations" to the public's response towards the two novels. Then it examines critics' reception in relation to the concept of "horizontal change" and how the two works in question either confirmed expectations or broke them.

2. The Horizon of Expectations

Since the backbone of the study is Jauss' theory "Aesthetics of Reception" and since *Absalom, Absalom!* and *Gone With the Wind* are primarily preoccupied with the conception of the Antebellum South; analyzing the novels' reception implies a careful examination of the literary context in which readers received the two works. In other words, studying these novels' reception requires a profound scrutiny of the way the Antebellum South was seen and portrayed in preceding and contemporary literary works.

A literary work, according to Jauss, predisposes "its audience to a very specific kind of reception by announcements, overt and covert signals, familiar characteristics, or implicit allusions"; this means that a literary work is never read in "an informational vacuum" and is often conceived vis-à-vis former experiences and familiarity with other works (Jauss, 1982, p. 22). Once the text is situated within its literary context, the odds of its reception become clear. So, the way readers react to a given text is relatively bound to their prior experiences with other texts. He asserts that a text "awakens memories of that which was already read, brings the reader to a specific emotional attitude, and with its beginning arouses expectations for the 'middle and end' " (Jauss, 1982, p. 22). As a given text is placed within a certain literary realm or an artistic rubric, it accumulates its meaning for readers in relationship with other texts that share the same concerns or similar features. So, the public readers who received *Absalom, Absalom!* and *Gone With the Wind* at their immediate publication were certainly influenced by some "specific rules of the genre or type of text" (Jauss, 1982, p. 22). In this regard, we shall begin with a synoptic overview about the conception of the Old South in the collective consciousness *i.e.* the Plantation Tradition in order to pave the way for an accurate understanding and contextualization of *Absalom, Absalom!* and *Gone With the Wind*.

The South "occupies a central place in the American imagination" through a range of mythological representations of the region (Wilson, 2006, p. xvii). That is why the field of Southern studies is rich with various myths that shape the southerners' conception of the South. Some of these are: the Southern Frontier, the Old South, the Solid South, the Sun Belt, the Benighted South, etc. These are but a few of the many "souths" that southerners believe in. In this paper, following suit of the novels' content, we are concerned with the myth of the Old South or "the Plantation Legend". The antebellum history of the South banked on cotton plantations and so the generations that came after the war were nurtured on the myth of the Lost Cause which looked beyond the defeat to "the ol' good days" in nostalgia. The Old South with all its mythical qualities and archetypes remains a central component in many southerners' self-identification since it became part of their collective consciousness. The image, more or less, corresponds to the following: in a beautiful white mansion, on the skirts of a beautiful bygone time, there lived an unfailingly graceful gentleman under the noble shelter of whom swayed a delicate wife in her fragranced hoofs softly tending kids and watching over happy darkies who joyfully work the blooming fields. The entire image is one of idyllic sanctuary into which nothing intrude but grand balls, moonlight and magnolia. Honor, loyalty, and truth are the moral

guidelines that the Old South lived by, guidelines that “Yankees” were unable to understand, future generations unable to picture and Southerners unable to let go of. A much-lamented brought-to-dust civilization that shines still even amidst the ashes.

In the field of Southern studies, scholars have generally regarded Thomas Nelson Page’s *In Ole Virginia* as the epitome of plantation fiction. It has been read as the recreation of a dead civilization generating mythical qualities and along with the works of Joel Chandler Harris and others it made up the core of the Plantation Tradition. In 1887 Page published his landmark collection of stories which gathered in them the most significant characteristics and features of Plantation Literature. Eliza Andrews’ book *The War-Time Journal of a Georgia Girl, 1864-1865* provides a synoptic overview of the myth of the Old South which can be summarized in the following points:

- The Antebellum South was a place of great peace and beauty inhabited by very proud and loyal southerners.
- The plantation life was like a hierarchal patriarchal system in which the benevolent aristocracy possessed the wealth and wisely exercised the political power (white males over blacks and females).
- Southern women were the epitome of womanhood; Southern men were the knights of 19th-century America.
- The African Americans led a happier and better life under slavery than as freed men.
- The South would have prospered more if not for Northern aggression and so ironically their defeat is a triumph and vindication of their lifestyle. (Andrews, 1997)

Consequently, 1936-readers approached *Absalom, Absalom!* and *Gone With the Wind* with a set of expectations based on prior familiarity with other texts basically and essentially the Plantation Tradition which had a paramount role in the shaping of collective conception of the South. Along similar lines, Richard H. King explains that:

The writers and intellectuals of the South after the late 1920s were engaged in an attempt to come to terms not only with the inherited values of the southern tradition but also with a certain way of perceiving and dealing with the past, what Nietzsche called ‘monumental’ historical consciousness” (King,1980, p.7)

Put differently, authors of Southern Renaissance tended to scrutinize the influx of the “modern” world upon their Old South; some struggling to keep it intact and others challenging its creeds out-rightly. Yet, both were well-aware of the constellation of myths, archetypes and dogmas that made up the historical consciousness of southerners and its indelible ramifications upon the present.

2.1. *Gone With the Wind* Meeting Expectations

Broadly speaking, a novel is deemed popular through a set of criteria: the number of copies sold, movie adaptations, translations, a remarkable presence in social media and in some cases its continuation through sequels. By analogy,

Gone With the Wind is undoubtedly a rare bestseller that confoundingly keeps selling. Its cinematic adaptation by David O. Selznick hyper-boosted its popularity until it squarely deserved to be described as “an odyssey from Atlanta to Hollywood”. Moreover, this blockbuster was translated into more than 40 languages and made into a number of sequels and parodies such as *Scarlett*, *Rhett Butler’s People* and *The Wind Done Gone*.

In analyzing the conceptualization of the Antebellum South, one notices that *Gone with the Wind*’s major concern is its picturing of the Old South. The painstaking portrayal of the southern belle, the careful sketching of southern masculinity with all its debonair premises, the mesmerizing documentation of the war and its zealous gore, and above all its depiction of a quasi-perfect relationship between blacks and whites are all distinctive features leisurely found throughout plantation literature. Consequently, what appealed to readers was not the language or the style_ readers were not even discouraged by the lengthy narrative_ it was simply the content. What drew readers, by millions, to the novel was its content which is so familiar and yet unfailingly enchanting. Evelyn Scott commented that the novel gave people their story “through Southern eyes exclusively...with the bias of passionate regionalism” (Scott, 1999, p. 314). Readers longed to know about their past and most probably to know what they carve to know and so Mitchell’s epic struck a chord. Besides, as Fox-Genovese remarks, “the Southern stories of fathers and lullabies of mothers” fed the public enthusiasm for tales of heroism and gentility in an age that offered little possibility for heroism, honor, and respectability. During the Great Depression, many suffered mental breakdown because they could not cope in a world of insolent materialism; so they found refuge in their ancestors’ glorious old days. Life in the Antebellum South, the ideals of resistance and courage against adversity, offered a stark contrast to the situation that most Americans knew during the Great Depression (Fox-Genovese, 1981, p. 397). Perpetuating an old tradition, *Gone With the Wind* satisfied and nurtured their desire to believe in a romantic past that is so much better than their capitalist greedy present. The public which was “a little surfeited with wistful reminiscence of the cape-Jessamine side of it” found a pleasant sanctuary in the novel’s gloriously-appealing tone (Benét, 1999, p. 314).

At large, *Gone With the Wind* though not a magnum opus in the literary realm it remains one of the major works in Southern American literature and even universal one as far as readability is concerned. The old tradition that was initiated around 1830s with Thomas Nelson Page, John Pendleton Kennedy, William A. Caruthers, William Gilmore Simms and others “grew in fulsome hyperbole until” it reached “the culmination and zenith with *Gone With the Wind*” (Bohner, 1961, p. 58). The works of these authors revolved around both historical and domestic events that took place in the Deep South sometime in the ceaselessly-born-back past; being romances by definition they established gradually _and buoyantly_ a number of myths and archetypes.

This sort of “boosterism” that many southerners engaged in became an “entity” that saliently manifests itself through renaissance literature as the tradition “loomed distressingly distant and overpoweringly strong, insupportable

yet inescapable” (King, 1980, p. 16). So Mitchell’s saga was but a reincarnation of those patterns and creeds that made up the constellation. Bohner’s rehashing words are certainly a good explanation in here. He says:

The flirtations and courtships, the duels and dances, which fill the idle days of these charming men and women seem always to be set against a scene of manorial splendor dominated by a mansion with a glistening white portico overlooking green lawns sloping down to a placid river. In the cotton fields, the darkies, too numerous even to be counted, sing contentedly at their work. This tableau is familiar to everyone today, owing chiefly to the phenomenal popularity of Margaret Mitchell’s ‘Gone With the Wind’ and the motion picture made from the novel – certainly the apogee of the plantation tradition (Bohner, 1961, p. 73-74).

If we apply Jauss’ concept of “horizon of expectations” *i.e.* placing *Gone With the Wind*’s conceptualization of the Antebellum South within the Plantation Tradition we see that the former perfectly meets readers’ expectations since as Stephen Vincent Benét notes: “Mitchell knows her period, her people, and the red hill country of North Georgia—she knows the clothes and the codes and the little distinctions that make for authenticity” (Benét, 1999, p. 313). Put succinctly, Mitchell’s novel conformed readers’ expectations, it simply did not disappoint them or oddly intrude on their horizon. So they in turn favored it with their support. The novel’s collective reception profoundly demonstrate that the sheer popularity and the unbridled enthusiasm with which Mitchell’s work was embraced has given it credence far beyond what any revisionist critic can denote as a flawed or flabby.

2.2. *Absalom, Absalom!* Disappointing Expectations

The conceptualization of the Antebellum South in *Absalom, Absalom!* is clearly very different if not contradictory to that of *Gone With the Wind* and the Plantation Tradition at large. Faulkner’s narrative negates and questions all of the archetypes and notions that readers are accustomed to. The way it portrays the plantation system, its code of conduct and its social mores was very unfamiliar to them. In this regard, Don H. Doyle asserts that Faulkner “seemed intent on subverting much of the romanticism and self-serving justifications of southern history as it had been formulated in popular narratives, novels, and film, and also as it had been embedded in school text books and scholarly journals since the Civil War” (Doyle, 2015, p. 80).

Viewing his account against the background of the Plantation Literature makes a stark contrast between what readers expected and the completely unfamiliar content that the novel offers. The “south” where Thomas Sutpen, Henry Sutpen and Charles Bon live seem to be a peculiar setting that readers have never come across in their previous readings. A renowned historian, C. Vann Woodward credits Faulkner and other writers of Southern Renaissance, for leading the attack on stubborn myths that enshrouded the region’s past and, thereby, helping clear the way for historians like W. J. Cash to take up the task of revising the traditional dogmas about Southern antebellum history (Woodward, 2008, p. 38). This denotes the radical vision that Faulkner draw for the

Antebellum South which essentially shocked readers whose horizon of expectation does not allow such non-conformist ground-breaking notions. Correspondingly, at its initial reception *Absalom, Absalom!* was no match for *Gone With the Wind*. It went out of print; Faulkner could not make it into a movie and readers complained endlessly of its desperately unintelligible content. At the historical moment of its appearance, it was discarded as a whole and Faulkner received a scathing disapproval from the crowd. In his seminal book *the Mind of the South* (1956) W. J. Cash explains some particularities in the Southern society which led to such reactions to wards given literary works by saying that:

among those who read if a few greeted such writers as Thomas Wolfe, Faulkner, with tolerance and even sympathetic understanding, the prevailing attitude toward them was likely to be one of squeamish distaste and shock, of denial that they told the essential truth or any part of it_ in many cases_ of bitter resentment against them on the ground that they had libeled and misrepresented the South with malicious intent (Cash, 1956, p. 419)

Apparently, readers have been for so long accustomed to the “traditional” conception of the Antebellum South that their reflex was that of disdain and denial. The plantation legend was deeply etched in collective memory of readers so works such as *Absalom, Absalom!* that daringly question and subvert this conception were regarded as villainous.

Viewing both cases, it is clear that what determined the two novels’ success or failure among public readers was their conceptualization of the South. While *Gone With the Wind* satisfied readers through conforming the established notions and creeds of the Plantation Legend, *Absalom, Absalom!* shocked readers through negating and altering the established image of the Old South. And so the first was successful in gaining their approval whereas the second was rejected.

2.2.1. A Horizontal Change

Jauss clearly states that there exists a distance between the work and its addressee which plays a significant role in deciding the aesthetic value of the work. The latter he characterizes as “the disparity between the given horizon of expectations and the appearance of a new work, whose reception can result in a ‘change of horizons’” (Jauss 24). In other words, if a literary work is so close to the unskilled readers *i.e.* it meets their expectations then the aesthetic distance is easily bridgeable. Hence, the larger the distance the more valuable the work is because it breaks their expectations to establish new ones “through negation of familiar experiences or through raising newly articulated experiences to the level of consciousness” (Jauss, 1982, p. 24). Such works are not mere reproductions of worn-out and used up clichés, they rather introduce novel elements in the actual horizon. The case being so explains why critics who have a broader understanding and sharper insights into literary works have a slight regard for works that appeal to larger audience; they simply situate the work within its larger context and see that it does not bring forth any outstanding creativity. Likewise, they appreciate all works that break familiar norms and raise “newly articulated experiences to the level of consciousness”. These are deemed as

holding an aesthetic charm which the public readers are unable or unprepared to see.

Moreover, it is worth noting that a work may probably gain its significance after an initial rejection *i.e.* its aesthetic value is well-appreciated once the horizons change so readers could receive it differently. As Jauss explains “this aesthetic distance can be objectified historically along the spectrum of the audience’s reactions and criticism’s judgment” (Jauss, 1982, p. 24). A gradual or belated understanding unravels the author’s genius which his contemporaries might be blind to. Accordingly, a work that “alters” the readers’ horizon generating a “horizontal change” is the one that exhibits a powerful stance in the history of literature because of its timeless and universal value.

2.2.2. *Gone With the Wind* : A Copious Novel

Mitchell’s *Gone With the Wind* though it completely charmed its readers, it only made a number of critics pose the question whether it is a literature in the first place. It was_ and still is_ considered by many as a vulgar literature of gore that seriously distorts historical realities and feeds readers prejudicial misconceptions with tons of propagandist inflammatory cliff-hangers about a mythical Old South. It is almost no use mentioning the scathing disapproval it up heaved; Lillian Smith may not have spoken for everyone but she certainly did for many when she wrote that *Gone With the Wind* “wobbles badly like an enormous house on shaky underpinnings...it was slick, successful but essentially mediocre fiction” (as cited in King, 1980, p. 177). Because it only reproduced worn-out dogmas and brought no innovative change to the scene, critics discard it as a trifling novel that can be easily and sluggishly copied by any. As if to say that “other novelists by the hundreds have helped to shape this legend, but each of them has presented only part of it” this one-hundred-page novel does nothing but repeating it “as a whole, with all its episodes and all its characters and all its stage setting” (Cowley, 1999, p. 314). Hence, Mitchell’s work is ostensibly stale bread heated for refreshment only.

Historian Willie Lee Rose described *Gone with the Wind* as “the greatest publishing-viewing extravaganza of all time” which not only admits its unequalled position among American denizens’ preferences but it rather admits its entertaining and somewhat soothing presence in the collective memory (Rose, 1982, p. 130). It soothed the wounded egos of war veterans; fed the unquenched thirst of post-bellum generations and merely covered up the inadequacies of a controversial history and a marred past. So it comes to nobody’s surprise_ but to many’s disdain_ that *Gone With the Wind* received scathing criticism from critics who mostly shared a common disregard for its literary merits: it was a mere reproduction and reaffirmation of an old unquestioned set of dogmas. Like many, Bernard DeVoto dismisses it as “wish-fulfillment literature” (DeVoto, 1995, p. 327). In view of the Plantation tradition that prevailed Southern literature for centuries, Mitchell’s novel could not conquer a distinguished position as a unique piece of literature because what it brought was only expectable. Therefore, the reason why *Gone With the Wind* gained public approval is its closeness to their expectations, yet the closer a text is to its readers’ expectations the smaller the aesthetic distance is. The closer it gets to

“culinary” art the further it goes from canonical literature. *Gone With the Wind* ‘s unmatched closeness to its readers made of it a prey to an enclosed sphere of which it could never escape so it could never be admitted among grand narratives.

2.3. Absalom, Absalom! : A Masterpiece

Faulkner’s *Absalom, Absalom!* though it had been discarded by readers as an infuriating read that is impregnably inapt for tangibility, it nonetheless impressed critics and gained their admiration. Apart from the novel’s tough-to-grasp style which Bernd describes as an “impetuous violence” because the author “boldly throws grammar overboard and follows his own private rules of syntax”, the content of the novel poses an even greater hardship (Bernd, 1995, p. 119).

In view of the permeating conception of the Antebellum South and the Plantation Legend, Faulkner’s narrative is nothing but seismic. He “challenged the plantation legend by creating a different sort of planter archetype, one who enters the wilderness seeking to will an embodiment of an idea into existence in the midst of wilderness” (Douglas L. Mitchell 140). The romantic picture of the Old South that is indelibly etched in the minds of most Americans was morbidly shaken. In a befuddling doubtful tone the story of the Old South is unfolded. The gentle master turns into a demon, the chivalrous code freezes over to a rigid immoral racism and the romance reveals a gothic tale beneath. “The drama of *Absalom, Absalom!* is clearly diabolism, a "miasmatic distillate" of horror” (DeVoto, 1995, p. 144). The unfamiliar_ if not upsetting_ vision of the Old South that Faulkner draws in his novel was the main reason behind its initial failure among readers or unpopularity among the public yet paradoxically it ensured for him a distinguished position among critics and reviewers for his work was undoubtedly a puzzling breakthrough. It is marked with a heavy ceaseless flow of enigmatic description that is so trying in its form and substance. Critics by dozens rejoiced in its modernist richness; Faulkner’s fiction rose above and beyond his contemporaries’ because:

with all of its minor stylistic and formal defects, *Absalom, Absalom!* is fiction of a high order of excellence, strong from its roots in the life of a people and in a land and in a time, rich from the experience of that people, and beautiful from its sincere telling by one of that very race, who has mastered his art as have few of his contemporaries (O’Donnell, 1995, p. 144).

However, *Absalom, Absalom!*’s worth was not immediately and wholly appreciated even by some critics who joined the public chorus of dissatisfaction. One such critic is Miller who openly expressed his slight regard for the novel through asserting that it is” built exclusively on tricky confusion” and so “if in the great show-down of years, *Absalom, Absalom!* does prove to be a great book then the joke is on [him]” (Miller, 1995, p. 152). Time proved him wrong.

In effect, the novel came to unveil the inherent inconsistencies of the myth and flout its dogmas. *Absalom, Absalom!* simply shocked the readers of 1936 who were not acquainted with such conception of the Antebellum South yet _as already noted_ critics could see its aesthetic value and ability to alter

horizons so that successive generations could regard it more accurately. This seems to equally match Jauss' illustration with *Madame Bovary's* worldwide success after it got understood and appreciated not only by "a small circle of connoisseurs" but by a large audience (Jauss, 1982, p. 28). In a twist of fate, the very same reason that led public readers to reject *Absalom, Absalom!*, i.e. its conceptualization of the Antebellum South which was seemingly so much far away and beyond their horizons, led critics to place it on top of canonical works that are able to create an aesthetic distance. This "horizontal change" ensured a belated success for the novel. In such a way Faulkner took risks of "offending" a public with whom so much quixoticism lingers; he "flirted with failure" to conjure a magnum opus (O'Donnell, 1995, p. 142).

Gone With the Wind's conceptualization of the Antebellum South was so close to readers' expectations henceforth it brought no striking creativity at the level of artistry. *Absalom, Absalom!* on the contrary broadened the gap between readers' expectations and its conceptualization; the distance was so large that it took readers off guard. This aesthetic distance was the reason critics mused over Faulkner's literary breakthrough.

3. Conclusion

The field of Southern literary study has long been a subject of much controversy and one might dare describe it as an arena of literary heated debates that accumulates loads of heavy weaponry used at full blast. Historians, authors, critics and laymen alike have been mercilessly caught up in the chasm of understanding, defining and judging the region, its history, and culture. Two of the most eminent literary works that came out of the South have been discussed and analyzed in the present research. William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* and Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind* stand for two opposite poles in the field of Southern studies.

As shown through previous analyses both novels meet at their genuine concern to portray the region especially its antebellum history yet *there* ends their resemblance since their portraits rest at a stone's throw from refuting one another. The former draws a cubist portrait that_ more or less_ revises, questions, and even condemns the region, its past and its doomed future. In its intransigent and almost appalling preoccupation with the past, the narrative moves against the current with which the latter smoothly flows. The Plantation Legend serves as a background against which the two works have been received and assessed. This old tradition that is carved in the collective memory of most Southerners pictures the Old South as a region "dominated by a country gentry that was learned, landed, chivalric, [and] paternal" which has often been "enshrined in the concept that Southerners were cavaliers, gentlemen like the monarchical-supporting class in 17th century Britain (Richter, 1982, p. 3). These were the prevalent notions about the Antebellum South which through this research we deemed as the cornerstone and backbone of the readers' "horizon of expectations".

Since this study is based primarily on the guidelines of Reception Theory namely: Hans Robert Jauss' Aesthetics of Reception, it contrasted the reception

of the two novels. In an endeavor to explain and demystify the reasons behind their dissimilar reception, we could ascertain that the “horizon of expectations” is a paramount element in the understanding and evaluation of any literary work. Jauss asserts that a literary work “is not an object that stands by itself and that offers the same view to each reader in each period. It is not a monument that monologically reveals its timeless essence. It is much more like an orchestration that strikes even new resonances among its readers” (Jauss, 1982, p. 21). Therefore, *Gone With the Wind* being a thrilling romance that tells the story of Old Deep South just as grandmas and war veterans did, it passionately documented the lives of those who “suffered crushing misfortunes and had not been crushed. They had not been broken by the crash of empires, the machetes of revolting slaves, war, rebellion, proscription, confiscation. Malign fate had broken their necks, perhaps, but never their hearts” (Mitchell, 1999, p. 349). It not only met their expectations but fed their eagerness and need to believe in the goodness of the old bygone days. Readers all over the world could relate to Scarlett’s story; they could identify with Rhett and long for Tara especially with the destruction and desperation of the WI. Simply, that is how *Gone With the Wind* found its way to millions of hearts and secured an unshakable place among worldwide bestsellers.

Directly related to the concept of “horizon of expectations”, is “horizontal change” which indicates an alteration at the level of horizons that allows for a different_ arguably more accurate_ viewing of literary works. Through analyses we found that what prevented *Absalom, Absalom!* from gaining a worldwide success at its immediate release was its opposition to the established dogmas about the Old South. The unfamiliarity of readers with Faulkner’s vision of Yoknapatawpha, a miniature of the south, led to an “unjust” evaluation of its worth. Though it “contains some of Faulkner’s most demanding prose”, it could only “frustrate and fascinate readers” who can barely come close at an adequate understanding of its plot let alone a square appreciation of its aesthetic value (Towner, 2008, p. 40). Hence, *Absalom, Absalom!* acquired a belated appreciation once critics exhibited its uniqueness and ground-breaking creativity. Faulkner’s narrative originated a “horizontal change” that few foresaw in 1936.

To sum up, the present research explores a very decisive side of literary criticism i.e. reception. its major contribution touches upon three disciplines namely: literature, history and sociology since it analyses *Absalom, Absalom!* and *Gone With the Wind* as literary works which are important thanks to their historical content and to their standing in the history of literature beside its examination of the social function of literature that is part and parcel of its aesthetic value.

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ARE INTERRACIAL MARRIAGES AN INDICATOR OF INTEGRATION IN THE AMERICAN SOCIETY?

Abstract

The paper aims to assess interracial marriage in the USA with a focus on the new generations. It discusses segregated laws that were enacted to prevent minorities from intermarrying whites to preserve white purity and supremacy through anti-miscegenation laws. The landmark Supreme Court case, *Loving vs. Virginia* (1967) is regarded as a turning point that led to the repeal of anti-miscegenation laws in the USA. A study was done to determine intermarriage of minority groups in the US and its leading forces, depending on rates and proportions of intermarriage. In this regard, it closely measured the degree of influence of new immigrant waves on intermarriage in the US. Besides the thorough examination of challenges that faced interracial communities, the paper was inclined to weigh the impact of interracial marriage on the integration of biracial children in the mainstream society and their racial identification.

Keywords: anti-miscegenation laws, integration, interracial marriage, minorities, United States of America.

1. Introduction

Family systems reproduce race by insisting upon endogamy, or marriage within the group. Racial intermarriage tends to undermine racial barriers. In any society in which race is important, racial intermarriage will be a focus of legal, social and political interest. The issue of intermarriage has always been controversial in the United States. The right to choose the future spouse is an individual right but unfortunately this was not the case in the new world during the 19th and early decades of the 20th century. In 1967, the Supreme Court of the United States *Loving v. Virginia* declared anti-miscegenation laws unconstitutional. Although still small in absolute terms, levels of Intermarriages have risen sharply in recent years. This paper aims at answering the following questions; what is the impact of new waves of immigrants on the rates of interracial marriage? What are different reasons and mechanisms that drive interracial marriage? What are the different racial and ethnic groups to intermarry? And do Interracial Couples Manage to integrate in the US Society?

3. Review of Literature

Not very long ago, couples from different races were singled out. Today, interracial marriages are more accepted, and in some places, such couples

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will not even attract attention. This does not necessarily mean that people have changed their perception of interracial marriages, but rather that the factor of color is seen less as a threat for a relationship today than in the past (Passel, Wang, & Taylor, 2010). Although a significant amount of literature on the issue is available, the debate is still going on. Recent studies reveal an increase in interracial marriage in the United States of America (Inman, Altman, Kaduvetoor-Davidson, Carr, & Walker, 2011; Passel, Wang, & Taylor, 2010). Despite that increase, few of these studies examine the specific experiences of interracial couples concerning integration in the American society. However, according to Bratter and King (2008), though the tensions between races are probably less perceptible than before, some studies have shown that interracial couples are struggling to enter the mainstream American society (Heer, 1994; Heaton, 2002).

2. 1. Historical Background about Laws Banning Miscegenation in the US

In the US anti-miscegenation laws were state laws passed by individual states to prohibit miscegenation. Typically defining miscegenation as a felony; these laws prohibited the marriage between persons of different races. Individuals attempting to marry would be punished of felony active charges of adultery or fornication. All anti-miscegenation laws were passed to ban the marriage of whites and non-white groups, primarily blacks, Native Americans and Asians. In several States, anti-miscegenation laws also criminalized cohabitation between whites and non-whites.

Since the time of slavery, interracial relationships have been part of the United States. However, throughout history, it has not been considered acceptable. Most interracial relationships in history were between a white male and black female. Children of mixed couples with white parents were not considered legitimate. After the Second World War tremendous change would happen towards attitudes concerning interracial marriages.

Berthoud (2002) argued that marriage between different nonwhite races generally was not prohibited. Anti-miscegenation laws were clearly meant to maintain the power and privilege of whites and to uphold widely held beliefs in those days about racial differences, purity, and separation (p. 18). Segregated laws were created and passed to protect white women from black men. Democrats in the 1864 presidential campaign developed a new term for sexual relationships between white women and black men. The new term is miscegenation. Racist laws were passed to deny blacks political rights because of the fear of interracial marriages. Several laws were created to prohibit interracial marriages between blacks and whites. One of these is the Mann Act. This act was passed to prohibit a man to take a woman across state lines for “immoral purposes”. This law was created to prevent a black man to take a white woman across state borders so they could marry in a state where interracial marriage was allowed.

Sollors (2000) stated that in November, 1881, Tony Pace, a Negro man, and Mary J. Cox, a white woman were indicted under section 4189, in a circuit court of Alabama, for living together in a state of adultery or fornication, and

were sentenced each of two years imprisonment in the state penitentiary. The judgment was affirmed in the Supreme Court. Consequently, Mr. Pace brought the case on writ of error, insisting that the act under which he was convicted was in conflict with the concluding clause of the first section of the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution², which declared that no state shall deny to any person the equal protection of the laws (p. 70).

Anti-miscegenation laws were led to the gradual erosion by the end of World War II. Between 1946 and 1957, large numbers of foreign-born children and wives of US military personnel were permitted to enter the US under the GI Fiancées Act or War Brides Act of 1946. While most of those admitted were from Europe, some foreign born Japanese wives and children were permitted. Brooks (2010) reported that the occupation of Japan after World War II and the Korean War and its aftermath led to substantial numbers of US armed services personnel being stationed in both Japan and Korea. Despite the fact that anti-miscegenation laws are often considered a Southern phenomenon, many Northern states had anti-miscegenation laws. From the 19th century into the 1950's, most US States imposed anti-miscegenation laws, between 1913 and 1948, 30 out of 48 States did so.

Anti-miscegenation laws were challenged in courts. The years following World War II brought the greatest changes to these laws, although there were some early exceptions, Pennsylvania was the first state to repeal its anti-miscegenation law in 1780, and Ohio repealed a similar law in 1887. Farley (2011) noted that “most States did not change their laws until after World War II” (p.5). In 1948, in *Perez v. Sharp*, the California Supreme Court ruled the State's anti-miscegenation laws unconstitutional. Oregon repudiated a similar law in 1951, and 13 other States followed suit over the next 16 years. The last one was removed in Alabama through a state constitutional amendment in 2000.

The reasoning of civil rights leaders was that all children attend school, and nearly all adults work at some point, but the number of individuals who were affected by bans on racial intermarriage was thought to be so small as to make the issue of anti-intermarriage laws one of secondary importance. In addition, white hostility towards intermarriage was thought to be so virulent that civil rights leaders feared that a white backlash against intermarriage could possibly overwhelm civil rights gains in other areas such as workplace and school integration.

Booker T. Washington, Malcolm X, and Du Bois opposed intermarriage on the grounds that it would incite whites unnecessarily and Marcus Garvey was ideologically opposed to the idea of racial intermarriage (Childs, 1979, p.201). By the mid-1960s the NAACP legal defense fund was willing to weigh in on the intermarriage issue, but did so gingerly. Many other black nationalists who challenged the entire ethic of integration charged that blacks involved in interracial relationships were sleeping with the enemy and they attacked intermarriage as an attempt to assimilate into the white world and to reject black culture.

In this context, Du Bois considered that “intermarriage inexpedient because it interfered with efforts on the part of black Americans to develop and applaud their cultural distinctiveness”. The vast majority of white Americans in the 1950’s were in favor of banning interracial marriages and they did not consider their attitudes as a contradiction with the principles of American democracy. A *Gallup* poll in 1958 showed that 96 % of white Americans disapproved of interracial marriage.

Civil rights organizations were helping interracial couples who were sentenced for their relationships to take their cases to the Supreme Court. Since *Pace v. Alabama*, the Court had refused to make judgments in such cases. However, in 1964, the Warren Court issued to rule in the case of an interracial couple from Florida who had been convicted because they had cohabited. According to Gullickson and Morning (1999), “in *McLaughlin v. Florida*, the Supreme Court ruled that the Florida State law which prohibited cohabitation between whites and non-whites was unconstitutional and based solely on a policy of racial segregation” (p.104). But the court did not rule on Florida’s prohibition of interracial marriage between whites and non-whites.

1.2. The Landmark of *Loving vs. Virginia*

Charlie (2008) noted that “in June 1958, two residents of Virginia, Richard Loving, a white man and Mildred Jeter, a Negro woman, were married in the District of Columbia. After a short period of their marriage, the Lovings returned to Virginia and they decided to live in Caroline County” (p.195). In 1958, a grand jury of the Circuit Court of Caroline County issued an indictment accusing the Lovings of violating Virginia’s ban on interracial marriages. On 1959, the Lovings were sentenced to one year in jail the sentence was suspended by the trial judge for a period of 25 years on the condition that the Lovings leave the state and not return to Virginia together for 25 years (Bender, 2000, p.7).

On January 22, 1965, the state trial judge denies the motion to vacate the sentences, and the Lovings perfected an appeal to the Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia. On February 11, 1965, the Lovings were allowed to present their constitutional claims to the highest State court. The Supreme Court of Appeals upheld the constitutionality of anti-miscegenation statutes and affirmed the convictions. Again, the Lovings appealed this decision (Shrestha & Heisler, 2015, p. 4).

Sollors (2000) stated that, months before the Supreme Court ruling on *Loving v. Virginia*, the Roman Catholic Church joined the movement, supporting interracial couples in their struggle to repeal miscegenation laws. The US Supreme Court overturned the convictions in a unanimous decision, dismissing the Commonwealth of Virginia’s argument that a law forbidding both white and black persons from marrying persons of another race, and providing identical penalties to white and black violators, could not be construed as racially discriminatory (p.53). The court ruled in 1967 that Virginia’s anti-miscegenation statute violated both the Due Process Clause and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

2. New Waves of Immigrants to the USA

Sharon and Edmonston (2005) claimed that the first wave of immigrants arrived before entries began to be recorded in 1820. The English made up 60% of the population in 1790, but there were Scots, Scots-Irish, Germans, and people from the Netherlands, France, and Spain. These migrants were motivated by a mixture of religious, political, and economic factors. These early immigrants took great risks. Starvation, disease, and shipwreck probably killed more than one in ten of those who set sail for America (p. 9). While African slaves were transported to America under horrific conditions and considerable loss of life, historians estimate that immigrants died at an even higher rate than slaves en route to the New World. Slaves often had more food and protection than ordinary passengers because the death of a slave was a business loss for the owners who had arranged their passage.

In this regard Jimenez (2011) added that the second wave of immigrants, who arrived between 1820 and 1860, fit well with Americans eagerness for people to help push back the frontier. Peasants displaced from agriculture and artisans made jobless by the Industrial Revolution were desperate to escape from Europe. New arrivals sent what came to be called “American letters” back to Europe, encouraging friends and relatives to join them. About 40% of these second wave immigrants were Irish escaping extreme poverty and famine in their home country (p.32).

According to the analysis held by Pew Research Centre (2012), the third wave of immigration started in 1880, when almost 460,000 immigrants arrived, and ended with the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914, when 1.2 million immigrants entered. During the third wave, over 20 million Southern and Eastern Europeans came, mostly to the Eastern and Midwestern states. Bradt (2010) noted that “several hundred thousand Chinese, Japanese, and other Asian laborers settled in the Western states” (p.4). The shift in national origins can be seen by comparing the homelands of the immigrants who entered during 1882 and 1907, two peak immigration years. Of those arriving in 1882, 87% came from northern and Western Europe, and 13% came from Southern and Eastern Europe.

Wang (2012) added that the Fourth wave immigrants began arriving in the United States after 1965 when the preference system changed. Instead of giving priority to immigrants based on their national origins, with preference to those from northern and Western Europe, the new system gave priority to people with US relatives and to a small number of people with outstanding accomplishments or special skills (p.8). These changes, coupled with prosperity in Europe, altered the composition of US immigrants. During the 1970s fewer than 20% of US immigrants were Europeans.

The 20th century has witnessed a transformation of the United States from a predominately white population mainly from Europe to a society with diverse racial and ethnic minorities. The country has moved far beyond black and white due to contemporary immigration. Unlike the earlier waves of immigrant of the late 19th and earlier 20th centuries, America’s recent newcomers have been mainly non-European, with the vast majority originating from the Caribbean, Latin America, or Asia (Lee & Edmonston, 2005, p. 10).

The rise of interracial marriage rate has contributed to the growth of the multiracial population, which became highly visible when for the first time in US history, the 2000 census allowed Americans to mark more than one race to identify themselves. This meant that a person with a black father and a white mother could mark both black and white on the census form to identify themselves, rather than black or white (Bender, 2000, p 25). It meant that a person with a white father and a Chinese mother could identify as both white and Chinese rather than having to choose one or the other. The option of marking more than one race is particularly significant since it gives official status and recognition to Americans who consider their backgrounds as racially mixed. In 2000, 2.4% of American population identified as multiracial, accounting for one in forty Americans (Algan, 2001, p.301).

3. Mechanisms Driving Interracial Marriage

Brooks (2011) explained how internet dating has generated a growing number of interracial marriages since the mid-nineties. Online dating is changing the way people date and marry in America. Around one in six people, who marry in America, meet through an online dating site. The Internet has become a much more social place (p. 17).

First, the advent of social networking sites such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter has turned the web from one of walled-garden individual web sites into an open social web in which users can freely share content and interests across multiple web sites. Second, the more recent rise of smart phones has enabled people to connect to the Internet in a deep and meaningful way no matter where they are.

Algan & Verdier (2001) argued that one way to explain why intermarriage exists is to consider the behavior from an economic approach in neo-classical economic theory, people are assumed to be rational. Hence every decision making is based on search for optimal use of time, energy, and money (p. 97). With regard to marriage, cost benefit calculation is made and marriage is pursued when the action ensures a profitable prospect. Costs and benefits in this sense need not be material but they can be social or spiritual.

Attitudes affecting a marriage decision concern general group member's view towards endogamy and exogamy with members of a particular group for certain groups. It could be religious body which reinforces the endogamy norm such as the religious affiliation but other actors can change when one is exposed to others ways of life and thinking through education, modernization, urban residence and such attitudes in this sense shape the degree of tolerance towards intermarrying in a particular social group (Charlie, 2009, p. 547).

In addition to the conditions known to contribute to improving attitudes and relationships among dissimilar groups, several factors have been identified that influence actual interracial marriage. Lee (2014) reported that "the propensity to marry interracially differs dramatically by gender; three main patterns exist in intermarriage rates by gender" (p. 101). In the first pattern, men and women from a group are equally likely to intermarry. This was the case for

whites, American Indian, Hawaiian, and Some Other Race (SOR). In the second pattern, men from a particular group are more likely to intermarry than women in that group. Blacks exemplify best this pattern. Black men are more likely to intermarry than black women. About 2% of black men were intermarried, compared with less than 1% of black women in 1970. In 2000, 10% of black men, but just 4% of black women, were intermarried.

In the third pattern, women in a racial group are more likely to intermarry than men in that group. This pattern is illustrated by Asians; this gender gap has remained stable over the past 30 years. 25% of Asian women and 14% of Asian men were intermarried (Pew Research Center, 2011). In this context, Sharon & Edmonston (2005) added that in 2000, the rates of intermarriage of Asian women still exceeded that of Asian men. The gender differences in intermarriage in certain racial groups are not easy to explain, indeed, many factors may contribute, including social relations among specific groups and the roles played by both males and females in different racial groups (p. 27).

A racial group's size may have a strong effect on its members to intermarry. Generally, the intermarriage rate is inversely related to a group's size. Intermarriage is more common among smaller groups. However, the rate will be lower in the larger group because of its larger population. The large US white population has the lowest interracial marriage rate. The rate of interracial marriage among whites was just 0.4% in 1970 to reach 3% in 2000 (Gullickson & Morning, 1999, p 82). Blacks have the lowest intermarriage rate among minorities. Asians have intermarriage rates above those of whites or blacks but lower than the rates of smaller racial groups. One-fifth of married Asians were interracially married. American Indians and Hawaiian who belong to smaller racial groups have always had very high intermarriage rates (Pew Research Center, 2014).

Douglas (2009) explained that in addition to the relative size of racial groups, the age of these groups can affect the possibility of intermarriage. But individual preferences and social factors such as perceived attractiveness of the marital partners are also important. Most interracial couples consist of a white person married to a nonwhite (p.29). Despite that interracial couples have become much more diverse in the last decades, marriage between nonwhite minorities Asians and Hispanics, for example has remained uncommon. In 1970 most common interracial couples were white-Asians; white-American Indian; and white-black. With the 1980 Census, white-SOR couples became one of the main types of interracial couples. After the introduction of multiple racial reporting in the 2000 Census, white-multiple race couples became the most common, accounting for 25 % of interracial couples (p.47).

According to Fisher (2003), "another factor believed to influence interracial marriage attitudes is age" (p.105). Many studies confirm the effects of age on tolerance toward interracial marriage. There is a clear relationship between intermarriage and age. Indeed, younger men and women are more likely than older people to intermarry, reflecting the recent increase in intermarriage. Almost 9% of married men and women below age 30 were intermarried, as

compared to 7% of people ages 30 to 44.5% for those ages 45 to 59, and about 3% among those age 60 or older. The rate of older couples that are intermarried is likely to increase in the future as younger intermarried couples grow older (Charlie, 2008, p.200). If the proportion of interracial marriage will be the same in the few coming decades, the rate of intermarried couples in the total US population will increase as well.

Jones (2013) claimed that the characteristics of those individuals who cross racial lines and intermarry have long been a subject of both popular speculation and scholarly inquiry. However, research has shown that interracial marriage is more common among those who are more educated holding a college degree or higher. Intermarriage rates are likely to increase with education (p. 42). The US Census Bureau (2011) reported that two different patterns exist for this relationship. In the first pattern, intermarriage increases linearly with education. This pattern holds for blacks, American Indians, Hawaiians, and SORs. The rate of intermarried blacks with bachelor's degree or higher is 9%. Concerning the second pattern, the percentage of intermarried couples reaches the highest proportion up to the 'some college' group, then declines among the most educated group, college graduates and above. Whites, Asians, and multiple race Americans follow this pattern.

Lewis (2001) agreed that intermarriages of US born adults have lower rates than foreign born adults, but this relationship varies by race and gender. Among white and black husbands, foreign born men have slightly higher rates of intermarriage than US-born men. For other racial groups, we see the reverse, with considerably higher rates of intermarriage for the US born. Almost one third of US born Asian husbands were intermarried, compared with 7% for foreign born Asian husbands who are naturalized citizens, and 5% of foreign born Asian husbands who were not citizens (p.117).

The US born population is mainly composed of whites and blacks, two groups with fairly low racial intermarriage rates. Foreign born spouses, especially wives, are important contributors to the increase intermarriage and, therefore to the increased diversity of the US population. Foreign-born white and black wives have higher rates of intermarriage than US born white and black wives. For other racial groups, foreign born women had much lower rates of intermarriage than US born women. Among married Asian women, for example, 14% of foreign born noncitizens were intermarried, compared with 22% of naturalized citizens and 44% of US born wives.

Everywhere we turn, we see images of "interracial marriages." Back in 1967, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, in which Sidney Poitier's character falls in love with Katharine Houghton's character, marked the first time a major film featured an interracial couple. Now it is much more common, as witnessed by the numerous movies featuring interracial couples, such as *Where Halle Berry Falls for Pierce Brosnan* and *Embraces Billy Bob Thornton*.

Interracial couples are becoming more popular on TV as well: characters played by Sandra Oh and Isaiah Washington on *Grey's Anatomy* are just one example. Recently, popular books such as *Interracial Intimacies* by

Randall Kennedy and *Interracial Intimacy* by Rachel Moan have focused on interracial relationships. Newspaper headlines such as “Blacks, Whites and Love” and “Interracial Marriage Surge across US” are common place.

3.1. White Intermarriage

Childs (2005) asserted that “negative attitudes toward intermarriage have decreased, rates of interracial marriages have increased in 1880, and interracial marriages among whites and blacks or Asians were extremely rare less than 0.1% of all white marriages” (p. 200). Whites were more likely to intermarry with blacks than Asians, though this trend eventually reversed. For the first 100 years of the time series, the share of white male-black female marriages remained under 0.1%, trended up from 1980 through 2000, and peaked in the latter years at 0.2%. Only between blacks and whites intermarriage remained such a rare practice as to still be regarded as socially deviant behavior (Lee 2014, p.91).

Brooks (2011) asserted that “several social researchers have posed the question of the reasons behind the low rates of black-white intermarriage, the largest factor in the low rates of black-white intermarriage may simply be the historical relationship between blacks and whites” (p.201). As a result of the long legal separation of the two groups which continued well into the last century, interactions between black and whites remain much different than the inter-actions between Whites and other minorities.

White intermarriages with Asians follow a very different pattern. White male Asian female matches were quite rare from 1880–1960. In 1960, this level was rising dramatically. These marriages continued to increase nearly tenfold over the next 40 years, and today are the most common interracial marriage. White female marriages with Asian men followed a similar, though less pronounced, trajectory (Chin & Karthikeyan, 2002, p. 31).

3.2. Black Intermarriage

Sollors (2000) claimed that “Americans are approaching unanimity in their views of marriage between blacks and whites, with 86% now approving of such unions, Americans views on interracial marriage have undergone a major transformation in the past five decades” (p. 400). When *Gallup* first asked about black-white marriages in 1958, do you approve or disapprove of marriage between whites and Blacks? Only 4% of respondents approved. Americans disapproved than approved until 1983, and approval did not exceed the majority level until 1997.

Douglas (1996) declared that the approval of black-white marriages is at a record high among blacks and whites. Blacks have always been more approving than whites of interracial marriage, going back to 1968 when Gallup first was able to report reliable estimates on each group’s opinions. However, the gap in approval ratings has narrowed considerably, averaging 13 percentage points since 1997 but 32 points from 1968-1994. Among African-Americans who were newlyweds in 2008, nearly one-in-six (15%) married someone who was not black.

The share of out-marriage among men was more than twice the share among women. According to *Pew Research Center*, as with whites, the rate of interracial marriage among blacks had been very low until fairly recently. Only about 1% of black newlyweds married outside their race in 1960. The rate has gone up dramatically over the past several decades and reached the all-time high of nearly 15.5% in 2008. Among black newlyweds in 2008, more than half married a white person and over one-in-five married a Hispanic. Just less than one-in-ten married an Asian, and the rest married someone of a mixed race, an American Indian or some other race (Childs, 2005, p. 185).

3.3. Asian Intermarriage

Farley (2011) pointed out that marriages between Asians and European American were illegal. Census data suggest that Asian American intermarriage increased steadily from the 1960s and 1970s to the 1980s. This trend was consistent with rates of intermarriage in other racial and ethnic groups. However, from 1980 to 1990, Asian American intermarriages dropped from 25, 4% to 15% of all Asian American marriages. Interestingly, this trend was not consistent with that of other racial and cultural groups for which intermarriages continued to increase (p.5).

Hall (1996) pointed out that “specific Asian American groups vary in their likelihood to intermarry, since the 1960s, Japanese Americans have consistently intermarried more than Filipino Americans, who have intermarried more than Chinese Americans” (p. 30). When Asian Americans do intermarry, they are more likely to marry European Americans or individuals of the Caucasian race than any other racial group. Among Asian Americans, females are more likely to intermarry than are males.

Fisher (2004) stated that “among Asian newlyweds in 2008, more than three-in-ten (31%) married someone who was not Asian. The rate of out-marriage among female Asian newlyweds was twice that of male newlyweds (p.287). According to the statistics held by the Pew Research Center (2014), nearly four-in-ten (39.5%) Asian women who married in 2008 married someone of a different race/ethnicity, compared with 19.5% of Asian men. Among Asian newlyweds who intermarried in 2008, a majority (75%) married a white person, followed by 12% who married a Hispanic, 7% who married a black and 7% who married someone of a mixed race, American Indian or other race.

3.4 Hispanic Intermarriage

Shrestaha & Heister (2011) claimed that since 1960 the number of interracial couples in the United States has increased more than tenfold, to 1.6 million, including marriages involving Hispanics. Such unions now account for about 4% of US marriages. a share that is expected to mushroom in coming years and that is already offering powerful evidence that many Americans are jettisoning old prejudices as never before (p.21).

In this regard, Lee & Edmonston (2005) added that among the whole number of Hispanic newlywed couples in 2008, about a quarter married someone who was not Hispanic, and this share is similar for men and women. For all Hispanics who are currently married, about 17% are married to someone of a

different race or ethnicity. The share of Hispanics with a non-Hispanic spouse is slightly higher for women than for men. About 19% of married Hispanic women have a non-Hispanic spouse, compared with about 16% of married Hispanic men (p. 25).

Among Hispanics newlyweds who intermarried in 2008, the vast majority (81%) married a white person. About one-in-ten married a black person, and 5% married an Asian. The rest married someone of a mixed race, an American Indian or some other race. Hispanic men and women in mixed marriages have a slightly different pattern in the racial profile of their spouses. More than eight-in-ten (83%) Hispanic men who out-married in 2008 married a white spouse, compared with 78% of Hispanic women. Among Hispanic female newlyweds who out-married in 2008, some 13% married a black spouse, compared with just 5% of Hispanic male newlyweds (Baars, 2009, p.230).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2000), this trend was not consistent with that of other racial and cultural groups for which intermarriages continued to increase. Specific Asian American groups vary in their likelihood to intermarry. Since the 1960s, Japanese Americans have consistently intermarried more than Filipino Americans, who have intermarried more than Chinese Americans. When Asian Americans do intermarry, they are more likely to marry European Americans or individuals of the Caucasian race than any other racial group. Among Asian Americans, females are more likely to intermarry than are males.

4. Do Interracial Couples Manage to integrate in the US Society?

Marti (2005) explained how in the US interracial marriage rates increased from less than 1% of all marriages in 1970 to nearly 3% in 2000. Despite this upward trend in the United States, rates of interracial marriage are still significantly lower than those found in Europe, especially between white and black people. Multiracial Americans have become the fastest growing demographic group, wielding an impact on minority growth that challenges traditional notions of race.

Sollors (2000) admitted that most studies of intermarriage do not address the inherently messy business of deciding when intermarriage has or has not occurred, but tends to dive into an examination of the different rates of intermarriage exhibited by some minority groups over others. But if there are methodological and theoretical differences with the term “intermarriage”, the concept of “integration” is equally slippery and vague (p. 87).

Lee (2014) argued that in most cases, analysts talk of integration as the outcome of intermarriage. But in some cases, intermarriage can be seen as the outcome of integration; for example, intermarriage is proceeding faster than might be expected in immigrant populations which seemed in economic terms to be imperfectly integrated (p.99). In this context Jimenez (2011) asserted that “most analysts do not clearly define “integration”, and some use it synonymously with the term “assimilation”. Alba and Nee use the term “assimilation rather than “integration”. Consequently, assimilation is defined as the decline of an ethnic distinction and its corollary cultural and social

differences". In the same context, Patterson and Peach use the term "integration" to mean social integration, and imply that intermarriage means an overall acceptance into the mainstream (p. 9).

Foreman & Nance (1999) assumed that if children of different ethnic backgrounds belong to the same play-group, later the same adolescent cliques, and at college would belong to the same fraternities and sororities. If the parents belong to the same country club and invite each other to their homes for dinner; it is completely unrealistic not to expect these children, now grown, to love and to marry each other, brightly oblivious to previous ethnic extraction (p. 532).

Gullickson & Morning (1999) explained that economic integration is subsumed within Gordon's term "structural assimilation", and is assumed to precede marital assimilation. But does structural assimilation necessarily lead to intermarriage, as Gordon claims? And does intermarriage really signal true social acceptance? Some groups have clearly not achieved structural assimilation as defined by Gordon. In the US many African Americans demonstrate a combination of poverty, residential segregation, and low levels of intermarriage with whites (p. 32).

4.1. Identity Formation in Multiracial Children

Biracial individuals may choose to identify as white, as a member of the minority group or as bicultural or of mixed heritage. The research literature has discussed the potential emotional challenges of biracial children. These children need to understand the concept of interracial (US Census Bureau, 2013). This abstract label might be more difficult to understand than fitting into a permanent racial category.

Racial and ethnic group differences have a significant impact on children's social development though the impact varies with age and specific ethnicity. The role of heritage in a child's development is affected by history, as well as by social context and immediate environment. Since having a multiple ethnic heritage has a different, perhaps more problematic, effect on a child's development, it is important to actively help multiracial children acquire a positive self-concept. They need exposure to models of all the ethnicities they embrace and to multiracial people generally (Caballero, 2008, p. 11).

They need to understand what it means to be multiracial and to acquire culturally-linked coping skills that include ways to deal with racism and discrimination. Because there are few integrated, stable, and tension-free racially mixed communities in the US that can facilitate positive identity formation in interracial children, families and schools must work hard to provide a supportive community that affirms multiracialism.

Several studies suggest that an achieved ethnic identity is especially relevant when one's ethnic group has a minority status in society.

Jones (2013) noted that, "a strong ethnic identity can serve to protect persons from the effects of negative stereotypes and discrimination by providing them a larger frame of reference with which to identify, and, in turn, protecting their psychological well-being" (p 11). Children are drawn into the conflict zone.

Polls show that most people who oppose interracial marriage do so because of the effect it will have on children. Where some religions almost force the expectancy of a large family within a marriage, other religions are more conservative with regards to having children.

Identity development is a continuous process that begins in early childhood and continues throughout the life span. Children actively seek exploration of themselves and their identities. With this exploration comes a natural comparison of oneself to one's parents. Children go through an expected process of assessing their family dynamics and then evaluating how exactly they fit into those dynamics. They often seek acceptance and companionship from those with whom they can most easily identify.

The biracial child may try to choose one identity over the other, but then one parent will try to pull him in one direction, and the other parent will try to pull him in a different direction. When the child finally decides, the parent who was not chosen will give the child negative feedback on his choice. This problem can lead children into emotional instability and a great resentment towards their parents, because they did not receive the support they longed for. Another problem biracial children face is when the parents and child agree on an identity but then society does not agree with their choice. The child blames the parents for the negative feedback society gives them; this adds to the resentment that children hold against their parents.

Farley (2011) argued that "coping with racism will become difficult for biracial children because they face more racism than individuals that can be placed into one category or another" (p.12). People who try to place individuals into specific categories are going to have trouble placing these children into any one category, thus they might hold more resentment towards them and be more racist towards them. The society will place another burn on these children by not accepting them into any race. For example, a child of a black and white marriage, may suffer because he is either too light to be black, and too dark to be white. This biracial child would literally be struck between two communities that reject him.

5. Conclusion

Interracial marriage has been an American obsession since the beginning of its history. The primary anti-miscegenation laws that were passed prohibited interracial marriage between blacks and whites. Over time, similar laws were enacted to include other minority groups. Social separation of the races was enforced formally by law and informally by prejudice and discrimination. Two main reasons had led to a dramatic change in American race relations and interracial marriages. One was the 1967 US Supreme Court decision that overturned remaining state anti-miscegenation laws. The second was the large scale of immigration which increased racial and ethnic diversity as well as the rates of interracial marriage in the United States. Inter-marriage has long been considered a core indicator of the integration of ethnic and racial minorities in society in which interracial couples still struggle to be integrated in main stream American society.

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LANGUAGE AND GENDER: THE SECRET BEHIND WILLA CATHER'S USE OF A MALE NARRATOR IN MY ANTONIA

Abstract

The research seeks to show how language can unravel issues relevant to an author's identity and gender. It is an analytical study from a biographical perspective of Willa Cather's novel *My Antonia*. It aims at showing how Cather's language can help in revealing something about her identity. The study investigates the reason behind Cather's use of a male narrator, Jim Burden, in a novel written by a woman and it is about a female character Antonia. The analysis shows that the secret behind Cather's use of a male narrator is her lesbian identity and through the use of a male narrator, she hides her lesbianism. Consequently, Cather's language exposes her gender identity and proves that an author's language can help in decoding something about his/her identity especially in modern times where the distinct gender boundaries are violated.

Keywords: gender, language, lesbian identity, male narrator, My Antonia

1-Introduction

In modern society, one outstanding issue is identity formation in relation to gender. While traditional gender roles are clearly set and differentiated between men and women, the boundaries between the two genders in modern life and literature are blurred and transgressed. In modern American literature, Willa Cather's *My Antonia* is an epitome of fluctuating unconventional gender issues. Cather's novel is known not only for its subject matter, but also for its departure from the conventional gender roles and traditional female narrative style. Concerning the subject matter, Cather's literary work brought something new in American literature. *My Antonia* is about the immigrants in the United States and Cather is most well known as a regionalist writer or a local color writer. In addition, despite the fact that Cather is a female writing about women, she uses a male narrator in *My Antonia* which is a new narrative device in the sense that Cather utterly transforms the conventional form of the novel. In fact, the presence of a male narrator, Jim Burden, raises heated and ceaseless debates among critics and readers. What is peculiar and queer in the novel is not the use of a male narrator to tell the story of a female, Antonia, but the use of a male narrator in a novel written by a woman, Willa Cather. The use of a male narrator by a female writer to talk about a female protagonist is said to be the focus of much literary criticism. Many critics question the position of the male narrator, Jim Burden in women's realm. Cather deconstructs conventions by providing a new narrative technique and opposing other female writers. Moreover, the novel

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not only blurs the narrative by viewing Antonia from Jim's lens, it also displays Cather's ambivalent attitude towards gender binaries and gender roles. In other words, what is Cather's aim behind using a male narrator, Jim Burden, instead of a female narrator? Is Jim Burden a mask to disguise Cather's true identity? Is there queer texture in *My Antonia*? Does it display lesbian undercurrents? and how language can reveal the author's gender identity? The present paper is an analytical study from a biographical viewpoint to decode the secret behind Cather's use of a male narrator.

2- Theoretical Framework

Many critics comment on Cather's uncommon practice of using a male narrator and for that reason she felt obliged to defend her choice. *My Antonia* is based on a real story of Cather's friend, a bohemian immigrant, called Annie Sadilek Pavelka. Cather used a male narrator because "most of what she knew about Annie came from talks with young men... Thus Cather created as narrator Jim Burden, whose age, experience, and personal history closely parallel her own" (Woodress, 1987, p. 289). In addition, concerning the characters themselves in *My Antonia*, Jim is the narrator and not Antonia because he is more educated than she is. He is an American lawyer and well educated so he is able to use words to be literary works.

Although Cather defended her use of a male narrator, her explanation, for many critics, represents only the tip of the iceberg. Her reasons for using a male narrator are not convincing. Even Cather herself once confessed that *My Antonia* is an ambiguous and illusive novel. She states:

If one is going to do new business the patterns cannot help, though one does not deliberately go out to do that. *My Antonia*, for instance, is just the other side of the rug, the pattern that is supposed not to count in a story. In it there is no love affair, no courtship, no marriage, no broken heart, no struggle for success. I knew I'd ruin my material if I put it in the usual fictional pattern. I just used it the way I thought absolutely true. (as cited in Benfey, 1994, p. 141)

In other words, there are two sides of the rug that represents the plot; the familiar side which includes a love story and broken hearts and the unfamiliar one like *My Antonia* which lacks love affairs.

Another meaning for her metaphor is that patterns of novels suggest something concealed, something "slipped under the rug" (Benfey, 1994, p. 141). Readers and critics should act as active detectives to decode the secret and find out the subtext in the literary texts. Furthermore, in her essay "The Novel D meubl ", Cather (1922) points out to something unnamed and absent in the text:

Whatever is felt upon the page without being specifically named there – that, one might say, is created. It is the inexplicable presence of the thing not named, of the overtone divined by the ear but not heard by it, the verbal mood, the emotional aura of the fact or the thing or the deed, that gives high quality to the novel or the drama, as well as to the poetry itself. (p. 6)

It is necessary to focus on the verbal mood and the emotional aura of the thing to detect Cather's most disputable phrase "the thing not named". Sarah Jewett, her friend and literary mentor, views Cather's use of a male narrator as a masquerade for something hidden and unnamed for which Sharon O'Brien (1984) claims that "the unnamed thing" is Cather's lesbian identity.

Despite the fact that Cather denied and disguised her lesbianism, her literary works unconsciously reveal her true identity. Her language can help in unravelling her blurred identity. She uses a male narrator not only in *My Antonia*, but also in other novels.

3- The Analysis of Cather's *My Antonia*

In *My Antonia*, Cather uses a male narrator, Jim Burden, to disguise her lesbian identity and to express her love to women via a male's voice to appear as a natural heterosexual love and not a lesbian one. In fact, there is juxtaposition between Jim and Cather's stories. Many critics state that Jim Burden is a reflection of Willa Cather. Reading the novel from a biographical perspective, many aspects of the novel can be found in Cather's life and Jim is a representative of her voice in the sense that Cather weaves her personal life and transforms her lesbian identity to her literary works.

Both Cather and Jim share certain affinities and similarities. They are Americans, born in Virginia then moved to Nebraska where they enjoyed their life in the prairie. Jim Burden moved to the town Black Hawk as Cather moved to Red Cloud Town. After finishing high school education, both Jim and Cather went to the university in Lincoln and after graduation, they looked for career. Not only their journey from place to place is similar, their interests are alike; for instance, they are fond of music, dancing and theatre. Cather expressed her appreciations of theatre and arts through Jim. For instance, Jim likes dancing and he went with Lena to theatre. Woodress (1987), Cather's biographer, summarizes the similarities between her life and the novel *My Antonia* by saying:

Jim's grandparents were drawn from Cather's grandparents; the entire miner family ...plays roles in the story; and Herbert Bates, one of Cather's professors at the university of Nebraska, appears as Gaston Cleric, Jim's college teacher. Minor figures and events also are rooted in actuality. The Black pianist, Blind d'Arnault, who plays in Black Hawk, was drawn from a real blind Tom, whom Cather heard in Lincoln and a blind Boone, whom she probably heard in Red Cloud. The visitor to the town today can see the home of the original Wick Cutter, a loan -shark named Bentley, who apparently was as evil and unsavory as Cather makes him. The hotel-keeping Mrs. Gardener in the novel was real Mrs. Holland, and the man who fathered Antonia's first child out of wedlock was James William Murphy. (p.38)

Cather, a female writer, arranged Jim to be a male narrator to transmit her lesbian identity and to transfer her affections to women through Jim so that her love seems natural and acceptable. "It seems safe to suggest that Jim is Cather's alter ego" (Mainiero, 2000, p. 175). She disguises her true lesbian identity through the use of a male narrator to the extent that Fetterley (1990) comments by saying:

“Often we forget that we are listening to Jim Burden... and we assume instead that we are hearing the voice of Willa Cather” (p.58) due to the common characteristics between Cather and Jim.

In *My Antonia*, there is something queer that floats to the surface, but the queerest thing is the character Jim Burden. He is such a perplexing and paradoxical character. He is not only the male persona for Cather the female writer, he is also a hybrid character of both masculine and feminine qualities. “People said there must be something queer about a boy who showed no interest in girls of his own age, but who could be lively enough when he was with Tony and Lena or the three Marys” (Cather, 1994, p. 172). In fact, the words “queer” and “gay” recur several times throughout the novel and both of them indicate a connotation with homosexuality and lesbianism. They imply behaviour and personality that are strange and odd. Although Cather denies her lesbianism, her language in her novel, *My Antonia*, manifests her secret. The queer takes place as a “process of making and unmaking, settling and unsettling that operates at times on the surfaces and at times on the deep structures of her fiction” (Lindemann, 1999, p. 4). Jim Burden is not only queer, he is also a burden as his name indicates. He is used to hide Cather’s lesbian identity.

Although Jim Burden is a male, he has many feminine and childish characteristics and his manliness raises ceaseless discussions. He has childish and impulsive nature from the beginning of the novel till the end. He is portrayed as “a romantic person” (Cather, 1994, p. 181) seeing life from female perspective and he is, unlike other men, weak, meek, passive and submissive. O’Brien (1984) ascertains: “A male character is not ‘really’ male but female...her male characters engaged in love affairs are not male at all” (p. 597). At the beginning of the novel, the anonymous narrator says: “though [Jim] is over forty now, he meets new people and new enterprises with the impulsiveness by which his boyhood friends remember him. He never seems to me to grow older” (Cather, 1994, p. 3). In his childhood, Jim has female playmates and not males that affect his personality. However, when he moves to Black Hawk, he is obliged to behave like a boy. “[He] was quite another boy, or thought [he] was. Suddenly put down among boys of [his] own age, [he] found [he] had a great deal to learn” (p.119). In addition, Antonia “thought of [him] only as a little boy” (p.103). Another episode which shows Jim’s weakness is the snake episode. Although he kills the snake, the scene is pregnant with irony because the snake makes him “sick... seasick” (p. 41). The snake is lying forming the letter “W”. “The ‘W’ is capitalized, suggesting a proper name. This ‘W’ not only is a foreshortened Willa... but enacts in advance the scene of castration/ decapitation that Jim performs” (Butler, 1993, p. 151). In other words, Jim is a castrated man who represents Cather (Willa or William) the female.

Another scene that shows Jim’s weakness is when Cutter attempts to rape Antonia. Instead of fighting back to Cutter, Jim escapes and he turns his rage and anger to Antonia. He is not proud of himself for saving Antonia from raping, but he is angry and disgusted because he does not want to admit his weakness. Jim is also passive and submissive. When professor Gaston asks him to leave Lena in order to continue his studies in Harvard, he accepts the offer after getting the

permission of his grandparents, but he actually does not wish to go. "To [his] astonishment, grandfather replied that [he] might go if [he] wished. [He] was both glad and sorry on the day when the letter came" (Cather, 1994, p. 227). At the end of the novel, Jim remains a child even if he is a lawyer. He has such a good relation with Antonia's children that "he felt like a boy in their company" (p. 269). Thus, he represents many feminine characteristics and is effeminate.

Albeit Antonia is a female character, she also shows masculine characteristics in terms of her physical appearance and behavior. After the death of her father, she wears his attire. "She wore the boots her father had so thoughtfully taken off before he shot himself, and his old fur up" (p. 60). Antonia takes a masculine role and abandons her delicate feminine qualities. In addition, her behavior also shows masculine features. Jim Burden describes her by saying: "everything was disagreeable to me. Antonia ate so noisily now, like a man, and she yawned often at the table and kept stretching her arms over her head" (p.62). Antonia announces several times that she can work like a man and she challenges men in doing their work. In the whole story, she shows masculine characteristics. Consequently, Cather's characters, Jim and Antonia, have androgynous qualities.

Concerning the relationship between Jim and Antonia, it is not a healthy heterosexual relation. It is based on nostalgia rather than on love and desire. Their relation seems anything but a heterosexual love. It is like the relation of Cather with her female friends. Actually, readers expect, at any moment, Jim's proposal for marriage, but he never proposes to Antonia. Although Jim and Antonia are the heart of the story, their relationship declines after childhood and "at the very center of [Jim's] relationship with Antonia there is emptiness" (Brown, 1953, p. 202). In their childhood, Antonia gave a ring to Jim, but he "didn't want her ring" (Cather, 1994, p. 27). At Black Hawk, Antonia also refused Jim's kiss because she considered him as her brother. She says: "Why, Jim! You know you ain't right to kiss me like that. I'll tell your grandmother on you!" (p.177). Not only in real life their relationship is not good, it is also in dreams. Jim never dreamt about Antonia because his love is not based on desire. Rather, it is based on memories and nostalgia to the past. Jim states:

One dream I dreamed a great many times, and it was always the same. I was in the harvest-field...Lena Lingard came across the stubble...She sat down beside me ...and said, 'Now they are all gone, and I can kiss you as much as I like' I used to wish I could have this flattering dream about Antonia, but I never did. (p. 179)

Jim actually shows his fear of Lena who represents a new independent woman who defies traditional gender qualities of women by pursuing him. Most importantly, Jim never had the same erotic dream in relation to Antonia which shows his blurred gender identity. In addition, Jim stresses the importance of Antonia as "a woman" and not as a wife in his life. What he wants is that Antonia should be present in his life as a mother, sister, or a wife. What is important for him is the presence of a woman. Jim confesses to Antonia: "I'd have liked to have you for a sweetheart, or a wife, or my mother or my sister" (p. 251). All he wishes is to have a woman in his life.

Through the use of a male narrator, Cather can express her love and passion to another woman without appearing as unnatural love. She disguises her lesbian identity through the use of a male narrator that “enables Cather to speak from her own sexual identity and express her own emotions for women” (Hermione, 1991, p. 153). Lambert (1982) also opines that “Cather’s fear is pervasive and dominates the development of *My Antonia*, so that the narrative structure itself becomes a defense against erotic expression” (p. 682). The male narrator Jim Burden is a masquerade to her lesbian identity. However, her language in *My Antonia* reveals her secret. In a society and historical era where gender boundaries are clearly set, Cather was afraid to expose her lesbianism, so she transforms her gender confusion to her literary work.

In addition, scrutinizing her biography, Willa Cather is a lesbian writer and she has a blurring attitude towards gender roles. As a child, she denied the limitations imposed on women and did not accept her feminine gender role. Cather looks like a man by adopting both male’s name and attire. She decided to be a doctor and signed her name “William Cather, MD” or “Willie Cather MD”. She cross dressed by wearing boyish clothes and cut her hair like a boy. “At college in Lincoln, her appearance is boyishly short hair and starched shirts rather than the customary frilly blouses-like her desire to play only male roles in college dramatic productions- continued to reflect her ‘male’ ambition” (Lambert, 1982, p. 678). Not only at college Cather dressed and acted as a man, she

continued to cut her hair short for at least her first year at the university and wore starched shirts like a man instead of feminine shirtwaists; she did put on skirts, though she wore them shorter than most women, daringly short...She also continued taking male roles in dramatic productions and singing her name William Cather. (Woodress, 1987, p. 69)

Changing her name and dress is her declaration to change her gender. Cather’s transformation and association with man’s appearance and personality represent a different personality and prediction to a lesbian personality. O’Brien (1984) asserts the following:

Her attraction to a rebellious posture thus anticipates her acceptance of an identity linked with ‘unnaturalness’ a few years later...since lesbianism was frequently associated...with ‘inversion’ a young woman who had defiantly adopted male dress and name in adolescence might well have been more aware that her attraction to other women was ‘deviant’ than one who was strongly female identified. (p. 587)

Her behavior in her early childhood and adolescence paved the way to her blurred gender identity and she transforms her behavior to her characters. Like Cather, Antonia wears men’s attire and behaves like men.

Furthermore, Cather never married, but she had strong romantic relations with many women, “After the affair with Louise [Pound] ended she found more stable, nurturing relationships, first with Isabelle McClung and then with Edith Lewis” (O’Brien, 1984, p. 590). She sent them many affectionate letters that are “central to establishing her sexual identity” (p. 580). Her lesbian identity was clearer after McClung was married to Jan Hambourg. “The great passion of

Cather's life seems to have been for Isabelle McClung...Just before she began work on *My Antonia*, she was alarmed to learn that Isabelle McClung had married" (Vaughn as cited in Cather, 1994, p. xxi). Cather suffered from emotional trauma and myriad emotions of jealousy and depression. To comfort herself, Cather turned to words and literary works that deliberately or undeliberately reflect her lesbian identity.

Cather manifests her lesbianism not only in her personal life, but in her literary life too. Cather is "a lesbian writer forced to disguise or to conceal the emotional source of her fiction, reassuring herself that the reader fills the absence in the text by intuiting the subterranean, unwritten subtext" (O'Brien, 1984, p. 577). She was unable to expose her lesbianism, so she embodies it in her language. Lambert (1982) states that "she could not, or did not, acknowledge her homosexuality and who, in her fiction, trans- formed her emotional life and experiences into acceptable, hetero- sexual forms and guises" (p. 676). Because she is a lesbian, she is "encoding a lesbian attachment whenever she was writing of heterosexual love... The heterosexual cover story is not then invariably the false one, the lesbian context the real" (O'Brien, 1984, p. 597). In fact, before her death, she asked for burning all her correspondences that were most of them with women. She wants to conceal evidences of her lesbianism. Yet, fortunately, there are remaining letters that show her gender identity that can help in interpreting her literary texts.

Willa Cather's novel *My Antonia* seems, at first glance, easy and clear, but it actually hides a myriad of meanings by reading it from different angles. It consciously or unconsciously reveals Cather's lesbian identity. "The tension between expression and suppression, revealing and concealing, produced fiction that is subtle, richly symbolic, and ambiguous, enriched by the repressed, the hidden and the covert" (O'Brien, 1984, p. 598). Although Cather uses a male narrator, Jim Burden who is Cather herself to disguise her queer identity, her lesbian identity cannot go unnoticed. Lambert (1982) opines the following: "these disguised relationships are characterized by an irrational, hopeless quality and by the fact that the male member of the couple, who is also the central consciousness of the novel, is convincingly male-is, in fact, female and lesbian" (p.682). Thus, Cather's use of a male mask, characters' portrayal and male-female relationships manifest her lesbian identity because she represents unnatural lesbian relationships rather than a heterosexual love.

4-Conclusion

Consequently, the study vindicates that Cather's *My Antonia* embodies blurred gender roles in relation to both male and female characters. Cather's characters are obscure, androgynous and they show confusion of gender identity. Through the analysis of the novel from a biographical standpoint, it is found that the secret behind her use of a male narrator in a novel that is merely about a female character and females' issues is to hide her lesbian identity. Hence, Cather's language unravels a disguised aspect of her gender identity. In other words, an author's language can greatly help in decoding something relevant to his/her identity and this is clearly demonstrated through the analytical study of Cather's *My Antonia*. Cather's language is clearly tied to her gender. So, the

relationship between language and gender is an important issue worth investigation especially in modern society and literature where the boundaries between the two genders are fluctuated. Yet, this is only one possible interpretation and Cather's use of a male narrator is open to further future research.

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DIDACTICS IN PREPARING STUDENTS TO TEACH EFL

Abstract

The present paper is a study of a hundred and fifty one (151) undergraduate students, focused on inferring the significance and effectiveness of studying didactics and assessing students' background about the teaching profession. It also seeks to show an evaluation of the readiness and capacities of Master degree students, since many researchers claimed that the study of didactics is useless inside classrooms, and that most teachers rely upon their creativity and self-abilities in teaching rather than theories of teaching and learning. The research methodology adopted in this study is a descriptive one. It intended to describe two main variables: Didactics and student's preparation to become EFL teachers. Data had been gathered through a series of questionnaires, administered to a sample of 151 participants and other questionnaire had been delivered to 04 teachers at the English department, Khenchela University. Finally, the results which had been obtained from this study showed that students gained a sufficient amount of knowledge which may serve them well in their teaching career; they consider themselves ready and capable to teach the moment they graduate.

Keywords: Didactics, Effectiveness, Master Program, Preparation, Teaching EFL.

1. Introduction

In recent years, academic degrees (Masters, PhDs) on didactics have fast grown and the field is in great development. The aim behind teaching didactics as a Master degree specialization in the Algerian universities is not only the intellectual development of students, but also training them for their subsequent entry into the workforce (as teachers) and providing Algerian schools with teachers aware of their work domain. This new situation is justified by a strong need to search for an effective, ideal, and a good source of knowledgeable and confident teachers, who would successfully teach students a foreign language (specifically English) in the classroom. Foreign language teaching has a tight relationship with didactics; the more the teacher is aware of this field, the more he can improve his practice. Studying didactics (as a theory of teaching profession) merits a lot of attention since it has a significant role in forming competencies and building a useful knowledge base for teaching. And since it aims to provide students with a solid grounding in teaching EFL, by introducing to them the proper features of teaching methodology and all elements that interact within the classroom, we wanted to explore its effectiveness and impact on EFL students. In this study, our major objectives were: To determine the significance and effectiveness of studying didactics, to assess whether students

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have a sufficient background (grasped knowledge) about the teaching profession, and to evaluate the readiness and capacities of Master degree students. Therefore, the present research may well be a reference to understand the great usefulness of the “teaching methodology” (Didactics) in the teaching of EFL. Secondly, facilitate decisions about individuals who plan to become teachers of English, but they struggle to choose the right specialization in their postgraduate studies by presenting to them the importance of studying didactics. Finally, it may be a source of help for teachers; in order to take in consideration the weaknesses that students feel and prevent them from achieving the goal of their study.

2. Review of Literature

The role of the subject of Didactics of Foreign Language teaching in general and English language in particular is becoming a major concern for theoreticians and postgraduates belonging to this field of study. This growing interest is taking such a dimension because of the importance of the quality of teaching English as a foreign language nowadays. Nowadays, the term didactics takes under its wings a wide range of concepts related to teaching and learning which doesn't only change the individual but also others' view about this field which was neglected and seen as unworthy. Didactics offers a very reliable and useful source for nourishing teachers' knowledge and practice to be relied upon in their teaching profession. Reflections about the teacher, the pupil, learning material, methods, aids, school, educative circumstances, etc. are of importance to didactics.

2.1 General Understanding of Didactics

Gundem (1998: 4) defines didactics as a science and a theory of teaching and learning under any circumstances and in any form. In a similar way, and supporting to Gundem view, a general definition was presented by Bengtsson's (1997), which embraces other ideas then understanding and explaining teaching but also how the didactic research affects the individual's thinking and memory and the relationship between teaching and learning. It means that didactics has many advantages in the process of learning about teaching. Another relevant participation to understand the meaning of didactics is done by Steffensen (2003) from the Danish University of Education in Copenhagen, who has researched into the use and understanding of the term didactics amongst teacher students who are training to become teachers at elementary and middle school in the last decades of the 20th century and he has concluded that the term is primarily understood as the “method of teaching”. We completely agree with the latter views since. Furthermore, for Kansanen didactics is simply the professional and scientific basis for the teaching profession i.e. foreign language didactics can serve well as the professional scientific background for language teachers. (As cited in Harjanne & Tella, 2007).

In addition, didactics can be either general or subject. By general we mean “*the academic theory of teaching and learning in all its forms and on all levels*” Dolch (1967). In other words, it is the most abstract and it is not bound to a concrete and specific teaching situation, but is focused on teaching and learning situations in general. It is often referred to as simply didactics. In contrast,

subject didactics is considered to be the nearest to the outside world since it is connected to a specific subject or subject area (e.g. English language: Didactics of English Language). According to Lorentzen et al. (1998) and Aase (1990): subject didactics consists of all the reflections one may associate with a subject and the teaching of this subject that may lead to increased knowledge about the nature of the subject, the legitimacy of the subject, and increased knowledge about how the subject can be learned, taught and developed.

This makes us understand that both of general and subject didactics offer explanations and expositions of how teaching appears in the everyday life of people, of its nature, the terrain that it occupies and its limits. Good teaching involves the application of the findings of research and the teacher's role is to put research-based principles into practice

2.2 Teaching as a Part of Didactics

Jack C. Richards consider that since teaching is considered to be a science, scientific investigations and empirical researches are the source and the base to practice teaching. Good teaching involves the application of the findings of these researches and the teacher's role is to put them into practice; and that a primary source for teachers' classroom practices is teachers' belief systems, the information, attitudes, values, theories and assumptions about teaching and learning which teachers build up over time and bring with them to the classroom, he continues: "*teacher beliefs form a structured set of principles that are derived from experience, school practice, personality, educational theory, reading, and other*".

2.3 Focal Elements in Master Programme

English foreign language teachers especially are expected to give their students high quality teaching in English as a foreign language using a sound theoretical framework for language acquisition with the pedagogy for teaching languages. Each English languages faculty proposes a program to be studied through two years according to the specialization to be taught to obtain a Master degree.

English department courses in Didactics of Foreign Languages and Cultures, at Khenchela University, are taught to Master degree students by experienced faculty members in teaching. This specialization aims to prepare and train students (theoretically) to become teachers (However, this does not mean that every Master degree student wants to become a teacher) through exposing them to related perceptions and theories. Students acquire the necessary theoretical skills for English language instruction and curriculum design, each module is taught for one hour and a half per week for a whole semester. Some modules are dealt with during only one semester, some for two semesters and others for three semesters. Lund (2003) sees that didactics refers to any social practice in which learners or teachers are configured around a knowledge domain, and in which knowledge building is made visible by grouping knowledge into educational subjects i.e. the didactics part aims to make students aware of how language, culture and literature can be used in the classroom and knowledge of and skills in planning, giving reasons for, implementing and assessing English language teaching, presented in the courses at university.

Students are supposed to improve their knowledge of how both culture and literature can be taught in the English classroom; Knowledge of how to use language correctly; knowledge of learning strategies, learning styles and learning environments; attitudes to teaching EFL; Skills in written and oral presentations. In support the latter view, Marsh (1982) discussed that much preparation of teachers is explicitly oriented towards developing teachers' teaching skills, especially their classroom practice.

The following table presents all the modules which are dealt with during three semesters (in 2 years); the content of each module is introduced in the table, as well as specification of the semester in which the module is taught.

Module	Content	S1	S2	S3
DTL (Didactique de Textes Littéraire)	Why and how to teach a literary text The use of literary texts The role of literary texts in the language classroom. Selection of appropriate literary texts and some proposed issues which may be faced through.	×	×	
DCL (Didactique de Compétences Linguistiques)	The four (4) skills: Writing, reading, listening, speaking.	×	×	
DLE (Didactique de la Langue Etrangère)	The syllabus. Keeping discipline in the classroom. Blooms' Taxonomy CBA. Description of the Algerian secondary school. Coursework (At the Crossroads). Project work. The use of songs/music in the classroom. Young learners. Adult learners.	×	×	×
Interculturali ty	Identity: who are we? Essentialism versus Non-essentialism. Successful intercultural communication.	×		
Sociolinguist	About Sociolinguistics.	×		

ics	Basic concepts in sociolinguistics. Language use in society. Language variation in society. Language forms in society. Language and sociolinguistic determinants.			
Semiology	About Semiotics. Basic issues in semiotics. What do signs mean? How signs work? Why study Semiotics? Denotation and connotation.	×		
Research Methodology	Important concepts in any dissertation/thesis. How to write a research proposal. Steps to write a Master dissertation. How to prepare a Master viva.	×	×	×
Psycho-pedagogy	About Psycho-pedagogy. Objectives of Psycho-pedagogy. Various strategies of language teaching.		×	
Pragmatics	About Pragmatics. Pragmatics and language structure. Interests of pragmatics.		×	
Culture and teaching languages	Definition of culture. Why is culture? Teaching culture through language. Key consideration in developing cultural awareness in EFL classroom. Stages of acculturation.		×	
LLS (Language Learning Strategies)	About LLS Strategies of language learning (learner-centered) Introducing famous theorists like Chamot Unna, Oxford, O'malley ...			×

	SILL (Strategy Inventory for <i>Language Learning</i>) and CALLA (Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach).			
Art, media and culture	Art vs. Arts. Multimedia vs. Multimedia. The effect of media on culture. The effect of media on Art.			×
French Language	Basics of the French language.	×	×	×
T.I.C.E (Technologies de l'information et de la communication pour l'enseignement)	About the digital tools and products that can be used in education and teaching and how to use computers in professional way.	×	×	

Table1: Master Degree Modules Taught in Two Years

In the previous table, we tried to bring to light all the important elements being taught to Master students through two years. The modules taught to Master students at Khenchela University serve immensely in training and surrounding them with useful knowledge; modules like Language Didactics, LLS and others are common in teacher education programs in many universities around the world. These modules have showed their effectiveness whenever students shift to the school reality (as teachers).

In regard to the modules introduced in the previous table, the following three elements were dealt with extensively through the entire program:

1- Language Didactics: Courses main focus is on the teaching and learning of English language in a formal setting (institutional). It deals specifically with methods of learning, teaching grammar (morphology, syntax) and vocabulary (connotation, register, pronunciation...), as well as development of language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening). It is concerned largely with linguistic phenomena, characteristics of speakers, strategies of language learning and teaching as well as issues which may prevent the acquisition of English language.

2- Literature Didactics: it is briefly about the meaningful use of literary texts; both as subject and medium of English language teaching. Courses are concerned with the use of literary texts (Poetry, prose and drama), as well as films and new media in teaching English languages. Communicative, literary and intercultural competences are of principal interest, since they all can be strengthened through the use of literature. Also, showing out its significance in educational processes and aims in addition to curricula.

3- Culture Didactics: It concentrates on the acquisition of cultural knowledge and intercultural abilities through the text and its contextualization. It addresses also understanding language as a part of culture, its characteristics are examined in relation to other cultural characteristics through discussions of the concept of culture, the discourse on teaching culture through media, the recognition of the communicative and attitudinal dimension of interculturality as well as the discussion on transculturality.

In a nutshell, from the courses shown in the previous table and as this specialization (Didactics of Foreign Languages) is closely connected to knowledge of learning strategies, learning styles and learning environments...etc, students will improve their:

- Knowledge of how culture can be taught in the English classroom;
- Knowledge of how literature can be taught in the English classroom;
- Knowledge of how to use language correctly;
- Knowledge of learning strategies, learning styles and learning environments in the English language instruction.
- Attitudes to teaching EFL.
- Skills in written and oral presentation in English.

More importantly, all of the preceding elements are included in the lists of types of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and values that perspective teachers or any teacher must have a mastery of, offered by many researchers like Anne Grosso de Leon, Anne Reynolds, Robert Glaser, Hilda Borko and Ralph Putnam, Olugbemiro Jegede, Margaret Taplin, and Sing-Lai Chan.

3. Methodology

3.1 Context

The study took place in the department of English Language at Abbas Laghrour University in Khenchela in the academic year 2014-2015. For the purpose of this study, we opted for descriptive research in order to obtain a picture of second year Master students (Specialization: Didactics of Foreign Languages and Cultures) opinions and beliefs about the study of didactics as a Master degree program at Khenchela University. Our chances in conducting an experimental research were very little, because second year Master students attended classes for one short semester and used to study only two (02) days per week; which did not offer the right environment or enough time for experimental manipulation. In addition, we were not seeking any change in the subjects being studied because our interests is far from manipulating subjects or environment, but we wanted to describe and collect information from the participants as they are. This study was an attempt towards confirming or rejecting what we have hypothesized at the beginning of this research whether didactics as a Master specialty can prepare students to be confident teachers with sufficient knowledge to teach EFL.

3.2 Participants

For the present study, we dealt with a sample of a hundred and fifty one (151) second year Master degree students, from a total population of a hundred

and seventy eight (178) students of the English Department at Khenchela University. The sample consisted of ninety two (92) participants, both males and females, the sample's ages, approximately, ranged from about twenty two (22) to fifty eight (58). However, both variables of sex and age were not taken into consideration in our research. The reason behind choosing to work with second year students was our belief that they are the closest to participate in teachers' job competitions to start working in an official way. Also, they were more likely able to express their ideas and more conscious of their attitudes than first year Master degree students. The entire process of sampling was done in a single step: we brought a complete and up-to-date list of population (178 students) provided by the English department and a new list of students with no experience in teaching was made (Excluding 27 students with teaching experience). We ended up with one hundred and fifty one (151) students. The research project was explained to the prospective participants who accepted to take part in the research.

Our sample of teachers were those teachers who taught modules tightly related to didactics to the Master degree students, so this needed no selection since there were four (04) main teachers.

3.3 Procedures

In order to obtain both students and teachers views, questionnaires were designed. The large number of students is the reason behind choosing a questionnaire as data collection tool. We also opted for questionnaire with teachers instead of interview due to the difficulties which faced us to plan interviews with them. The questionnaires were directly administered to students and teachers of the English department at Khenchela University after the examinations of the 3rd semester 2014/2015.

3.3.1 Description and Aim of Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire which was administered to second year Master students at Abbas Laghrour University, aiming to collect students' impressions and attitudes about the significance of didactics in preparing them to teach EFL, consisted of twenty (20) close-ended questions organized in eight (08) sections as follow:

-Section one, from question 1 to question 3: general questions about student's age, gender and their enjoyment in studying didactics.

-Section two, questions 4 and 5: students' view about the participation of didactics in preparing them to teach and to understand the role of teachers.

-Section three, from question 6 to question 8: number of approaches, methods and techniques which students have learned.

-Section four, questions 9 and 10: about the effect of didactics on students' way of thinking and personality

-Section five, from question 11 to question 13: students' background about key educational and psychological concepts as well as characteristics of their future students

-Section six, questions 14 and 15: students' opinions about language didactics, culture didactics and literature didactics

-Section seven, question 16 and 17: students' readiness to become teachers

-Section eight, from question 18 to question 20: Students 'difficulties and suggestions about Master program

3.3.2 Description and Aim of Teachers' Questionnaire

Teachers' questionnaire consisted of fourteen (14) close-ended questions. It was given to four (04) teachers of "Didactics" in the Department of languages at Abbas Laghrour University in Khenchela in order to obtain teachers' views of didactics, and at the same time of their students' perceptions and attitudes. The questionnaire included five (05) sections as follow:

-Section one, from question 1 to question 4: includes general questions about teachers' experience in teaching in general and teaching didactics in specific.

- Section two, questions 5 and 6: asks about the effects of didactics, generally on students' personalities and specifically on their beliefs about their abilities as prospective teachers.

- Section three, from question 7 to question 9: teachers' main focus while teaching didactics to Master Degree students.

-Section four, questions 10 and 14: inquires about teachers' view of students' background and understanding of their future role as teachers of English as a Foreign Language as well as the readiness of students to teach English the moment they graduate

- Section five, consists of only one question about teachers' point of view about didactics as a Master specialization.

4. Results and Discussion

As a global understanding of students' questionnaire results, it was clearly noticed that students' answers on the whole were very positive. This is because when looking globally to the different sections, it is directly understood that their opinions and attitudes towards the statements were entirely supporting the previous hypothesis concerning the significance of didactics in preparing students to become teachers and about their readiness and abilities. The majority agreed with almost all the statements which confront our hypothesis. Each section's results will be interpreted as following:

Section One: Collected data revealed different ages, the majority of them swung between 22 years and 30 years old, female dominance is also obvious. The third point was slightly connected to the research inquired about students' enjoyment in studying the field of didactics with two high positive responses: enjoy it very much and a lot.

Section two: A large number of participants declared that didactics participated in the readiness of students to teach EFL. With a similar high

number, they confirmed their understanding of the role of the teacher in teaching EFL.

Section Three: In this section, students fairly admitted that they know from 2-5 approaches, methods and a larger number of techniques of teaching English language.

Section Four: The participants stated that the study of didactics had a great effect on their attitudes which also made them think that theory based methodologies of teaching made teaching a more interesting career.

Section Five: Most participants declared that they have an acceptable or a high psychological concept of learning about didactics. Surprisingly, students almost had an equivalent share of background about classroom management, methods of teaching, facts about students, syllabus and lesson plan and problem solving. They had also admitted their awareness about their future students' characteristics and the variations among them.

Section Six: The teaching of Language Didactics, Literature Didactics and Culture Didactics in combination was generally considered helpful for students. Though, Language Didactics had more impact on students either as being students or for the future as prospective teachers.

Section Seven: The participants declared their readiness to start teaching EFL the moment they graduate. However, they believed that this shift will be a bit difficult.

Section Eight: One of the difficulties which students had faced and stood as an obstacle for them, was the lack of "application" or what is known as the practical training. They suggested that more studying hours should be added, organizing more conferences as well, and include other modules in order to study this field deeply, and lastly to engage more technology in their classroom. Finally, the research participants stated that they are luckier and have more chances to be good teachers than other students who are studying other specializations.

On the other hand, as it is previously stated, the purpose behind teachers' questionnaire was to obtain professional perceptions towards what is being undertaken in this research. The experienced teachers in TEFL in general and didactics specifically claimed their comfortability with the teaching of this field. Even though some teachers found that the program is not doing well, some others confirmed its acceptable effectiveness. Results from teachers' questionnaire strongly emphasized that the students have positive beliefs about their abilities as prospective teachers as well as the positive effect of didactics on their attitudes. Teachers focused mainly on the knowledge being transmitted to students as prospective teachers. Even though the teaching of Language Didactics, literature Didactics and culture Didactics in combination is helpful, teachers had mostly focused on language Didactics. More importantly, in section four, some teachers thought that the students have a good background about teaching and that they understand their role for the future; whereas some others think the opposite. All teachers claimed that they prepare their students for the shift from theory to application, part of them made it clear that their students are

ready for the shift and able to teach when they graduate. Finally, teachers strongly agreed with the opinion which says that studying didactics at university gives students more chances to be effective teachers comparing with other specializations.

Both teachers' questionnaire and students' questionnaire helped a lot in gaining the required data to confirm our research hypothesis, and to shed light on the field of didactics (the program itself) which is taught to Master degree students, as well as the suggestions of both students and teachers and the surrounding difficulties. Another promising finding was that students show a good understanding of the value of theories and principles for foreign language learning/teaching; and their capability for independent and critical evaluation of methods, forms of instruction and teaching material. This ensures the idea that students' cognitions and conceptions about the science of teaching are sufficient and that both of the proposed program and the faculty teachers served well in students' preparation for the shift to become teachers of English as foreign language. In addition, students' many-sided knowledge and their whole background made them aware of teacher's role, and are considered to be able and ready to enter to the work place and start teaching; agreeing with Kansanen (1990:17) who finds out that didactics is regarded as the professional and scientific basis for the teaching profession

We ended up with the following suggestions and recommendations:

- The lack of application is considered as an obstacle preventing students from acquiring more knowledge about teaching profession. Therefore, the learning environment should not be 'charged' only theoretically, but allowing students practical trainings with professional teachers are needed since it is an effective way to acquire (practical) knowledge.
- English language department should engage and work hard to put in use more technology throughout the Master program; to help students in many sides in their learning process.
- This research can be conducted (Experimental research) on experienced teachers (at least 3 years of teaching) who have Master degree in Didactics of Foreign Language and currently teaching EFL; to see the extent to which they find didactics useful in their teaching process, and if they rely upon its theories.

5. Conclusion

Our interest is in highlighting the positive effect of studying didactics and its role in preparing Master degree students to become EFL teachers, at the same time focusing greatly on students' evaluation of themselves, motivated the study presented here, with an emphasis on how a group of 151 undergraduate students in a Master degree program observed didactics and its role in teacher preparation. To that end we approached the context of the program taught focusing on the modules, as well as both students and teachers' opinions. Through this estimation of the data obtained, the results that we end up with are in accordance with our review of literature and in the direction of our research hypothesis; the results permit us to create a representative picture of the role of didactics in teacher preparation, bringing us to the three conclusions below.

The first is that the study of English language Didactics significantly provides practical guiding theoretical concepts through the empiric research of contexts concerning teaching and learning language. It also makes an important link between the scientific education at the university and the occupational field school.

The second conclusion is that the study of didactics proposes important theoretical knowledge and insight; which do play a significant part in understanding well the domain of teaching. Moreover, didactics is necessary for the prospective teacher to be made aware of his vocational responsibility and put him into the stream.

We finally concluded that Didactics of foreign Language introduces all the necessary elements and concepts which serve students to become effective teachers in the future. Moreover, students good understanding of the value of theories and principles for foreign language learning, their capability for independent and critical evaluation of methods, forms of instruction and teaching material made us ensure the idea that students 'cognitions and conceptions about the science of teaching are sufficient, and that both of the proposed program and teachers served well in students' preparation for the shift.

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EXTENSIVE READING INSTRUCTION VIA E-BOOKS IMPACT ON EFL STUDENTS' READING ATTITUDE AND MOTIVATION, AND READING SKILLS

Abstract

Extensive reading instruction that emphasizes quantity of books read gives priority to the student to choose the reading material. Opting for the one that fits their level of proficiency and interest makes EFL readers confront the phenomenon of e-books accessibility against paper books shortage. This research seeks to explore EFL students' motivation and attitude towards e-books reading, and identify if this latter have the same impact on their reading skills as paper books. In particular, the study aims at checking EFL students' perceptions towards their experience in reading e-books and finding out if this kind of reading materials motivate them to read more as these latter improve their reading skills mainly comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. This work is led through the analysis of questionnaires administered to second year students of English at the École Normale Supérieure de Constantine as being subjects to extensive reading instruction training in their Reading Techniques sessions. Discussion of the results revealed that despite students' definite preference for paper book; however, the numerous advantages offered by e-books as enlarging students' culture and knowledge, vocabulary acquisition do stimulate EFL learners to cope with this new type of reading materials: e-books.

Keywords: E-Books, EFL readers, Extensive Reading, Reading attitude, Reading Motivation, Reading skills

1. Introduction

Teaching reading techniques at the École Normal Supérieure de Constantine (ENS-C) is provided to first and second year students. During the first year, they are introduced to the different reading skills used at the three levels of the reading process: before reading, while reading, and after reading. In their second year, students put into practice the acquired skills within two reading courses: intensive reading approach and extensive reading approach. Through an intensive reading instruction, they read full texts where the teacher embeds within the arranged instruction some reading strategies such as asking for the main idea, guessing word meaning from context, studying text organization, summarizing...etc for the sake of developing students' text understanding. In an extensive course, however, students are requested to talk about the books they read at home in organized classroom tasks such as making brief oral reports to the class, organizing classroom discussions around the book major and minor characters, main events, themes, cultural aspects, ...etc.

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This reading course has always been at the center of EFL educators' attention as it enables the students to develop some reading skills and improve their literacy education (Day and Bamford 1988; Conley, 1996; Davies, 1995; Harris, 2001). As the main objective is encouraging reading in a quantity, central is the role of the chosen book in an Extensive Reading classroom. Opting for the one that fits their level of proficiency and interest, EFL readers confront the phenomenon of e-books accessibility against paper books shortage. Because second year students at the ENS of Constantine are experiencing reading e-books as part in the extensive reading course, we aim to investigate their motivation and attitude towards reading this digital formats, and identify if this latter have the same impact on their reading skills mainly comprehension and vocabulary acquisition as paper books.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Theoretical Framework of the Extensive Reading Approach

Though extensive and intensive are complementary programs, postulates Nutall (1982: 23), they differ in many aspects. Distinct from intensive reading instruction where priority is to help students construct detailed meaning from the text, develop reading skills, and enhance vocabulary and grammar knowledge; extensive reading main concern is the reading of large quantities of long texts for global understanding. The learning objectives in this kind of instruction is encouraging students to engage fully in more and more readings with the intention of obtaining pleasure from the texts far from teacher's guidance and help (Robb & Susser, 1989). The provided instruction focus more on fluency over reading accuracy and on the general comprehension of the material read rather than detailed understanding of every word (Miller, 2013). Extensive reading, then, calls for boosting students to read independently in the target language increasing amount of materials for information and pleasure manifesting an enjoyment towards their readings.

The main assumption is that when students' exposure to large quantities of written discourse is combined with the efforts furnished while reading help in improving students' reading ability (Smith, 1982; Robb and Susser, 1989). Since then, extensive reading has been recognized as the most beneficial approach in second /foreign language education (Day & Bamford, 1998; Shen, 2008). Researches show that when reading extensively materials of their own choice, EFL student's ability to read consequently improves and a sense of responsibility is simultaneously shaped in him, assert Abersold and Field (1997). This reading autonomy that is manifested via taking a full responsibility in choosing the material to be read, reading it at any time in the day, and stopping to read when needed gives freedom to the reader from any external pressure exercised on him. Because of the opportunity in selecting the material to be read is placed at the forefront in extensive reading instruction, what should be considered during the process of material choice?

2.2. Criteria of the Reading Material

The concept of choice is referred to by Seitz (2010) as to provide students with the opportunity to select tasks and texts which they find an interest in, or they recognize as something that is personally relevant. As extensive reading instruction motivates students to select their reading texts by themselves, it is important to raise students' awareness towards the main characteristics of the reading material; hence, facilitating the selection task. It is recommended that L2/EFL teachers have to encourage students read large amount of printed materials with varying topics and of multiple genres (Day & Bamford, 1998). In other words, the reading texts should cover various topics and should be of distinct genres. Besides varying the sources of reading materials, the most significant factors in matching the suitable material for this kind of reading instruction are mainly related to the students' level of understanding, interests, and needs.

To begin with selected material should fit students' interest. To motivate students to fully engage in this task and thus read more, the reading materials are to be interesting for them (Day, 1994). According to this expert, "when the topic of a passage is not of interest to students, their motivation to read is substantially lessened. Without this motivation, it is exceedingly difficult to meet one of the generally accepted aims of a reading program: to help get the learners to read in English on their own, outside the reading classroom" (ibid: 20). Therefore, in the absence of appealing texts, very little is expected. That is why while reading extensively, learners are free, indeed encouraged, to stop reading anything they find to be too difficult, or turns out not to be of interest. The teacher's role is to boost students to read more and more interesting topics and books because students' motivation increases more and more when they do task out of curiosity and interest (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The teacher' role may expand via encouraging his/her students to simply stop reading if they lack interest in the reading materials because learners may become de-motivated if they choose an unsuitable text (Harris, 2001:115).

Choosing an interesting reading material is as important as orienting students towards materials that suit their level of comprehension. Bamford and Day (1998:103) focus more on the principle of simplification as a basis in material selection. The material, to be read, should not be beyond the readers' grammatical and linguistic competence and vocabulary. Because when the reading materials exceed students' level of understanding, they may experience the feeling of being unable to read in the target language (Jiménez, 2007). This results in developing a negative attitude towards reading which, in its turn, leads the learner to stop extensive reading (Bamford & Day, 1998). To avoid this kind of problems, teachers are advised to "simplify the texts in order to make them accessible for the students" (Jiménez, 2007: 133).

In short, students may benefit a lot from their readings when they use understandable, interesting and enjoyable materials; instead of being forced to decode and translate texts hopelessly beyond their abilities.

2.3.E-Books Definition

As explained previously, students may gain a lot when reading large amount of self-selected materials that they are expected to understand, to enjoy and to learn from. To choose the reading book, students are between two formats of books: paper book and electronic book (e-book). No one could dismiss from the importance of the former, however, digitalization transforms the reading habit from just turning the pages of a printed book to pressing the button on a computer or just touching the screen of an electronic device. Since the shift from paper to screen is evolutionary and nearly inevitable (Jeong, 2012) let us dig deep into this digital world.

Even though the dictionary definitions are generalizations rather than specifications, it is almost important when studying something to move from general to specific. The concept of e-book is referred to by The Concise Oxford English Dictionary (2002) as “an electronic version of a printed book which can be read on a personal computer or handheld device designed specifically for this purpose” (p, 451). Similar to the previous description, Merriam Webster-dictionary (<http://merriam-webster.com>) considers that this new shape is a book composed in or converted to digital format for the unique purpose to be displayed on an electronic device. By a matter of fact, readers need access to devices such as e-reader, iPod, tablets, cellphones...etc that are created primarily for reading electronic versions as e-books, periodicals, and newspapers.

In listing down the main characteristics of e-books, Grimshaw et al., (2007) focus on the electronic features included in this digitized format. For these scholars, “electronic books may come with some form of digitized speech that provides word pronunciation, dictionary entries and definitions to aid comprehension. Others have a fully digitized narration accompanied by highlighting of the relevant text” (p, 584). Moreover, Page turning that is a basic option in a digitized formats, is carried out through “the use of forward and backward arrows” explains Grimshaw et al., (ibid). The electronic devices make it easy for students to choose the reading material with the touch of a button, to enlarge the text fonts when necessary, to watch the pictures that are animated and so on.

2.4.E-Books vs. Paper Books

E-books have some benefits over paper books. The two prominent factors for using e-books, explains Jeong (2012:391), are “searchability” and “availability”. These features enable the reader to get access easily within a short of time twenty four (24) hours a day to an unlimited number of e-books. Beside the affordability of e-books and the rapidity while searching for this latter, flexibility is another characteristic that favors this digital format. According to Chou (2014), “the commonly recognized advantages of e-books are the greater flexibility and accessibility over hardcopy texts and the potential of adding supportive materials, such as visual aids or audio clips, to websites” (p,64).

One focal point favoring the e-book over the paper book is related to the text flexibility. The computer or any other electronic device can be used to modify

the way the digital text is read through changing the font face, size, and color of digital text. Besides the modifications that readers can brought on the lay out of the electronic text, they can benefit from other advantages such as “text can be read out loud; concepts can be defined and explained; multiple illustrations can appear simultaneously; links can lead to supportive information...” argue (Horney & Anderson-Inman, 2007: 153). These electronic features that the reader utilizes while reading the e-book facilitate for him the reading process by providing assistance such as word pronunciation, word definition...etc, something that can never be done while reading from a paper book.

The fact that the physical act of reading deviates from turning the pages of a bound print book to pressing the buttons or touching the screen of an electronic device to make text materialize onscreen, the reader has to consider all the aspects highlighted above when dealing with an e-format of books.

2.5.Extensive Reading via E-books

According to Moody (2010:38), studies suggest that digital supports available in e-books can assist reading engagement, vocabulary development, comprehension, and phonological awareness skills. For this scholar, the use of digital scaffolding supports enables the reader to develop his reading skills. Chen and his associates (2013) assert that e-book Extensive Reading Program training enables students to experience improvement in their reading skills mainly reading comprehension.

Besides the crucial effect of these online reading materials on students’ reading skills, the reading attitude towards this kind of books is proved to be positive. In a study undergone at the University of Taiwan by Sun (2003), EFL learners were invited to participate in an Extensive Reading Online program (ERO) where they experienced e-reading in quantity. Results purport that students held a positive attitude toward this reading system.

3. Methodology

To investigate whether the transition from print to digital formats that is taking place in the ENS of Constantine educational setting effects positively or negatively students’ reading attitude, motivation, and their reading skills; we are guided by the following research questions:

1. Do 2nd year EFL students at the ENS-C read e-books for the same reasons as paper books?
2. What kind of attitude do 2nd year EFL students hold towards reading e-books?
3. What specific reasons currently encourage or discourage students from reading e-books?
4. Do e-books contribute in developing 2nd year EFL students’ reading skills mainly comprehension and vocabulary acquisition?
5. Can e-books substitute paper book in the future?

3.1.Participants

To explore the above questions, a survey study was undergone with 2nd year university students. Thirty (30) students majoring in English at the department of English in the ENS of Constantine participated in this study. The rationale

behind selecting this sampling was that all the participants have experienced during their Reading Techniques sessions reading both print books and e-books. As Extensive Reading requires from the students reading in quantity, learners are faced to the problem of print books shortage against e-books availability.

3.2. Research Procedure

The questionnaire as a data collection tool in this study was utilized to investigate through it about this new reading experience that invades the readers' environment. Selecting the questionnaire as a tool for data collection from this sample has its advantages and disadvantages. It is a widely used tool in different researches. It is a time- saving tool that can be used both with a large, or a small number of subjects providing a great deal of information. The chief aim of the administered questionnaire is to check EFL student's beliefs towards their experience in reading e-books. The four (04) sections of the questionnaire enable us to investigate, not only, students' attitude and motivation towards e-books reading; but, mainly, to find out if this kind of reading materials improve their reading skills mainly comprehension and vocabulary acquisition.

3.2.1. Description of the Students' Questionnaire

In section one, the first three (03) questions pertain to the act of reading in English; how often students practice reading, where they read, and whether they like to read in class. We intended, then, to have a wider knowledge about the reading habits and environment of our participants in this study. The last four (04) questions of the same section relate to their attitude towards reading books, how do they prefer to choose their reading materials, and whether or not they are guided by their teacher during the reading activity. The reason behind is to know if students are aware about the most significant factors in choosing the reading materials.

The second section of the questionnaire deals with students' experience in reading e-books. Whereas, the first item inquires about the informants' preferred reading material either print book or e-book; the other six items in the same section focus on getting information about the respondents' familiarity with this new kind of medium. The aim is know how much they are involved in reading e-books, when did they start this new experience, where is it practiced either in-class or at-home, what kind of hardware facilitates for them reading e-versions. More importantly, we investigated through this section the reading purposes and the literary genres for which an e-book is selected.

Similarly, section three digs deep in the same area of concern as the previous one where the focal point is to investigate about the informants' attitude and perception towards e-books. The first question spots light on how easy or difficult an e-book reading is for students. In the second question, the respondents are asked to react via "yes" or "no" to six statements highlighting the advantages of e-books over print books. The last query in this part examines to what extent an e-book is as enjoyable as a paper book in a reading activity.

The nine (09) questions of the fourth section attempt to explore about students' attitude towards the benefits they could gain when reading e-books.

Whereas the first seven (07) items in this part are 3- point Likert-like scale ranging from 1="agree" to 3="disagree", the two last questions are open ended ones. To avoid getting artificial results, we do not only measure the respondents' degree of agreements or disagreement towards the issue raised; however, they were asked to comment on their ratings. From question one to five (1-5), informants were asked to specify the different areas of improvement that e-books allows. As to whether or not e-books develop their reading comprehension, improve their way of thinking, facilitate for them information access, provide assistance in vocabulary and cultural growth. Q6 revealed the respondents' feeling when reading this kind of books. In Q7, they were interrogated about the importance of e-books in their studies. Via Q8, the informants were asked about their perception about the future of this new type of reading materials in the ENS of Constantine. The last question in this section (Q9) provides a space for the participants to supply any additional feedback about their experience in reading e-books.

4. Results and Discussion

The results of the study are categorized into five major headings turning around students' experience in dealing with the digital format and the gains they developed when reading this kind of material during the ER program they went through at the ENS of Constantine. Hence before digging deep in this area of concern, inquiring about the students' reading habits and environment, their awareness towards the ER factors is vital.

4.1. Students' Reading Habits and Environment

Relevant to the reading habits and environment of the participants, the study findings revealed that 97% of second year English students at the Teachers School of Constantine practice reading in English with varying degrees. Despite their awareness towards this skill, most of them do not read daily. Either they read at least weekly (42%), or they exercise this skill less often (45%), or do not read at all (3%).

When enquiring about their level of enjoyment towards reading books, the rates diverge between those who appreciate reading books very much (49%); and others who enjoy reading books a bit (48%). For the former books create an imaginary world. Adding to gaining knowledge, asserts one of them "*reading a book is similar to becoming immersed in another world of imagination.*" For this portion, books enable students to know others 'thoughts and way of life "*books taught me how to respect others' culture and way of thinking,*" revealed one of them. For the latter portion, however, their degree of enjoyment towards books is a bit low because not all books satisfy their needs as readers. Accordingly, when the reading interest is low the level of enjoyment decreases and vice versa. From this sample, one participant 3% revealed his dislike to reading. For this latter, "*reading is tiring*".

4.2. Students' Awareness towards the ER Factors

On whether or not students are aware about the needed factors in an ER session such as reading large amount of materials independently both for

information and pleasure while manifesting an enjoyment towards their readings experiences, findings demonstrate the following:

In regard to the choice of the reading book, all respondents (100%) prefer selecting their books by themselves. They assumed that since reading is a personal experience, they need to be the only ones involved in this choice because they are more knowledgeable about the topics, genre, and themes they want to read.

When asking them about the factor(s) that are mostly regarded during the process of reading material, their responses vary. They all agreed that the topic, genre, author, language simplicity are taken into account while selecting a book; yet, these latter are influencing their choices with varying degrees. 13% of them prefer reading books of simple language. Since a book is read to be understood; yet, the selected books should fit their level of understanding. Another portion of the sample (13%) perceived reading for the genre and the author are primordial during book selection; yet, 12% regarded the topic as major factor. 52% of the students take the four factors together into account before opting for a book to read. For them when giving these factors equal importance, they will never confront a problem of understanding that results in making them get bored during the reading process. As argued by one of the respondent when saying: “ *I care for all the characteristics while choosing a book, starting from the topic which is the hook for me; the genre encourages me more to finish reading and the language simplicity stimulates me to learn more, and the writer whose books are written with creativity is the best choice*”.

And when asked whether or not the teacher explains the goals and clarifies the ER procedures, 58% of the participants affirm that they are supervised by the teachers during the reading course; however, 42% of them maintain that they are not.

4.3. Students' Experience in Reading e-books

Before examining students' attitude and motivation towards e-books, important is to generate information about their experience with this digital format. As far as, the type of books they preferred to read, 52% of the informants favored reading paper book; yet, 48% of them opted for the digital format. As far as, the purpose(s) stimulating them to approach this type of reading materials, students' responses were the following. For 45%, e-books were read for leisure and spare time; however, for the remaining portion (55%), besides leisure, e-books were approached both for knowledge and general understanding too.

When interrogated about the beginning of their experience with e-books, the majority of the informants encountered this category of books once at the ENS of Constantine (58%). For them, it is the school environments including students' sharing books and the requirements of some subjects such as Reading Technique that stimulated them to begin reading digital books. “*I didn't use to read a lot before coming to ENS; however, studying in this school stimulated me to read e-books simply because I couldn't have access to paper books*”, speculated one of

the participants. Nevertheless for the other respondents (42%), their story with e-books started before they enrolled in the Teacher Training School.

Due to technological advancements, some technological devices (computers, lap tops, I-pods...etc) facilitate the reading of e-books. The hardware that is found to be mostly used by the informants was the mobile phone 55%. For the other devices, 13% of them utilized their lap tops, and 16% relied on their tablets. Yet, for the rest the task of reading digital books was achieved via a mixture of devices.

When asked about the reading setting where e-books are read, it has been recognized from their responses that a large part of the respondents (61%) preferred reading this kind of books at home. The other participants favored other settings such as in class (13%), both at home or in class (10%) or other places (16%) such as in the bus.

With regard to the different reasons stimulating students to read e-books, informants' responses were turning around the facilities e-books provide. While 19% of them read e-books because they are not expensive when compared to paper book, another portion (7%) sought this kind of books simply because the paper book are not enough in the libraries and "*most of the time not all book titles are available in the school library*", affirmed one of the students. The remaining informants (74%) admitted that their access to the digital format was due to all of the previous listed reasons.

4.4. Students' Attitude and Perception towards E-books and their Benefits

Despite the fact that a large portion of students admitted that e-books affordability, availability, lightness, and easy access factors oriented them to select this kind of books; however, when asked if the reading the latter was enjoyable for them; their responses altered. In fact, 77% of the students were not enjoying this kind; still, 23% of them were appreciating this e-format.

Having to do with their perception towards the benefits they gained from reading e-books, the following table sums up these results. Noticeable is the over dominance of the positive attitude in the informants' feedback towards the different gains and benefits they experienced when reading e-books. For a large portion of the sample population, e-books enlarged their foreign culture (77%), helped them getting access to various information (61%), developed their comprehension (45%) and way of thinking (32%), and enhanced their vocabulary acquisition (51%). Some students were neutral in their stand towards the e-books benefits (**See Figure1**). Negligible percentages, however, displayed students' negative attitude towards e-books advantages (**See Figure1**). Notwithstanding, when questioned "if e-books make reader feel relaxed", 52% of the respondents manifested their disagreement. Holding this negative attitude was mainly due to the e-books shortcomings such as lack of concentration, headaches, and eyes strains. Still 26% felt themselves relaxed when reading digital books.

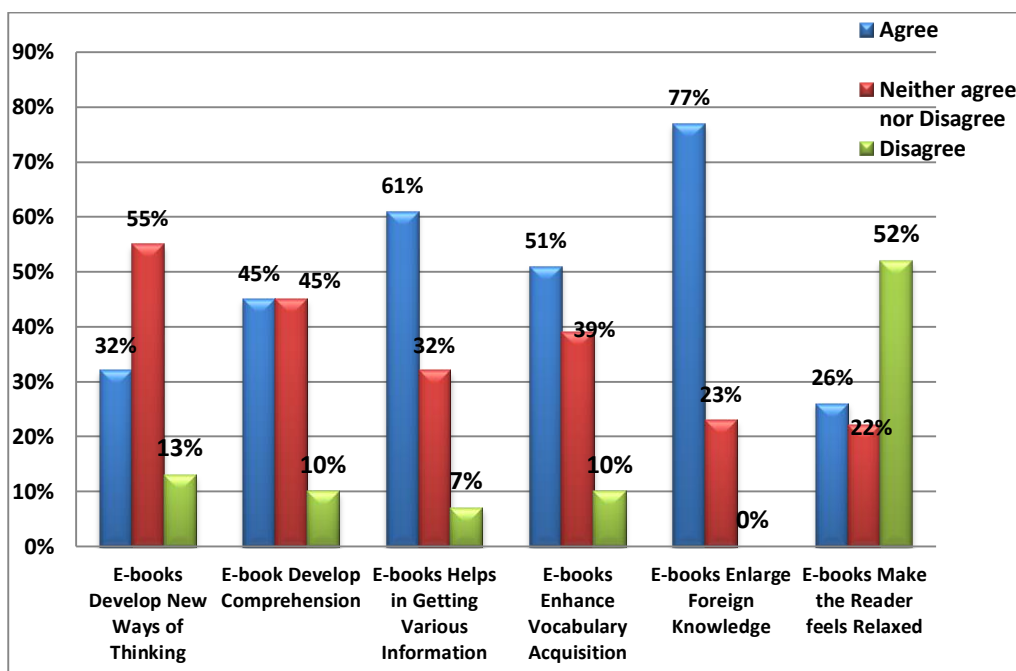


Figure 1:

Students' Attitude towards E-books Benefits

4.5. Usefulness and Future of E-books at the ENS of Constantine

When inquiring on whether or not e-books are useful for students' studies at the ENS of Constantine, the majority of the informants (81%) expressed a total agreement. Still, 19% of them remained neutral.

The future of e-books in the department of English at the ENS of Constantine will be prominent, affirmed most of the participants (See Figure2). With the exception of 13% of the respondents who considered that e-books will never take the place of paper books. The majority of them considered that e-books at the ENS of Constantine will be used more for education (26%), more for education and leisure (26%), and no student opted for leisure to be the only reason for reading the digital format of books at this school (See Figure2).

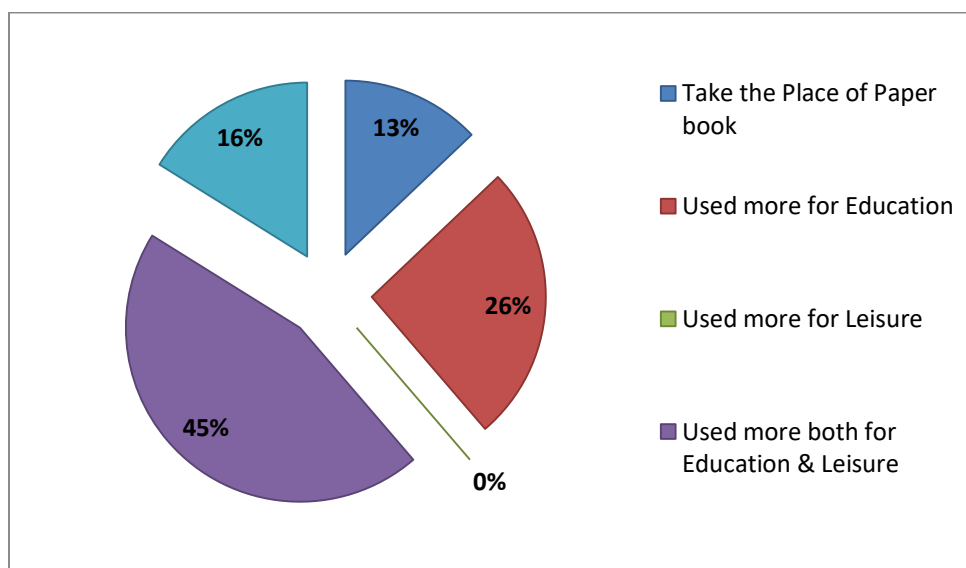


Figure 2:
Usefulness and Future of E-books at the ENS of Constantine

4.6. Discussion

On what concerns the first research question, “Do 2nd year EFL students at the ENS-C read e-books for the same reasons as paper books?”, it is interesting to note that findings confirm that students follow the same process when selecting these two formats. Interest, needs, topic, language simplicity represent the main factors behind students’ choice of books whatever the format of the book is digital or print. Yet, on what concerns the reasons stimulating them to opt for one or another, these books are not read for the same reasons. It has been found that students prefer reading paper books over e-books; however, the unavailability of paper books obliged them to confront the reality of e-books.

In regard to the second research question, “What kind of attitude do 2nd year EFL students hold towards reading e-books?”, it is noticeable from the study results that students hold a positive attitude towards e-books. Being available, affordable, easily accessed to make EFL readers ready react positively by adding to their reading environment an unlimited number of e-books. Despite students’ definite preference for paper book; however, the numerous gains and benefits offered by e-books as enlarging students’ culture and knowledge, vocabulary acquisition do stimulate EFL learners to cope with this kind of books. This conclusion goes hand in hand with Moody’s study (2010). Moody asserts that e-books provide students with an immense opportunity via exposing them to literature and improving their literacy skills without the assistance of an adult. In the same line of thought, in the study undergone by Chen and his associates (2013) on 89 students at the university of Taiwan, it was proved that e-book Extensive Reading Program training played an important role in enhancing EFL learners’ reading attitudes.

Relevant to the third research question, “*What specific reasons currently encourage or discourage students from reading e-books?*”, and based on the study results, students are sometimes encouraged to read e-books, other times, however, they are discouraged. Among the factors behind students’ motivation to read e-books are the easy access, the availability and the affordability of e-format books. This finding goes hand in hand with the research conclusions generated by the study of Chu (2003). In a survey administered to 27 students, this researcher found that the top three reasons for using e-books are: available around the clock, searchable, and timely access to new titles. Nevertheless what discouraged the participants of this study to approach the digital format is related to some difficulties they experienced when reading e-materials such as headaches, eyes strains and the lack concentration. Reading e-books, then, is an alternative solution for the lack of paper books. However, the top three reasons determined for not using e-books by Chu’s participants are related to the fact that e-books are hard to read and browse and they need special equipment that are costly most of the time.

In answering the fourth research question, “*Do e-books contribute in developing 2nd year EFL students’ reading skills mainly comprehension and vocabulary acquisition?*”, the findings affirm that e-books have a positive effects on students’ reading comprehension skills and vocabulary growth. This result confirms previous studies confirming the significant impact when reading the digital format on comprehension skills (Reid, 2016; Chen et al. 2013). In his study, Reid (2016) attempted to investigate the effect e-books exercise on comprehension skills. After their interacting with an eBook’s enhanced features training, students’ reading retell comprehension was tested. It was concluded that eBooks contain engaging reading features that help students improve reading comprehension. Similar to, significant improvement of English reading comprehension through e-book Extensive Reading Program training was confirmed in Chen et al.’s study (2013).

Having to do with the fifth research question, “*Can e-books substitute paper book in the future?*” the results indicated that e-books will have a prosperous future at the ENS of Constantine. This conclusion is certified by students’ testimonies. Even though, EFL learners feel sometimes obliged to read this format of books because of the lack of paper book; yet, their availability in the environment of students orient them towards these books. Hence, due to the requirements of some subjects such as Reading Techniques, and because of the shortage of paper books in the library; the e-book that is now invading EFL readers’ environment by standing side by side with the print book will in the future, for sure, substitute its counterpart book (print book).

5. Conclusion

As long as the physical act of reading deviates from turning the pages of a bound print book to pressing the buttons or touching the screen of an electronic device to make text materialize on screen, this study attempts to examine the extent to which e-books that are invading the environment of EFL readers may have on their reading attitude and motivation. The findings provide strong

support that students' experience in reading e-books within the extensive reading session effects positively their reading attitude and motivation, and contributes in enhancing comprehension, and vocabulary growth.

In brief, as students become more and more motivated towards reading this digital formats, and since the latter have the same impact on students' reading skills mainly comprehension and vocabulary acquisition as paper books, it is then high time to help EFL readers cope with this kind of materials by searching for adequate method that may enable EFL readers benefit a lot from e-books. Moreover, investigating e-books effect on comprehension through the administration of a validated reading comprehension tests rather than using student survey results is of a focal concern for future studies.

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Appendix Students 'Questionnaire

Dear Students

This questionnaire is intended for second year students at the department of English at the Teacher Training School of Constantine. Its aim is to gather information about students' attitude towards e-book reading impact on their comprehension, literacy education and vocabulary growth. We would be very grateful if you would answer the following questions.

To answer, please put a tick (✓) in front of the right answer.

Background information

1. Do you read in English?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. How often do you practice reading?
 - a. Daily
 - b. At least weekly
 - c. Less often
 - d. Never
3. Where do you practice reading?
 - a. In class
 - b. At home
 - c. Both
4. How much do you enjoy reading books:
 - a. Very much
 - b. A bit
 - c. Not at all

Justify your choice by telling why do you enjoy reading books to that extent

5. Do you prefer to choose your reading book by yourself:
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

In both cases say why

6. Do you choose to read a book according to your interest to :
 - a. Topic
 - b. Genre (romance, fiction...etc)
 - c. Language simplicity
 - d. The writer
 - e. All of them

Whatever your choice of the book is explain.....

7. Does your reading teacher guide your reading activity:
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

In case your answer is **YES** say how the teacher fulfills this role.....

Section one: Students' Experience in Reading E-Books

1. Do you prefer to read:
 - a. Paper books
 - b. E-books
 - c. Mixture of theseJustify your choice.....
2. Do you read E-books mainly for what purpose?
 - a. Information and general understanding
 - b. Leisure
 - c. OthersIn case your answer is **C** explain.....
3. Did you start reading E-books at the ENS-C?
 - a. Yes
 - b. NoIn case your answer is **YES** explain the reasons behind.....
4. How many E-books have you read:
 - a. More than 10
 - b. Less than 10
 - c. I can't remember
 - d. none
5. What hardware do you use for reading e-books?
 - a. Lap top
 - b. Tablet
 - c. Mobile phone
 - d. others
6. What genre of E-book do you read?
 - a. Romance
 - b. Science Fiction and fantasy
 - c. Non-fiction
 - d. Others
7. Do you prefer to read E-books:
 - a. In class
 - b. At home
 - c. Other placesJustify your choice.....

Section Three: Students' Attitude towards E-books

1. How do you find reading E-books?
 - a. Easy
 - b. DifficultJustify your choice.....

2. Respond to the following statements:

statements	es	o
I read E-books because they give opportunity for me to read whatever book I want to		
I read E-books because Several titles are carried in one space		
I read E-books because E-books are portable (easy to carry)		
I read E-books because they are not expensive		
I read E-books because there is not enough printed books in libraries		
I read E-books because Paper books are expensive		

3. Reading an E-book is as enjoyable as reading a paper book

- a. Yes
- b. No

Whatever your choice is, say why.....

Section Four: Benefits of E-books

1. I get to know about new ways of thinking when reading E-books

- a. Agree
- b. Neither agree nor disagree
- c. Disagree

Whatever your choice is please comment.....

2. I develop my reading comprehensions ability when reading E-books

- a. Agree
- b. Neither agree nor disagree
- c. Disagree

Whatever your choice is please comment.....

3. I get various kinds of information when reading E-books

- a. Agree
- b. Neither agree nor disagree
- c. Disagree

Whatever your choice is please comment.....

4. I acquire new vocabulary when reading E-books

- a. Agree
- b. Neither agree nor disagree
- c. Disagree

Whatever your choice is please comment.....

5. I can acquire broad knowledge if I read E-books

- a. Agree
- b. Neither agree nor disagree
- c. Disagree

Whatever your choice is please comment.....

6. I feel relaxed if I read E-books

- a. Agree
- b. Neither agree nor disagree
- c. Disagree

Whatever your choice is say why.....

7. Reading E-books is useful for my studies at the ENS de Constantine

- a. Agree
- b. Neither agree nor disagree
- c. Disagree

Whatever your choice is say why.....

8. What do you see the future of e-book in your institution (ENS de Constantine):

- a. E-book will take the place of printed book in the future
- b. E-book will be more and more used in the purpose of education in the future
- c. E-book will be more and more popular in the purpose of leisure in the future
- d. E-book will be more and more used in the purpose of education and leisure in the future

Please comment why you have given these choices.....

9. Please provide any additional feedback about your experience in reading E-books.

Thank you for your Feedback

Meriem Othmene ¹& Naima Bouyakoube
University of Tlemcen, Algeria

**WHAT WORKS TO PROVE THE STUDENTS' COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE
IN ALGERIAN UNIVERSITIES? USING PICTURE-BASED ACTIVITIES**

Abstract

The primary concern of the current study is to explore ways to promote the students' communicative competence through utilizing pictures-based activities. This paper tried to explore the influence of using an extensive picture based tasks to motivate students, get them engaged and most importantly, develop their communicative competence. We examined the influence of using picture based activities to improve the students' communicative competence through an action research that was conducted in the second semester at the University of Biskra, the sample was non-randomly assigned and exposed to an extensive picture based activities to improve their communication and interpersonal skills. The results of the study revealed that using picture –based activities in the classroom are an enjoyable, yet a valuable technique for improving the students' communication skills; it could be served as a motivating factor to improve their communicative competence.

Keywords: Communicative competence, Interpersonal skills, Picture-based activities.

1. Introduction

Be it overtly admitted or not in the language classroom, communication remains an unavoidable and prominent parcel of the foreign language learning process so that at any rate. It can be argued that the communicative approach is the most popular direction in ESL and EFL teaching settings. Improving the students' communicative competence is the primary concern of schools these days. Throughout this paper, we portrayed the notion of communicative competence with a brief description of Canal and Swain proposed model, then we moved to the question of how the implementation of picture-based activities can boost the students' communication skills. Finishing up with a concise report of how was the action research implemented throughout the four well-known steps (Plan, Act, Observe, and Reflect) in addition to providing some valuable suggestions and recommendations for teachers to start thinking of utilizing this technique.

2 .Review of Literature

2.1. Definitions and Components of Communicative Competence

The concept of communicative competence has been the object of considerable debate within the higher education community ever since it was first proposed by Hymes (1966-1968). Gumperz and Hymes (1964) published their article entitled “ethnography of communication “(1972) in which they holistically define communicative competence as “what the speaker needs to know to communicate effectively in a culturally significant setting” (Gumperz&Hymes, 1972: Vii). The typical language teacher, says Bratt, (1992), tends to view communicative competence as the ability to perform linguistic interaction in the target language, yet a knowledge of social rules is highly

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required. That is to say, knowledge of when and how and to whom the linguistic form of language is appropriate. Simply because “the same linguistic form varies from one culture to another”. (Bratt, 1992.p.49). It is important to realize that “Competence” is “a knowledge, skill, ability, personal quality, experience, or other characteristics that are applicable to learning and success in school or in work” (Wheeler&Geneva, 1993, p.30)

Savignon (1978) defines communicative competence as “ the ability to function in a truly communicative setting, that is, in a spontaneous transaction involving one or more other person”(p.12). Taking this definition into reflection, it can be argued that teachers have to create real communicative settings in his/her classroom, this, can be successfully achieved through the utilization of the different modes within the classroom environment. Due to the fact that “ *Our students need practice in using the linguistic form for the social purpose of language*” (Bratt, 1992,p. 54), obviously, this can be easily realized by the implementation of the multimodality approach in the classroom where the instructor exposes his students to English songs,real videos and communicative games that foster their communication strategies and help them cope with potential communication problems .

To move into a deep elucidation, Canal and Swain (1980) propose three sub-components which make up communicative competence;grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic. Language users must be able to create free-mistakes’ grammar utterance (linguistic competence) coupled with the ability to produce a socially appropriate utterance (sociolinguistic competence), not only that, but also, the ability to produce coherent and cohesive utterances (discourse competence) in addition to being able to solve communication problems (strategic competence).

2.2. Models of Communicative Competence

There have been many books and articles tackling the issue of testing the writing ability and proficiency comprehension, but unfortunately, only few tackle the issue of testing oral language proficiency. In every classroom, EFL teachers are in urgent need of a valid framework that helps them evaluate their learner's communicative competence; the latter refers to the learners' ability to perform competently in tasks that require fluency as well as accuracy. It is composed of four main competences; linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, strategic competence and discourse competence. These four areas were maintained by Canal and Swain (1980). Applying a model while assessing students ‘competence will arguably guarantee objectivity and fairness.

To guarantee the objectivity of a language test, teachers have to break the language down into various elements and think of a way to testing one element at a time. This can be identified as “discrete point test” which is opposed to the «integrative point test” where the teachers are supposed to test the learners' abilities all at once. Nicuolo (1991) is among many researchers who spoke extensively about the betterment of measuring one aspect of a language to test the learners' performance "assessment of the underlying skills does not necessarily imply an assessment of the global performance" (p. 143). In the same line, Savignon (1991) seems to agree with the Nicholo‘definition as he sees

communicative competence as the learners' ability to well perform on a "discrete point test". The healthy, balanced test view would be that one which encourages the use of both types of test to promote the learners' language proficiency.

Based on the assumption that communicative language teaching (CLT) should be by one way or another grounded in some models of communicative competence, Several communicative models have been established by authors in order to better clarify how language teaching and learning work (e.g. Canale & Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983; Bachman, 1990; Celce-Murcia et al. 1995) . The current study will be heavily grounded on Canale and Swain model because of its simplicity in the sphere of testing

The first model that was designed to serve instructional, as well as assessment purposes, is the one proposed by the North American Canale and Swain (1980)

▪ **Grammatical competence:** (structural competence) the knowledge of language inventory (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling). It is worth mentioning at this level that learners need a procedural knowledge (knowledge about how to use language) rather than a declarative one (knowledge about language).

▪ **Sociolinguistic competence:** The knowledge of social and cultural conventions of language use that governs communication in a specific culture, such as the appropriate use of vocabulary, register, politeness strategies in conversations. Those norms and conventions are not just related to the way messages should be expressed (form) but rather, to how appropriate they are expressed in a given cultural context.

▪ **Discourse competence:** The knowledge of language structure as being combined with cohesive texts.

▪ **Strategic competence:** The knowledge of communication strategies which manage to avoid misunderstanding and breakdown of conversations. Learners may compensate their lack of structural knowledge by using certain verbal and non- verbal strategies in order to communicate. Canale and Swain (1980) define strategic competence "how to cope in an authentic communicative situation and how to keep the communication channel open» (p .25).

As a trial to explore the interrelationship of language to culture and society, communicative competence has emerged in the early 1970's. This newly emerged concept had contributed significantly to the field of linguistics and language teaching. (Bern, 1990). Chomsky's view of language was restricted to the mere knowledge of grammatical rules. Having said that, Hymes proposed a totally different story at that time. Being accurate, is not enough for the child to be said competent. Hymes proposed another crucial criterion that he labeled "appropriateness" which goes hand in hand with correctness and lies under the big title of sociolinguistic rules. As a matter of fact, the language cannot be said to be complete without the intervention of performance features, simply because meaning is rarely clear without the contexts in which it appears. Supporting his claim, Hymes proposed "ethnography of communication" which is the study of communication as being related to social-cultural practices.

Very confident of his claim, Halliday purports that the notion of communicative competence is something which is unnecessary to speak about simply because communicative competence is what the speaker can do with language; the same definition can be given to competence. For him, nothing new has been established by Hymes; knowing how to use language is the same as knowing what to do with it. But, in spite of their conflicts, Hymes and Halliday share the view that language is crucial in social life (Bern, 1990). Keeping in mind that "context of situation" plays a major role in the understanding of communicative competence; Firth has established his own interpretation of the context of a situation which describes the individual communicative competence. In his book "context of competence", Bern (1990) states that «the cultural settings and personal history of each participant in a speech situation determines what is appropriate within that setting" (p. 32)

2.3. The Value and Importance of Using Pictures

At first place, it is useful to clarify what is meant by the pictures. Pictures can be (photos, drawings, paintings, illustrations, symbols, cartoons, flashcards Collages, picture stories, magazine ads, newspaper and website illustrations, stills from video, doodles...) (FluentU English Eduactor Blog, 2018)

It has been said that "a picture is worth a thousand words". Students can learn plenty of things through pictures; this latter can be enormously effective if properly implemented from the part of the teacher. First, it promotes students' vocabulary and communication skills specially the pictures and images that are used for speaking practice. Also, it increases the student's motivation for learning; it best fits visual learners who learn by visual materials. One might ask the question, why to use pictures to teach English, why not to use the traditional way of teaching which are highly secure and easily implemented. The answer can be recapitulated in the following elements:

1. The current multimedia learning context of the 21 century are visually oriented
2. Students learn differently, the use of pictures fosters their visual orientations
3. Using pictures is highly attractive, it guarantees that everyone is paying attention, engaged and motivated
4. Implementing pictures in the classroom bolstered vocabulary
5. Pictures are usually open to a variety of interpretation which enables the students to be creative and invent new constructing to things
6. They can be used as a talking point for shy students who are usually hesitant and anxious to speak
7. The pictures are really fun and enjoyable, students find themselves anxiously speaking and expressing ideas and discussing topics.
8. They are good for promoting the student sub-skills (prediction, discussion, explaining, recognizing the ideas ..)

The utilization of pictures in the classroom is highly significant for the students and the teacher, because it fosters the students' motivation and creates a meaningful context, it gives the student information about various topics also, and they are faster than words. Before using pictures in the classroom, the teacher has to guarantee certain criteria such as the large size of the picture, it

also should not be complicated, so why to use pictures in the classroom, the answer of this would be the following:

- Introducing new vocabulary and grammar
- Providing a good opportunity for writing
- Expanding the students' motivation
- Offering the chance to use language in real life situation

Pictures can take a variety of forms (flashcards, large wall pictures, cue cards, sliders...) and despite of the richness of picture based tasks, the use of the latter can lead to various problems specially if the pictures are small and distant or not obvious, this may lead to the students' misunderstanding , also , some students fail to interpret the pictures but , the disadvantageous of using pictures are more than the drawbacks , *"pictures are ; easy to prepare , easy to organize, interesting , meaningful and authentic and holds a sufficient amount of language"* (Zahara, 2014, p.28)

In accordance with the benefits of using pictures in the classroom, Pirrozzolo and Wittrock (1981, p. 212) have proposed the following:

- Pictures are very useful for presenting new grammatical and vocabulary items. They help to provide the situations and contexts which light up the meaning of words or utterances, and help the teachers to avoid resorting to translation or to lengthy explanation of meaning.
- Pictures can be used for revision from one lesson to another as well as for long-term revision of vocabulary and structures.
- Pictures can be used as the basic of written work, for instance, question writing.
- Pictures increase students' motivation and provide useful practice material as well as test material
- Pictures can be used to give students an opportunity to practice the language in real contexts or in situations in which they can use it to communicate their ideas.

2.4. Sample of Picture-based Activities

There are plenty of creative ideas for using pictures in the classroom to develop the students' communicative competence .The following are some ((McLoughlin, 2016):

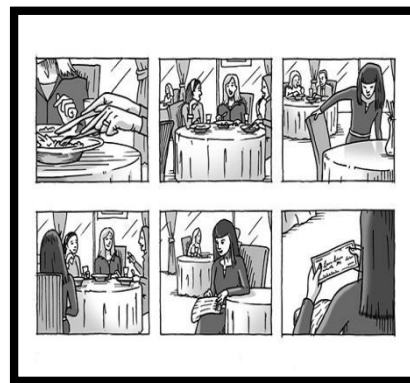
1. Dialogue Bubbles:

The teacher might expose the students to a picture of two people chatting and ask them to add a dialogue bubble; this will be a real delectation for students with implicit focus on grammar and vocabulary



2. Storyboards:

This technique is highly implemented in ESL classrooms where the teacher sources a series of pictures and asks the students to use their imagination to tell the story



3. Picture profile:

The teacher displays a profile picture of a famous person and asks them to describe him/her. This would be a good way to teach the present simple and adjectives



The list is limitless; the creative teacher is the one who invents his own manners and accommodate them in a way that fits his students 'needs.

3. Methodology

3.1. The Action Research

Action research means that “practitioners themselves investigate their own practice as they find ways of living more fully in the direction of their educational values” (Niff, Lomax, & Whitehead, 2003, p. 8)and that’s what makes action research different than the other types of research , because the teacher is part of the situation and his mission is to improve it , regardless of how much he/she knows “Anyone and everyone can do action research. You do not need any specialized equipment or knowledge. All you need is curiosity, creativity, and a willingness to engage”. (Ibid, 2006. p. 16) , and that was the imperative reason behind conducting this type of research

3.2. The Tests

One group pre-test and post-test (before–after) design” were conducted before and after the intervention to track the student’s progress and to determine whether improvement has occurred. In addition to using classroom documents (lesson plans), During the second semester of the academic year (2017-2018) , the researcher implemented the action research at the university of Biskra to teach the intervention course , the action research was carried out into Three phases :

The pre-test was distributed to the targeted group made up of 35 students .The test is comprised of Four tasks, each is designed to assess one of the four competences (linguistics , sociolinguistics , strategic and discourse) .It is worth mentioning at this level that this study is a part of an action research implementation where the teacher implement the multimodality approach as being related to speaking tasks (use of songs, videos, games, picture, role plays) to improve the students communicative competence. This paper is a part of the whole work which is in the preparation stage. The picture- based pre-test was

exposing the students to pictures asking them to entitle it and to speak about it for ten minutes.

The intervention stage includes an extensive use of a multiplicity of mode to develop the learners' communicative competence (pictures, videos, games, songs, role plays ..) . Throughout this stage the teacher plays a variety of roles: (a course designer, a researcher, a feedback provider, an assessor, a motivator, a learner, a decision maker and a reflective practitioner)

Students were exposed to another test that resembles the Pre-test in form and focus, the test measures the students' four competences (linguistics, sociolinguistics, strategic and discourse). The picture -based activity was a simple task, each learner was given an expressive picture and was asked to give a title and to describe it orally, the teacher used an observation checklist to track the students 'progress and to grade them based on this checklist (see appendix 2)

3.3. The Research Participants

The current study is composed of (N: 35) participants (Third year LMD students) at the department of foreign languages at Biskra University. The informants were non-randomly chosen and were exposed to extensive picture based activities.

3.4. The Research Problem

The overall problem of our paper is the noticeable imbalance between teaching the communicative and linguistic competence in Algerian universities. Among the 12 courses taught at the university of Biskra (pragmatics, psychopedagogy, language acquisition, didactics, linguistics, written expression, oral expression, methodology, French, statistics), Third year students are required to speak only in "oral expression"! , which might be the reason behind their noticeable lack of fluency, the solution, we assume, is the extensive implementation of picture-based activities to hopefully compensate their speaking deficiencies and promotes their communicative competence.

3.5. The Research Questions

This study is undertaken in an effort to answer the following leading question: Does the utilization of extensive picture-based activities improve the students' communicative competence?

3.6. The Research Hypothesis

In setting out to answer these questions, we have proposed that the implementation of picture-based activities, learners will be able to boost their communicative competence.

3.7. Data Collection

The data were collected from Third Year-University students enrolled at the University of Biskra. The participants were one group made up of 35 students. They were 26 females and 9 males, ranging from 20-40 years old. For the quantitative data analysis, pre and post –oral test was taken by the participants at the beginning and the end of the semester. The two tests were designed to describe a picture.

4. Results

The findings show that there is a significant difference in the students' fluency and communication skills between the pre-test and posttest. The difference can be further clarified in the following figure

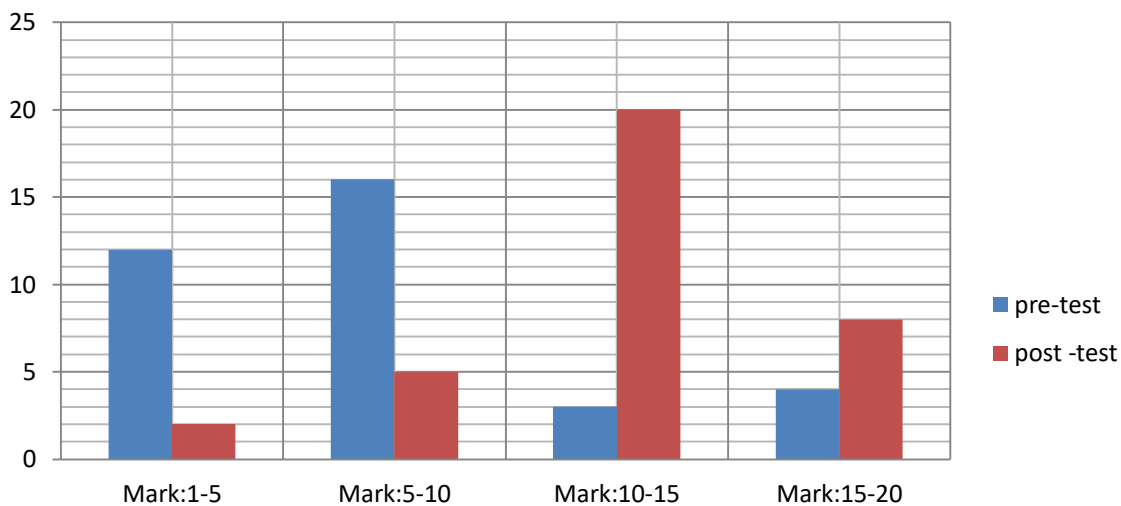


Figure 1 :

The thirty five students' scores of the pre and post test in the picture based activities

As shown in the table above, the students did not obtain high results in the pre-test, (N: 28) students score between (1-10). This means that students find difficulty expressing themselves at the level of their fluency. In the post-test, the students' scores have shown a considerable improvement which indicates that student's development in term of fluency was significant. This confirms our assumption that the implementation of picture based activities would bring positive results in terms of the students' communicative competence

4. Conclusion

This study has shown that picture based activities are capable of stimulating the learners' interest in the English classroom by asking them to describe the given picture, learners will find the space to express themselves extensively, gain new vocabulary from each other, feel motivated and highly engaged in the given tasks and, most importantly, develop their communicative competence and fluency in English.

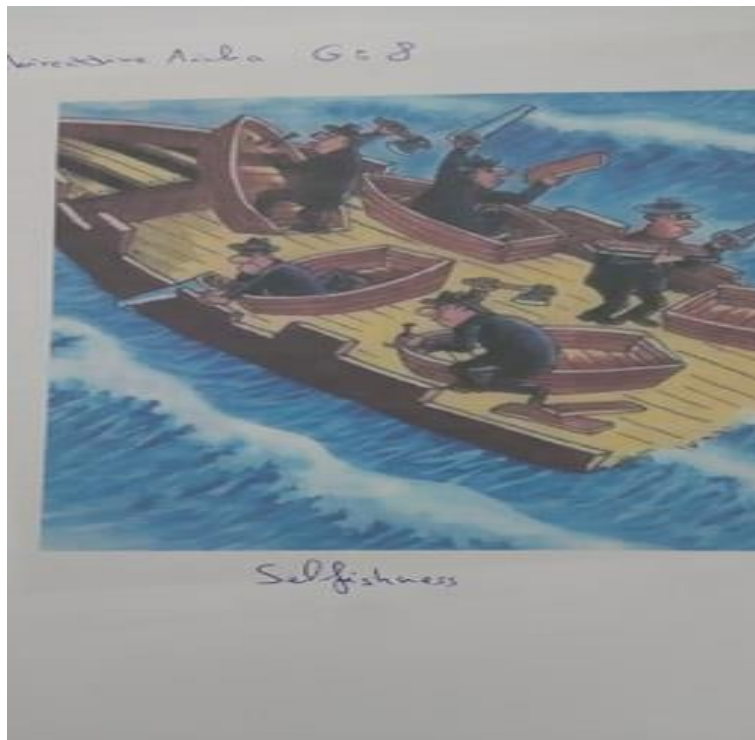
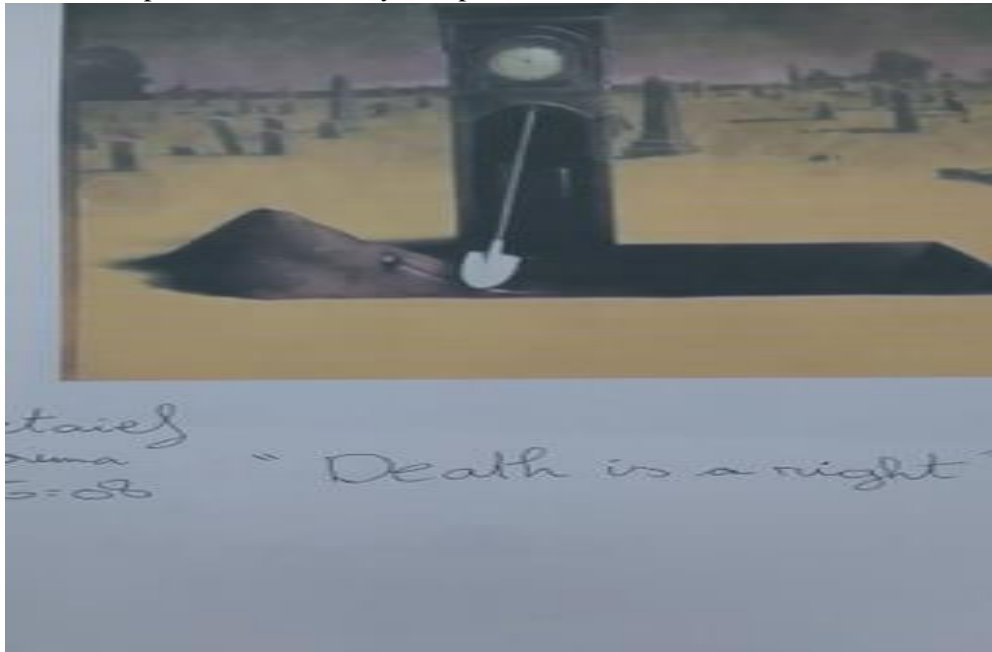
References

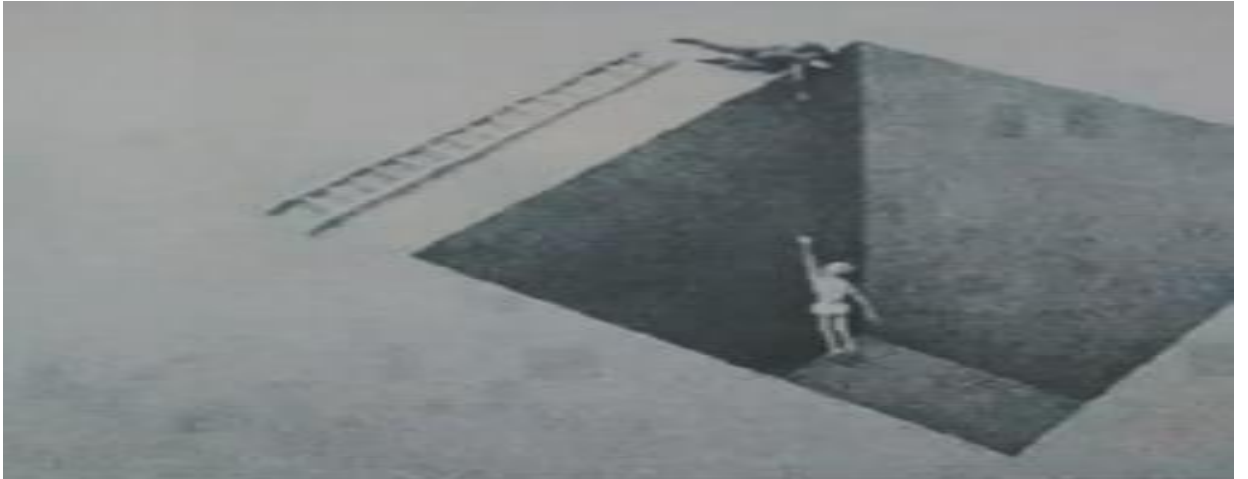
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Appendix 1: The picture based activity (samples)





hialo seloko .
patleam



good I know
or people vs view one



Zarina Abisragan

Wolf in sheep clothing



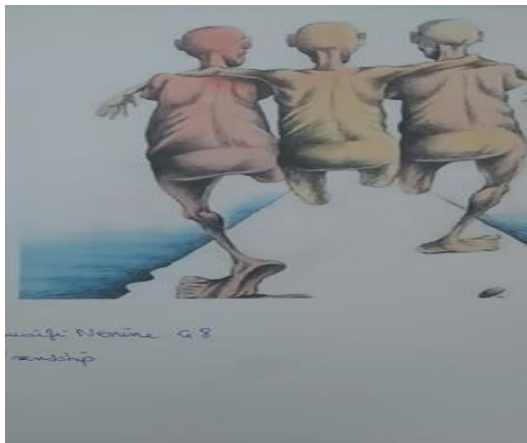
LaZraque Lynda. [6/08]
agination according to Freud.



Amim Kherbouche G8
knowledge is the fuel of our minds



Boudina Ayo H. Alot Allah G8
Re: My father is my hero.



Amim Kherbouche G8
friendship

Appendix 2: The observation checklist used to assess the students' four competences

Level / Third year

Teacher:

Student's Name:.....Date of Presentation

Title of Topic:..... Type of presentation:

		Rubric						
Grammatical C	Pronunciation/orthography							
	Semantic appropriacy of lexis							
	Vocabulary							
	Morphology							
	Syntax							
Discourse C	Cohesion							
	Coherence							
Sociolinguistic C	Register							
	Performance							
Strategic C	Fluency							
	Density of information transfer							
	Hesitation phenomena							
	Non-verbal compensation							
	Verbal compensation							
	Confidence/neatness							
	Overall strategic success							

Total score:

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UNDERTAKING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE SKILLS TRAINING TO OVERCOME SPEAKING ANXIETY AMONG NON-NATIVE PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS
The Case of Third Year EFL Pre-Service Teachers at Oum El Bouaghi University, Algeria

Abstract

With the growing number of the learners who suffer from Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA), it is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore its harmful outcomes on their performance and success, especially during their first contact with the pupils, as they will be teaching in the near future. The present study sheds light on Emotional Intelligence skills training as an effective strategy to help learners lessen their speaking anxiety and eventually to prepare them for their professional career. A quasi-experiment is used with two groups of third year EFL students. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) were used to collect data about the participants' FLSA and EI levels. The data analysis has yielded that the assumption that there is a negative correlation between EI and FLSA was statistically validated by the Pearson Correlation Test, concluding that, the more emotionally intelligent the individual is the less anxious s/he will be. In addition, the lack of amelioration in the results of the control group and the noteworthy improvement in the experimental group's results led us to conclude that the training was an effective strategy in minimizing the FLSA level and therefore, we confirmed our hypothesis.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Emotional Intelligence skills training, EQ-I, FLCAS, Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety, Pre-Service EFL Teachers.

1. Introduction

The nature of teaching makes it one of the most stressful careers, and the case of non-native pre-service EFL teachers can be even more serious. Before they begin to teach English, those pre-service teachers were once EFL learners. With the increasing demand for English as a lingua franca of education, business, science, and technology, many universities and language schools emphasize the oral skill and make of it a must. Normally, third year pre-service EFL teachers who have been studying English for many years should have at least an average or above average proficiency of English which allows them to speak fluently without being anxious or feeling unable to communicate. Unfortunately, many students with high capacities are hidden because they suffer from Speaking Anxiety (SA). These learners, who are willing to be EFL teachers in the near future, find the oral courses much demanding. They feel unable to communicate, they fear making mistakes, and they fear negative evaluation or being called on. These factors and others cause various degrees of anxiety that EFL learners as well as pre-service and novice teachers do not know how to cope with.

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2. Review of Literature

'Speech fright', 'stage fright' and 'public speech anxiety' are all names that refer to anxiety occurring when giving a speech in public. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) described FLSA as the worry experienced when a specific situation requires a not fully proficient speaker to use a second or a foreign language. Tsipalakides (as cited in Siyli & Kafes, 2015, p. 26) also defined FLSA as a "mental blockage during speaking activities, forgetting previously learned materials and passivity in the class". The negative effect of anxiety on the learner's cognitive processing system, especially the retrieval processes during an oral performance, was summarized by MacIntyre (1995) who argued that the reason behind the poor performance of EFL learners is the competition between the task-relevant information for space in the learner's processing system with the task-irrelevant information. For example, when presenting a lecture in class, novice teachers focus on (i) giving information with accurate grammar and pronunciation and at the same time (ii) evaluating the reactions of the pupils and worrying about unexpected situations to the extent that task-irrelevant information (such as negative self-evaluation and self-deprecating thoughts) increases and task-related information is restricted and therefore the performance suffers and will be impaired.

Many teachers look for effective ways to improve EFL learners' oral performance and increase their willingness to communicate. In relating EI to FLSA, public speaking is not about just giving information, rather, it is about engaging with an audience by emotions and emotional impact, even when delivering facts. Beginners as well as advanced learners suffer from FLSA; anxiety and fear are both emotions. Bar-On (2004) described EI as an "array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and non-cognitive skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with situational demands and pressures" (p.111). In other words, EI concerns the ability to reason and think correctly about feelings and emotions and to use emotions and emotional knowledge contained in them to foster thinking and reasoning for the general purpose of enhancing different life domains. EI has different competencies, and each of them can not only influence public speaking success but also can help overcoming or at least minimizing SA through learning how to manage those emotions in an intelligent way. That is why EI is very important for shy, violent, anxious, lazy and negative people (Roohani, 2009).

It was believed that an individual's level of intelligence is relatively fixed and difficult to change (Mayer & Salovey, 1993). Nonetheless, "Intelligence can be learned and improved throughout life" (Gardner, 1983, p. 41). Many researchers (e.g. Jacobs, 2001; Gardner, 1983; Cherniss & Goleman, 2001) believed that EI skills and competences can be taught, learned and developed regardless the age of the person; however, it is more difficult and is time consuming to train people on EI skills compared to cognitive skills. EI training is "the process of teaching and learning the skills, knowledge and dispositions that allow people to understand, process, manage and express the social-emotional aspects of their lives" (Saarni, 2007, p.17).

3. Methodology

3.1 Context

The present study aims at investigating the effect of EI skills training on overcoming or at least minimizing pre-service teachers' FLSA. It addresses the following *questions*:

- Is there any relationship between the pre-service EFL teachers' EI level and their FLSA?
- To what extent does the EI skills training help pre-service EFL teachers to overcome their SA?

The study is based on one main *hypothesis*: Undergoing Emotional Intelligence skills training would relatively reduce the pre-service EFL teachers' Speaking Anxiety.

3.2 Participants

The population of the present study is 139 male and female third year EFL learners in the English Department of Larbi Ben Mhidi University who have been studying English for about nine years, from middle school to present university form. This period of time is long enough to lessen their anxiety related to novelty and unfamiliarity with both the university environment and the foreign language and it implies that they have at least an average proficiency and knowledge of English which we assume allow them to participate in the experiment. Since the groups are already formed by the administration, two groups out of three are chosen randomly to be the sample of the study. The participants are 55 male and female students representing 39.57% of the whole population.

3.3 Procedures

The nature of this research, which is estimating the causal impact between the two research variables, made it necessary to conduct an experimental design. There is a random selection of the groups but not of the participants and this made our design a quasi-experimental one.

First, both groups received the pre-test which consists of two scales: the EQ-i and the FLCAS to measure their levels of EI and FLSA before receiving the treatment. Nine items in the FLCAS (i.e. items 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28 and 32) need reverse scoring because they are negatively worded so that a higher score would be an indicator of higher anxiety (Aida, 1994). After conducting the pre-test, participants in the experimental group took part in a discrete training designed to teach the EI skills and how to use them to reduce FLSA. The control group carried out their lectures as usual and they did not receive any treatment. After the training period, the FLCAS and the EQ-i were used once again in the post-test to see the progress of the participants and to test the effectiveness of the training.

Table 1
The Training Sessions Design

Sessions	Duration	Skills
1st Session	90 Min	An introductory session aims at helping the participants of the experimental group recognize the benefits of the training; motivate them to be self-directed to participate in it and to develop positive expectations about it
2nd Session		<p>Identifying Emotions: Accurate perception of emotions: About the self About the others Accurately expressing emotions</p> <p>The techniques used in this session are: Facial expressions, body language, and voice tones Story - Emotion Checklist for videos</p>
3rd Session		<p>Using Emotions: To have better social relationships To enhance reasoning and decision making</p> <p>The self-help techniques used in this session are: Creative visualization - Positive Self-talk</p>
4th Session		<p>Understanding Emotions</p> <p>The self-help techniques used in this session are: - Reflecting on past experiences - Story</p>
5th Session		<p>Managing Emotions: Managing Feelings of the Self Managing Feelings of Others</p> <p>The self-help techniques used in this session are: Creative visualization Positive Self-talk Breathing Exercises</p>
6th Session		In this concluding session we recapitulated and summed up what we had seen during the whole training period. The participants were motivated to make efforts and learn from their mistakes. They were also encouraged to apply what they had learned from the training in their real life and to be aware of the possible difficulties they may face; some situations would not go according to their plans.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

The collected data were analysed quantitatively using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). It is worth noting that all tables of scores

have been arranged in appendices. It has been done so for a pure ‘arrangement constraint’.

4.1.1 Pre-Test Results

The participants’ FLCAS scores were calculated and arranged from the higher to the lower then categorized into five levels (Very low Anxiety, Low Anxiety, Moderate Anxiety, High Anxiety, Very high Anxiety). Then the descriptive statistics of the participants’ FLSA level were calculated.

Concerning the EQ-i results, the participants’ raw scores were calculated then transformed into standard scores which were in turn categorized into five levels (Very much below average, Below average, Average, Above average, Very much above average). Finally, the descriptive statistics of the participants’ EI level were calculated.

The results of both groups on the pre-test are summarized in table 2.

Table 2

The Experimental Group and the Control Group Results on the Pre-Test

			Experimental Group	Control Group	The difference*
FLSA	Desc. Stat**	Minimum	96	92	-4
		Maximum	137	148	11
		Mean	113.04	115.52	2.48
		Standard Deviation	10.525	15.024	4.499
	SA range	Very high SA	3.6%	11.1%	7.5%
		High SA	50%	37%	-13%
		Moderate SA	46.4%	51.9%	5.5%
		Low SA	0%	0%	0%
		Very low SA	0%	0%	0%
EI	Desc. Stat**	Minimum	73	75	2
		Maximum	127	133	6
		Mean	100	100	0
		Standard Deviation	15.036	15.013	-0.023
	EI range	Very much below average	0%	0%	0%
		Below average	25%	25.9%	0.9%

	Average	57.1%	59.3%	2.2%
	Above average	17.9%	11.1%	-6.8%
	Very much above average	0%	3.7%	3.7%

*The difference= Control Group Scores – Experimental Group Scores

**Desc. Stat: Descriptive Statistics

4.1.1.1 The Independent Samples T-Test

The t value was calculated using SPSS then compared to the correspondent t in the table of the critical values of t distribution (known as ‘Table D’) which equals 2.000. Since the latter is greater than the calculated t ($t_{FLSA} = -0.712$; $t_{raw\ scores} = 1.376$; $t_{standard\ scores} = 0.000$), then we can say that there is no significant difference between the experimental and the control groups’ levels of SA and EI.

4.1.1.2 The Pearson Correlation Test

Since we are investigating the relationship between two variables, the most appropriate test is the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

$r = -0.807 < -0.6$ } We conclude that: There is a significant strong negative
 $P = 0.000 < 0.05$ } relationship between FLSA and EI, $r = -0.807$, $P < 0.001$

4.1.2 The post-test results

The participants in both groups were asked to answer the two scales (the FLCAS and the EQ-i) once again to see their progress. The same procedure followed in analyzing the pre-test results was followed with the post-test.

The results of both groups on the post-test are summarized in table 3.

Table 3

The Experimental Group and the Control Group Results on the Post-Test

		Experimental Group	Control Group	The Difference *	
FLSA	Desc. Stat **	Minimum	63	73	10
		Maximum	118	149	31
		Mean	91.32	111.26	19.94
		Standard Deviation	14.124	18.386	4.262
	SA range	Very high SA	0%	11.1%	11.1%
		High SA	14.3%	40.7%	26.4%
		Moderate SA	42.9%	37%	-5.9%
		Low SA	42.9%	11.1%	-31.8%
		Very low SA	0%	0%	0%

EI	Desc. Stat**	Minimum	72	84	12
		Maximum	125	136	11
		Mean	99.96	99.96	0
		Standard Deviation	15.012	15.019	0.007
	SA range	Very much below average	0%	0%	0%
		Below average	35.7	33.3%	-2.4%
		Average	39.3%	44.4%	5.1%
		Above average	25%	14.8%	-10.2%
		Very much above average	0%	7.4%	7.4%

*The difference= Control Group Scores – Experimental Group Scores

**Desc. Stat: Descriptive Statistics

We noticed that there is a difference between the two groups, but we need to determine if the difference is statistically significant or not. By conducting the *Independent Samples T-test* and comparing the calculated t ($t_{FLSA} = -4.498$; $t_{raw\ scores} = 5.270$) with the correspondent t in the ‘Table D’ which equals 2.000 we deduce that the experimental and the control groups’ SA and EI levels are significantly different:

1. The participants’ FLSA level on the experimental group post-test is statistically significantly lower than the participants’ FLSA level on the control group post-test.
2. The participants’ EI raw scores on the experimental group post-test are statistically significantly higher than the participants’ EI raw scores on the control group post-test.

➔ So, we conclude that the significant difference between the experimental and the control groups after the treatment period is due to our EI skills training and not by a chance.

4.1.2.1 The Paired Samples T-Test

This test is used with both groups in order to determine if the difference between their results on the pre and the post-tests is statistically significant or not.

Table 4
SPSS Results of the Paired Samples T-Test of the Experimental Group

	Paired Differences					t	f	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	D	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
FLSA Pre-Test – FLSA Post-Test	21.714	9.3	3.653	14.220	29.209	5.945	7	.000
Raw Scores Pre-Test – Raw Scores Post-Test	-46.321	3.6	8.241	-63.231	-29.412	-5.621	7	.000
Standard Scores Pre-Test – Standard Scores Post-Test	.036	8.8	3.553	-7.254	7.326	.010	7	.992

As shown in table 4, the P-values of the FLSA and raw scores are less than 0.001 whereas the P-value of the standard scores is approximately equal to 0.5. So, we conclude:

1. The participants' FLSA level on the experimental group post-test is statistically significantly lower than their FLSA level on the pre-test, $t(27) = 5.945$, $P = 0.000 < 0.05$ (one-tail)
2. The participants' EI raw scores on the experimental group post-test are statistically significantly higher than their EI raw scores on the pre-test, $t(27) = -5.621$, $P = 0.000 < 0.05$ (one-tail)
3. The participants' EI standard scores on the experimental group pre and post-tests are statistically significantly identical, $t(27) = 0.010$, $P = 0.496 > 0.05$ (one-tail)

Table 5
SPSS Results of the Paired Samples T-Test of the Control Group

	Paired Differences					t	f	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	D	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
FLSA Pre-Test – FLSA Post-Test	4.259	14.02	2.698	-1.287	9.806	1.578	6	.127
Raw Scores Pre-Test – Raw Scores Post-Test	-7.185	19.52	3.756	-14.906	.536	-1.913	6	.067
Standard Scores Pre-Test – Standard Scores Post-Test	.037	10.24	1.970	-4.013	4.087	.019	6	.985

As indicated in table 5, $P(\text{FLSA}) = 0.063 > 0.05$ (one-tail). It may be observed that the participants' FLSA levels on the control group's pre and post-tests are not statistically significantly different, $t(26) = 1.578$, $P = 0.063 > 0.05$

As indicated in the same table, $P(\text{EI raw scores}) = 0.033 < 0.05$ (one-tail). It may be deduced that the participants' EI raw scores on the control group pre and post-tests are statistically different, $t(26) = 1.578$, $P = 0.063 > 0.05$. However, the fact that they are different does not imply that there is a significant difference between them because the critical value ($t = -1.913$) is 30 times bigger than 0.05. This proves that the difference between the control group EI raw scores on the pre and post-tests are very insignificant.

Moreover, as table 5 shows, $P(\text{EI standard scores}) = 0.492 > 0.05$ (one-tail) which indicates that the control group pre and post-tests standard scores are statistically significantly identical.

4.2 Discussion

➤ *Is there any relationship between EI and learners' FLSA?*

The assumption that there is a negative correlation between EI and FLSA was statistically significantly validated by the Pearson Test using the pre-test results of both experimental and control groups. The Pearson's r of the experimental group equals -0.807 which is very close to -1, signifying that there is a strong negative relationship between the students' EI and FLSA scores. Similarly, it has been found that the control group Pearson's r equals -0.721 which is close to -1, signifying a strong negative correlation between the two research variables. It is therefore deduced that the more emotionally intelligent the participant is the less anxious will be.

➤ *To what extent does the EI skills training help EFL students to overcome their speaking anxiety?*

Our quasi-experiment's results, which were validated with the Paired Samples T-Test and the Independent Sample T-Test, confirmed the research hypothesis, showing an acceptable improvement of the participants' scores after receiving the treatment (EI skills training). What was remarkable after the training is that almost all the participants in the experimental group (89.29%) had lower levels of FLSA, except two participants (N°15 and N°24) who remained at the same level (7.14%) and one student (N°20) who had a higher level of FLSA (3.57%). The two students who remained at their SA level, had higher EI raw scores, but when we compared these raw scores to the whole experimental group's mean we found that they had lower EI standard scores. Also, 24 students (85.71%) had higher EI raw scores after the treatment. The other 4 students (6, 17, 20 and 28) had a lower EI raw scores and lower EI standard scores (14.29%). The participant 6 difference score is only -1, so it is highly not significant. Concerning the participant 20 who had higher FLSA and lower EI, maybe, because she was absent 2 times from the training. In addition if we consider the activity they were asked to perform in the oral module we find it "Telling Stories" which may be another possibility for raising their SA. In order to find out the reason behind the decline of the participants 17 and 28, an informal interview was conducted with them. Unfortunately, it did not help us with any worthy explanation.

All in all, the lack of amelioration in the results of the control group and the noteworthy improvement in the experimental group results (which was confirmed to be due to our treatment and not by a chance) lead us to conclude that EI skills training was an effective strategy in minimizing the FLSA level and therefore, we confirm our research hypothesis.

5. Conclusion

There was an encouragement from the previous studies to create and incorporate EI training into the EFL classes' programmes. This study focused on EI skills and competencies to overcome or at least minimize FLSA. The present piece of work investigated the possible effect of EI skills training on lowering Non-Native Pre-Service Teachers' FLSA following a quasi-experimental design.

There was a random selection of the control and experimental groups but not of the participants themselves who were already randomly put together by the administration. The FLSA level of our population was found to be high and their EI level was moderate. The results of the study revealed that instructing students the EI skills was statistically significant and successful in reducing their anxiety in speaking classes. Therefore, our research hypothesis is confirmed validating our assumption that there is a negative correlation between the two variables. In the light of the present study's findings, more importance should be given to Emotional Intelligence as an effective strategy to minimize Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety and its negative outcomes in the EFL classrooms.

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Appendices

Appendix A: The Experimental Group Pre-Test Results

Participants	FLSA	FLSA Range	Participants	Raw Scores	EI	EI Range
1	137	very high SA	1	176	73	below average
2	131	high SA	2	190	80	below average
3	130	high SA	3	211	90	average
4	127	high SA	4	183	76	below average
5	124	high SA	5	186	78	below average
6	121	high SA	6	209	89	below average
7	121	high SA	7	218	94	average
8	120	high SA	8	208	89	below average
9	118	high SA	9	224	97	average
10	117	high SA	10	222	96	average
11	116	high SA	11	234	102	average
12	115	high SA	12	211	90	average
13	113	high SA	13	202	86	below average
14	112	high SA	14	250	110	average
15	112	high SA	15	245	107	average
16	109	moderate SA	16	284	127	above average
17	108	moderate SA	17	248	109	average
18	107	moderate SA	18	232	101	average
19	106	moderate SA	19	230	100	average
20	106	moderate SA	20	249	109	average
21	105	moderate SA	21	277	123	above average
22	105	moderate SA	22	233	101	average
23	104	moderate SA	23	233	101	average
24	104	moderate SA	24	278	124	above average
25	102	moderate SA	25	235	102	average
26	102	moderate SA	26	231	100	average
27	97	moderate SA	27	279	124	above average
28	96	moderate SA	28	275	122	above average

Appendix B: The Control Group Pre-Test Results

Participants	FLSA	FLSA Range	Raw Scores	EI	EI Range
1	148	very high SA	201	80	below average
2	144	very high SA	196	75	below average
3	138	very high SA	212	91	average
4	131	high SA	201	80	below average
5	130	high SA	213	92	average
6	130	high SA	220	99	average

7	129	high SA	229	107	average
8	126	high SA	204	83	below average
9	125	high SA	217	96	average
10	120	high SA	215	94	average
11	118	high SA	223	101	average
12	118	high SA	226	104	average
13	112	high SA	211	90	below average
14	110	moderate SA	222	100	average
15	109	moderate SA	210	89	below average
16	109	moderate SA	215	94	average
17	109	moderate SA	207	86	below average
18	108	moderate SA	219	98	average
19	108	moderate SA	228	106	average
20	106	moderate SA	230	108	average
21	103	moderate SA	252	130	above average
22	101	moderate SA	221	99	average
23	100	moderate SA	229	107	average
24	99	moderate SA	245	123	above average
25	99	moderate SA	231	109	average
26	97	moderate SA	256	133	very much above average
27	92	moderate SA	248	126	above average

Appendix C: The Experimental Group Post-Test Results

Participants	FLSA	FLSA Range	Participants	Raw Scores	EI	EI Range
1	111	high SA	1	205	72	below average
2	79	low SA	2	308	112	above average
3	68	low SA	3	342	125	above average
4	107	moderate SA	4	220	78	below average
5	84	low SA	5	241	86	below average
6	118	high SA	6	208	73	below average
7	63	low SA	7	313	114	above average
8	74	low SA	8	302	110	average
9	80	low SA	9	302	110	average
10	77	low SA	10	297	108	average
11	84	low SA	11	298	108	average
12	81	low SA	12	307	112	above average
13	80	low SA	13	295	107	average
14	84	low SA	14	317	116	above average
15	112	high SA	15	287	104	average

16	91	moderate SA	16	312	114	above average
17	99	moderate SA	17	233	83	below average
18	91	moderate SA	18	294	107	average
19	94	moderate SA	19	302	110	average
20	118	high SA	20	228	81	below average
21	89	low SA	21	298	108	average
22	100	moderate SA	22	242	86	below average
23	92	moderate SA	23	239	85	below average
24	104	moderate SA	24	288	104	average
25	98	moderate SA	25	238	85	below average
26	96	moderate SA	26	293	106	average
27	91	moderate SA	27	306	111	above average
28	92	moderate SA	28	235	84	below average

Appendix D: The Control Group Post-Test Results

Participants	FLSA	FLSA Range	Participants	Raw Scores	EI	EI Range
1	144	very high SA	1	213	92	average
2	149	very high SA	2	198	84	below average
3	128	high SA	3	216	93	average
4	142	very high SA	4	219	95	average
5	100	moderate SA	5	209	90	below average
6	128	high SA	6	241	106	average
7	73	low SA	7	260	116	above average
8	129	high SA	8	208	89	below average
9	122	high SA	9	223	97	average
10	124	high SA	10	257	115	above average
11	115	high SA	11	225	98	average
12	120	high SA	12	224	98	average
13	84	low SA	13	210	90	average
14	96	moderate SA	14	222	96	average
15	112	high SA	15	209	90	below average
16	117	high SA	16	229	100	average
17	111	high SA	17	199	84	below average
18	104	moderate SA	18	220	95	average
19	114	high SA	19	221	96	average
20	105	moderate SA	20	229	100	average
21	100	moderate SA	21	263	118	above average
22	105	moderate SA	22	200	85	below average
23	97	moderate SA	23	205	88	below average

24	91	moderate SA	24	285	130	above average
25	101	moderate SA	25	201	85	below average
26	103	moderate SA	26	297	136	very much above average
27	90	low SA	27	292	133	very much above average

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SELF-REGULATED LEARNING AS A CORNERSTONE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

Abstract

Advance in technology and communication has radically transformed all levels of education. With the easy access to various technological innovations and online tools, learning has gradually shifted towards computer-mediated classrooms with a wide availability of tools and resources most suited to learners' learning differences and styles. Distance learning has recently been given great attention as it opens the doors to learners who seek to learn and develop their potential and skills despite age, space or time. Nevertheless, this exposure to myriads of technologies and online tools represents real challenges for learners like loss of control, time management deficiencies, lack of leadership skills, social networking addiction, etc. To minimise these challenges, educators need to focus upon the development of personal skills and help learners regulate their cognition, emotions and behaviour in order to manage the social learning environment. The ability to develop personal skills and regulate one's own learning is defined as self-regulated learning. This personal constructive learning approach can be considered the cornerstone of an effective development of distance education. Throughout this study, we sought to explore this concept of self-regulated learning and explain how it relates to distance education. In an attempt to link the two constructs, the present paper derives its theoretical foundation from the social cognitive theory of Bandura and Zimmerman.

Key words: distance education, self-regulated learning, social cognitive theory.

1. Introduction

One of the major objectives of education today is to develop learners' academic potential and lifelong skills in order to develop the academic domain, prepare learners for the professional life and integrate them in the social life as well. These purposes have changed as long as societies have been evolving. As a result, the way knowledge is delivered has completely changed following societies' needs and individual differences and learning styles. New educational programs and systems have emerged. Education has evolved from traditional to modern teaching and learning. There has been a move away from classrooms where the teacher is the authority and the sole source of knowledge to learner-centered classrooms then to more asynchronous types of education. Development in the educational field made it possible for learners to acquire knowledge, develop their skills and pursue their educational goals regardless of the constraints of physical presence imposed by face-to-face education. Lessons, workshops and tutorials are now delivered online. This type of education that is distance learning or distance education opened new paths to learners to learn and

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advance in their lives regardless of age, time, place or social and cultural differences. Learners are now able to acquire knowledge and develop their potential at distance. Yet, distance education is not as simple or easy as learners may think; it represents a process that is multifaceted; thus, it can be hindered by many factors. Based on this, the aims of this research paper are twofold. First, we aim at exploring the concept of distance education from its wide range of uses in order to get a full understanding of this process. Then, we seek to cope with the challenges that hinder distance education by fostering the development of personal and social skills among learners at distance.

2. Review of the Literature

2.1. Distance Education

Distance education or distance learning is a type of nontraditional education. The words that make up the term refer to: “... *teaching and learning, the imparting and/or acquiring of knowledge via methods used because teachers and learners are at a distance from each other.....regardless ... of the limitations of space and time, social and economic inequalities among learners, geographic isolation, and cultural differences.*” (Wedemeyer, 1981: 49). This definition emphasises the physical distance between the instructor and the learner which represents the key feature of distance education. Yet, it remains a traditional conceptualisation. With the rapid growth in the world, the use of technology has become indispensable for every person; people need to use a wide range of information and communication technologies to interact with the world and cope with its challenges. This technological development and globalisation created a new generation called ‘digital natives’ who depend on technology in every corner of their lives. Education has then become associated with the new technologies and distance education has evolved from traditional correspondence types of delivery of knowledge to online delivery. From this perspective, distance education is defined by Keegan (1995: 7) “*as a technological separation of teacher and learner which frees the student from the necessity of travelling to “a fixed place, at a fixed time, to meet a fixed person, in order to be trained or educated.*” From the definition above, what makes distance education different today is that learning takes place via technology. Nevertheless, a common misconception of distance education is that teachers and learners may think that it refers to the substitution of the classroom with technology. To correct this misconception, we need to explore the term distance education from the wide range of its uses. A thorough definition is presented by Greenberg (1998: 36) who defines contemporary distance learning as “*a planned teaching/learning experience that uses a wide spectrum of technologies to reach learners at a distance and is designed to encourage learner interaction and certification of learning.*” In the same vein, Wedemeyer (1981: 111) further explains: “*what is different about learning via technology today is the scope of learnings facilitated by technology, the altered roles of teachers and learners, the changed environment for learning necessitated by technology, and the sophistication of the processes used in developing instruction that will be communicated by technology.*” In these conceptualisations, Greenberg and Wedemeyer make it clear that distance education is not about letting learners learn alone, but it requires planning and instruction. They also highlight different

features of contemporary distance education which show that it is a complex concept. Based on the ultimate goal of education, the process of learning in distance education can be considered similar to classroom learning. Learning refers to the development of skills and potential and teachers have the role of facilitating this process. The most apparent difference is the physical distance between learners and teachers that is facilitated by technology. Yet, this absence of physical interaction between instructors and learners puts both of them in different relationships from that of classrooms. Sharma, Dick, Chin & Land (2007) explain that in distance education, learners may experience a sense of isolation; as a result, in order to be successful, they must rely more on their individual abilities to regulate their learning. That is, learners have to be independent and take their full responsibility to develop their potential and regulate the learning process by themselves. Similarly, Threlkeld & Brezoska (1994) advocate that successful learners need to have a number of characteristics such as tolerance for ambiguity, high level of autonomy and an ability to be flexible. Moreover, Hardy and Boaz (1997: 43) found that “*compared to most face-to-face learning environments, distance learning requires students to be more focused, better time managers, and to be able to work independently and with group members.*” (as cited in valentine, 2002: 7). The authors cited above highlight that in distance education learning is a personal and complex process; therefore, learners are required to develop some characteristics such as tolerance of ambiguity, autonomy, flexibility, responsibility, independence and strategy use. Additionally, the mere reliance of digital natives on technology may create challenges for this type of education. So, another problem related to distance education is the misuse of technology (Valentine, 2002). Given the potential limitations associated with the uncontrolled use of technology by digital natives and the misconceptions about distance education, it is necessary for educators to raise awareness of the factors that influence learners’ achievement and engagement in distance learning. To overcome such challenges, learners need to be self-regulated in order to monitor and control both internal and external factors related to their learning.

2.2. Self-regulated Learning

Self-regulated learning is generally defined as a personal, constructive process whereby learners set goals for their learning and then attempt to monitor, regulate, and control the factors affecting their learning (Pintrich, 2000). This definition describes self-regulated learning as the extent to which learners are actively involved in regulating and managing their own learning. Self-regulated learning has been approached from different standpoints resulting in the emergence of different theories and models of self-regulated learning. Nevertheless, all the theories and models share common assumptions about the active role of the learner in both learning and self-regulation processes. To fit the purpose of the present work, our choice falls upon the social cognitive theory of self-regulated learning. The social cognitive perspective of self-regulation provides a framework for online education research that can offer insights into the functioning of autonomous learners (Lynch & Dembo, 2004). From this perspective, learning is the reciprocal interaction among personal (cognitive and affective), behavioural and environmental factors as shown in figure 1 below and

learners regulate their learning by monitoring these factors (Zimmerman, 1989: 330).

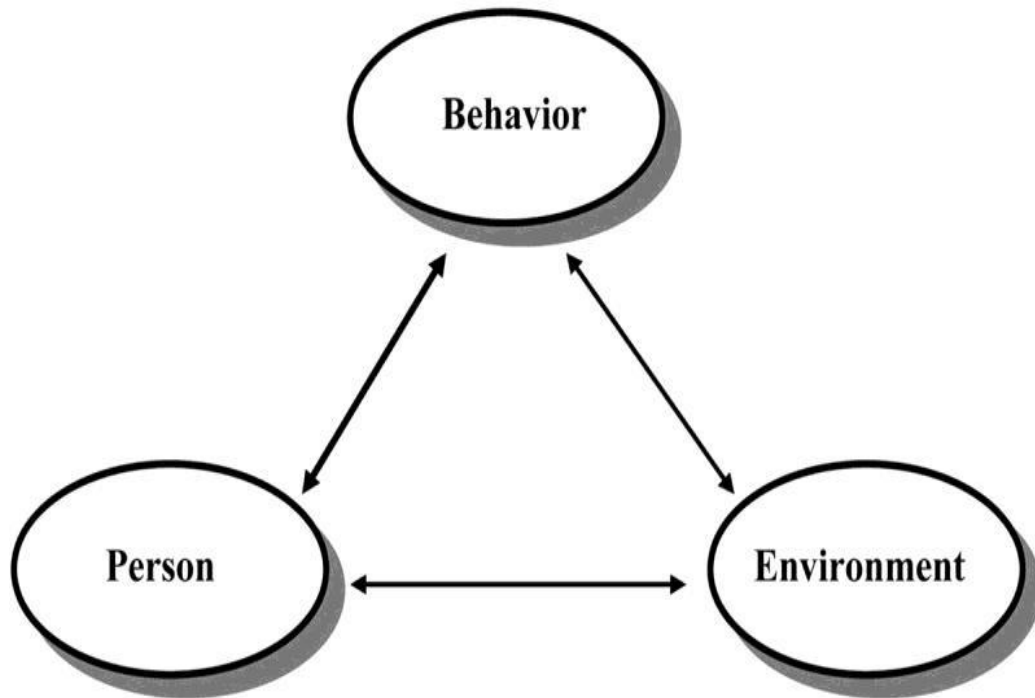


Figure 1

Bandura's model of reciprocal interactions (adopted from Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007: 2).

Put differently, learners are said to regulate their learning when they take full responsibility for their learning and proactively monitor and control their cognition, emotion, behaviour and the social learning environment. The interaction between these three basic elements is what constitutes the triadic reciprocity of self-regulation (Hodges, 2005: 376). Personal factors refer to learners' meta-cognitive awareness, the cognitive processes involved in learning and the motivational and affective factors that may foster or hinder their learning. Behavioural factors are represented by Bandura (1991) in three internal sub-functions that result from one's interaction with the environment: self-observation, self-judgment, and self-reaction. These behavioural components provide important self-diagnostic information that result in self-direction of learning. Environmental components refer to the features of the social environment in which learning takes place and which include the teacher, peers and in our case the technological mediums used.

Distance learning is characterised by the physical absence of the instructor and the use of various types of technologies which make it a highly demanding and challenging process. So learners need to take a proactive role in monitoring and regulating both internal and external factors related to their learning. Self-regulated learners are characterised by the use of different strategies and self-regulatory processes that enable them to monitor, manage and regulate their learning. These processes play the role of a mediator between the individual and the social learning environment. In this regard, Zimmerman, Bonner and Kovach (1996: 141) explain that self-regulated learning involves goal setting, strategy

use, self-monitoring and self-adjustment to acquire a skill. This definition caters some self-regulatory processes learners use when regulating their learning and which are: goal setting, self-monitoring and self-adjustment. Besides, Wolters, Pintrich and Karabenick (2003) advocate that one of the central aspects of self-regulation is the actual selection and use of various cognitive strategies for memory, learning, reasoning, problem solving, and thinking.

Schunk (2009: 806) advocates that the social cognitive theory emphasises three key elements: the active role of learners, their motivational beliefs as well as the cyclical nature of self-regulated learning. First, self-regulated learners are proactively engaged in the learning process and exert control over their learning. Second, self-regulation depends on motivational factors such as: goals, expectations and self-efficacy. That is, learners who are motivated, set goals and have high self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to engage in self-regulation. Third, self-regulation is a cyclical process involving many factors, internal and external as already mentioned, that typically change during learning.

2.2. Self-regulation in Distance Learning

Research on self-regulation in the context of education focuses on how learners regulate their learning experiences in order to become successful learners (Wolters et al, 2003). A review of studies in the field of self-regulated learning shows that researchers have focused on the application of models of self-regulation on face-to-face classrooms; however, their application to distance education has received little attention. Niemi, Nevgi and Virtanen (2003) emphasise the need for teachers to integrate self-regulation into their distance education courses and learn how to use the new tools on the internet to support learners' distance learning. Similarly, Sharma, Dick, Chin and Land (2007) claim the need for self-regulation training in distance education. Distance education theory implies that learners should possess certain self-regulatory attributes to effectively succeed in their learning, i.e., the development of distance education depends on high levels of self-regulation. For instance, Zimmermen (2002) and Järvelä and Järvenoja (2011) explained that learners who learn to use self-regulated learning strategies increase their attention, efforts and persistence; they can plan, monitor, control and regulate the learning process. In the same line of research, Niemi, Nevgi and Virtanen (2003: 2) argue: *“Learners’ repertoire of strategies to monitor their learning processes, and their willingness to invoke such strategies, will dramatically affect their ability to manage the wealth of information found on the Internet”*. In their study, Sharma, Dick, Chin and Land (2007) found that distance learners with higher levels of self-regulation were likely to have better distance learning performance.

Self-regulatory processes are different from one learner to another, yet there are common self-regulatory attributes that have shown their effectiveness in promoting distance learning. These self-regulatory processes include: motivational beliefs, environment and time management skills and help seeking. This was demonstrated in Lynch and Dembo's (2004) study investigating the relationship between self-regulation and online learning. They concluded that five self-regulatory attributes were demonstrated to be predictive of academic performance: intrinsic goal orientation, self-efficacy for learning and performance, time and study environment management, help seeking, and

internet self-efficacy. Motivational strategies describe activities in which learners make efforts to increase their intrinsic interest for learning, the relevance and meaningfulness of learning tasks by linking them to personal experiences and interests (Wolters et al, 2003: 19). First, self-efficacy beliefs play a significant role in learners’ learning and achievement (Bandura, 1991; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007). This motivational factor is defined as “*the judgments that individuals hold about their capabilities to learn or to perform courses of action at designated levels*” (Pajares, 2009: 791). Schunk and Zimmerman (2007) explain this as learners with high self-efficacy beliefs work harder, persist longer when facing difficulties and achieve higher levels compared to learners who are not sure of their capabilities. Second, goal-setting is another motivational factor that affects learners. Beatty-Guenter (2001) identified goal orientation as a significant attribute for course completion in distance education (as cited in Lynch & Dembo, 2004). Concerning environment structuring, it refers to learners’ efforts to manage the learning environment and minimise distractions (OMalley, Russo, Chamot, & Stewner-Manzanares, 1988; O’Malley and Chamot, 1990). Another important self-regulatory attribute in distance learning is learners’ ability to effectively manage their time (Kearsley, 2000; Phipps and Merisotis, 1999; as cited in Lynch & Dembo, 2004). Yet, it is not the amount of time spent that is important, but rather its effective use and management (Whisler 2004, as cited in Sharma, Dick, Chin & Land; 2007: 386). Based on the complex nature of distance education, an important factor determining learners’ success is help seeking. Help seeking refers to learners’ tendency and efforts to solicit help from experts. All in all, different self-regulatory processes and skills are associated with distance learning. Therefore, it is important to encourage the development of self-regulation among distance learners. In this regard, educators and teachers play an important role in integrating self-regulation into distance education and develop learners’ ability to self-regulate their learning. Based on what has been discussed so far, this paper provides some suggestions for both teachers and learners to facilitate the integration of self-regulation into distance education.

Learners’ role	Teachers’ role
Change their attitudes towards distance learning, Develop a sense of responsibility for their learning, Set goals for their learning, Analyse task requirements, plan for effective strategies, – Use and adjust these strategies Manage their time effectively, Control their emotions and minimise distractions,	Raise learners’ awareness of self-regulation, Create opportunities for self-regulation, Support learners’ learning through different activities , Help learners control their emotions, Provide feedback on both their learning progress and self-regulation strategies, Encourage interaction and collaboration through technology to minimise feelings of isolation and loss of control, Encourage problem solving and critical thinking,

– Assess their progress,
Solicit help from peers and teachers.

The need for teacher training on self-regulation.

3. Conclusion

Learners' self-regulation can be considered a cornerstone of an effective development of distance education. The current paper reviewed the distance education and self-regulated learning literatures. It updated our understanding of self-regulated learning, identified the core issues surrounding distance education and explored learner self-regulatory skills predictive of academic success in a distance education context. Based on this, we can conclude that self-regulation plays an important role in successful learning in a distance education context. Learners need to use a wide range of self-regulatory processes and skills in order to self-regulate their learning. Motivational beliefs, environment structuring and time management skills as well as help seeking strategies are all important self-regulatory attributes for successful learning. Building on this, there is a need to raise awareness among educators and learners of the importance of self-regulation in distance education contexts where different variables are interacting therefore affecting both learning and teaching. Yet, only limited research has been conducted to empirically investigate self-regulated learning within distance education contexts. So, further investigations are highly required.

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A THEORETICAL ACCOUNT OF THE DIFFERENCES IN MEN AND WOMEN'S LANGUAGE USE

Abstract

The aim of the present paper is to discuss the theories which underlie the differences between male and female's language use. In light of this, the paper provides an overview of the dominant theories and approaches that have been provided in an attempt to understand the roots of men and women's differences in language use, especially in speaking. Discussion of gender and language is in light of certain accounts and studies that have focussed on certain striking linguistic aspects remarkably noticed in men/women's speech in different contexts.

Keywords: differences, gender, language, men, speech, women.

1. Introduction

Men and women use language differently. The differences may be small to the extent that people may not notice, or may even overlook, them because they are of no importance, or they may be significant to the extent that people can easily notice them. Over the few last decades, the area of language and gender has been attracting considerable attention. Research has led to many explanatory theoretical accounts and approaches to language and gender relationships, and many dominant theories have been introduced. The aim of the present paper is to discuss the dominant theories that explain the differences between male and female's language use, especially in speaking interactions.

In light of this, discussion is of a theoretical nature. It focuses on providing a general account of certain language differences and an overview of language theories and approaches to explain the source of language-gender differences. The paper highlights certain points of interest to any research investigation in the field, including theories, levels of language differences and the different factors that may influence male and female's language performances in different interactions.

2. Theories of Language-Gender Differences

Despite the fact that neither men nor women have been explicitly instructed in using language, both parts do, in fact, use language in different ways (Dunn, 2014). Due to certain noticeable differences in their use of language, many explanations and accounts have been introduced in the field of language and gender studies. These explanations have been advanced in order to understand and identify the factors which explain how these differences come about in the use of language (spoken/written). Several theories have also been developed and established

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in order to help researchers in the field of language and gender to understand and further investigate the differences in men and women's language behaviour. The following discussion focuses on providing and explaining the major theories about male and female's language differences in their respective order of occurrence.

4. The Invasion Theory

The invasion theory claims that the differences in male and female's speech are mainly due to historical wars and invasion. According to this interesting theory, differences in the language of the invaded country are likely to occur. The traditional eminent instances of language-gender differences that reflect the invasion theory stem from the West Indies. The first time the Europeans have arrived in the Lesser Antilles and interacted with the Carib Indians, they have discovered differences in male and female's speech. In fact, they have even thought that men and women speak distinct languages. A seventeenth century report has stated that:

The men have great many expressions peculiar to them, which the women understand but never pronounce themselves. On the other hand, the women have words and phrases which the men never use, or they would be laughed to scorn. Thus, it happens that in their conversations it often seems as if the women had another language than the men (De Rochefort, 1665, as quoted in Trudgill, 1995, p. 64).

The report shows that the differences in male and female's speech are significantly apparent at the lexical level of language. Men and women do not speak different languages. In fact, they only speak distinct varieties of the same language.

A widespread explanation for the differences that are found in male and female's speech has been given by Caribbean Indians themselves. They have stressed the similarity between the speech of the Carib men and that of the Arawak women to whom they got married to. The Carib men have waged wars against the Arawak men, who are native inhabitants of the Lesser Antilles. The Caribs won the war, and the Arawak have been defeated and exterminated. The Caribs have, then, occupied the place of the Arawak men and married their wives (Aikhenvald, 2016). This point has been clearly stated in the following quote:

The savage natives of Dominica say that the reason for this is that when the Caribs came to occupy the islands, these were inhabited by an Arawak tribe which they exterminated completely, with the exception of women, whom they married to populate the country. It is asserted that there is similarity between the speech of continental Arawaks and that of the Carib women (Rochefort, 1665, as quoted in Jespersen, 1922, p. 237).

As it has been clearly shown in the Caribbean Indian speech, the language differences have been a consequence of the blend between

the Carib men and the Arawak women languages. Different speech styles have occurred as a result of war and invasion. The Caribs' victory could not, however, eliminate the existing language of the Arawak women, who continued to speak their language with children, but they used to speak to their new husbands using a pidgin Carib. The coexistence of the two parties has led to the creation of a multilingual situation.

Further examples have been found in Amazon and Japan. Levi-Strauss (as quoted in Spolsky, 1998, p. 36-37) has pointed out that, "an Amazonian father laughed at his young daughter for using the male word for hunting." Many cases have also shown that male's speech is different from that of female's. For instance, when American service-men have learned Japanese from women, people used to laugh at them, and they have become a source of amusement to those who knew the language. The reason behind that is related to the fact that the language that has been learnt is associated with women only.

5. The Taboo Theory

Taboo is another explanation to men and women's differences in language. Jespersen (1922) has claimed that in some cases, taboo can be a source of linguistic differences. He (1922) has pointed out that on a war-path, the Carib men use certain words and expressions that can be uttered only by adult men. It is believed that 'bad luck' can result if such words were to be used by women or uninitiated boys. This can lead to significant differences on both the lexical and the phonological levels of language. Taboo can also have significant influences on vocabulary. If Caribs' women are forbidden to use some words or names, they will, instead, use new ones. This can, hence, lead to sex-vocabulary differentiation.

Zulu is also an example where women were not allowed to use male's words or to mention the name of their father in law. Another example about male-female differences on the lexical level is found in the Chiquito, an American-Indian language of Bolivia. The female's word for 'my brother' is 'ičbausi', while the male's one is 'tsaruki.'

Similar examples have also been found in other pronominal systems of some languages. In English, for instance, only the third person singular is differentiated (he/she). In the French system, the third person plural is differentiated (ils/elles). The differentiation may extend to involve the second or even the first person as in the case of 'Thai', where in conversation, a male says 'phom' for the first person singular 'I', whereas a female uses 'dichan' to refer to herself (Jespersen, 1922).

6. The Prejudice Theory

Prejudice is also another theory that has been introduced in order to explain the factors that influence male and female's language. Differences in men and women's speech may arise from customs encouraging marriage outside the country. For example, when a person from village 'A' marries a woman from village 'B', the woman's speech will be characterized by many features of the dialect of her village.

However, such evidence is only prejudice which can be true as it can be wrong. People's impressions are not necessarily correct. For instance, it has been assumed for a long time that women talk more than their men counterpart, while the opposite has been proved (Spolsky, 1998).

7. The Educational Level of Theory

A crucial cause of male-female language-gender differences can be attributed to the level of education. It is claimed that the greater the differences between educational opportunities for both sexes are, the greater the diversity in male and female's speech will be.

In American ultra-orthodox Jewish communities, it is expected that men tend to spend more time studying traditional Jewish topics. As far as language is concerned, they become competent in both Yiddish and Hebrew, yet they remain weak in English. Women, on the other hand, tend to spend more time on secular studies. As a result, their English language becomes closer to the standard one. Women's Hebrew language knowledge remains weak, however.

Other studies in the Arab world provide evidence that education is the chief cause of the linguistic-gender-differences. In one village, it has been found that more linguistic differences are found in the half where girls have less education than boys, than in the half where both sexes are offered equal educational opportunities. What is more, is that women tend to be more sensitive to the status norms of the language (Spolsky, 1998).

8. Approaches to Language-Gender Differences

According to Coates (1986), research on language and gender can be divided into studies that focus on dominance and those that focus on difference. The two approaches have been advanced in an attempt to surpass some 'folk linguistic' assumptions about the way men and women use language.

8.1. The Dominance Approach

In this approach, the role of men in everyday interactions with women is seen as being 'operative'. Women are subordinate to men, and this reflects the dominance of men over them (Kunsmann, 1998). Research has shown some facts with regard to the lower or secondary status of women to men (Spolsky, 1998). Women are always referred to as girls, and this, in fact, lowers their status. For instance, in Hebrew, feminine forms are found only in lower ranks, and the use of generic masculine (he) like in 'Everyone should bring his lunch', illustrates and reinforces women's subordination and secondary status.

In her work 'Language and Women's Place', Lakoff (1975) has argued that women use many expressions of tentativeness and powerlessness in their daily interactions. They use tag-questions like: 'John is at work, isn't it?' And they also use declarative answers with a raised tone, like in: 'Bill is in his post office' (Aitchinson, 1992).

The use of tentative phrases is claimed to be associated with females. For instance, they may say a 'kind of' or 'sort of' instead of direct statement: 'Bill is kind of short' instead of 'Bill is short.' Women

are also accused to use raised intonation as in questions in their response to queries: ‘about eight o’clock’ as a reply to ‘What time is dinner?’ Such “insecure style of conversation seems to be typical of powerless people” (Aitchinson, 1992).

For Lakoff (1975), using a falling tone when saying a statement is a sign of lack of confidence. This involves expressions such as: John is here, isn’t he? And: the way prices are rising these days is horrendous, isn’t it? The latter reflects the speaker’s opinion which demonstrates insecurity (Ehrlich, 2004).

In a research study that has been conducted by Dubois and Crouch (1975), they have claimed, however, that tag-questions are not associated with women only. Men produce them more than women. Tag-questions do not only express uncertainty and insecurity; they may also function as expressions of politeness and for facilitating communication.

Showing Insecurity: I graduated last year, didn’t I?

Facilitating Conversation: Andrew this is our new neighbour, Frank. Andrew has just changed job, haven’t you?

In these two previous examples, Holmes (1993) has reported the following different functions of tag-questions in both men and women’s speech.

Table 1:

Male and Female’s Use of Tag Questions

Function of Tag Questions	Women	Men
Expressing Uncertainty	35%	61%
Facilitating	59%	26%
Softening	6%	13%
Confrontational		
Total	100%	100%

The results of this study show that tag-questions which express uncertainty are more used by men. Those facilitating communication are more used by women. In fact, tag-questions can have different functions, and their use depends on the speaker’s intention in a particular context.

In the same line of thought, according to West and Zimmermann (1983), the use of interruptions by men in a conversation represents a ‘site of conversational dominance’. When men interrupt, the topics are initiated and maintained by them. In a similar vein, Fishman (1983) has claimed that women’s role in conversation is to allow it to continue as long as possible. Women perform in order to sustain conversation with men; their purpose is not to dominate.

8.2.The Difference Approach

The difference (dual-culture) approach attempts to explain the differential ‘communicative behaviour’ of men and women. Both sexes use different linguistic styles. In childhood, children have plenty opportunities for developing different speech styles when talking in single-sex groups.

Tannen (1990) has stated that, "Male's styles prepare them better for public speaking, asking questions after lectures, talking in committees, presenting verbal reports and so on, while female's style is more 'private' suitable for establishing rapport" (p. 70).

In her best-selling book 'You Just Don't Understand: Men and Women in Conversation', Tannen (1990, p. 47) has stated that "misunderstanding arises because styles are different and each style is valid on its own terms." That is to say, men and women's styles are different from each other, but they are equal.

In a study conducted by Coates (1986) investigating men-only and women-only discussion groups, she (1986) has found that when women converse with each other, a lot of private things about their lives are discussed and revealed. Women tend to stick to a single topic for a long time, give opportunity to other speakers to finish their personal feelings and participate in the discussion. In contrast to women, men,

competed to prove themselves better informed about current affairs, travel, sports,... etc. The topic changed often and men tried to, over time, establish reasonable stable hierarchy, while some men dominating conversation and others talking very little (Coates, 1986, p. 151-152).

Put differently, men's style of speech is competitive, while that of women is cooperative. Both Coates (1986) and Tannen (1990) have preferred to use the term 'style' instead of 'language' to make it clear that both sexes use the same language. The differ only in terms of style (Litosseliti, 2006).

In the 1970's and 1980's, it has been clearly emphasized that male's speech styles are competitive, whereas female's ones are cooperative. However, it is claimed that such studies have been based just on limited populations (White North America Middle Class) and have been over generalized to all women and men. In correction to such kinds of generalizations, Freed and Greenwood (1996) have claimed that when involved in same-sex intimate conversations with friends, men and women have shown similar behaviour: the one associated with women is a cooperative style of speech. In this case, it has been concluded that the emergence of this style of speech is not due to gender, but rather to the demand of particular types of talk (friendly). As a result of such study, great importance has been, therefore, given to both "communicative settings and tasks as possible determinant of linguistic behaviour that has [...] been treated as the effect of a speaker's gender" (Ehrlich, 2004, p. 307). In relation to what Ehrlich (2004) has stated, Cameron (1995) has also stated that 'Sociolinguistics says that how you act depends on who you are: critical theory says that who you are (and taken to be) depends on how you act' (p. 15-16).

In conversations, females seek to achieve solidarity. They try to upgrade themselves towards the use of the prestigious language. Men, on the other hand, seek to show power and dominate the conversation.

In addition to that, cases in the Western world have shown that women are said to have a tendency towards the prestige standard. Their speech is better than that of men, even colloquially speaking. It has been explained that women may behave in a 'Lady like' manner of speaking because of the society pressure exerted on them, or because they "may tend to have jobs which rely on communication rather than on strength" (Aitchinson, 1992, p. 117). Women's speech also tends to be closer to the prestige norm (R.P.) than that of men.

The general tendency is that power is associated with men, while solidarity is associated with women. In conversations, men try to dominate the whole conversation to protect themselves from attempts of putting them down. For them, life is a struggle to reserve independence and to avoid failure. Women's aim in speech, on the one hand, is to give confirmation and support, in addition to reaching and establishing agreement. Men's purpose, on the other hand, is to protect themselves from pushing them away. For women, life is a struggle to preserve intimacy and to avoid isolation (Hudson, 1999).

9. Gender Differences at the Level of English Syntax

In a diachronic study of gender differences in dramatic dialogue, Biber and Burges (2000) have observed that female authors portray both male and female characters as being involved and tentative than male authors. Various linguistic devices can be used to signal the speakers' commitment to the truth of the expressed proposition. Both tentativeness and politeness share the property of being expressed by these linguistic devices.

As far as the English syntax is concerned, Mondorf (2002) has conducted a study investigating language differences between men and women vis-à-vis the use of finite adverbial clauses (F.A.C.) both quantitatively and qualitatively. F.A.C. are of four types: causal, conditional, purpose and concessive clauses. Mondorf (2002) has found that causal, conditional and purpose clauses are highly used by women, while the concessive ones are used by men. Also, unlike men, there is a strong tendency on the part of women to use post-posed clauses.

Women prefer to use more post-posed A.Cs. than men do. Mondorf (2002, p. 166) has stated that, "the positional preference can be explained in terms of the information structure of F. A. C. The post-posed favoured by women are mainly asserted rather pre-posed." Post-posed clauses reflect a lower degree of commitment than that of pre-posed ones. Thus, one of the main reasons why women apparently use final clauses is to modify the proposition expressed in the main clause. Put differently, the post-position of adverbial clauses appears to be the default location for signalling one's limited commitment towards the truth of the proposition expressed in the main clause.

Unlike the case of women who prefer post-posed position, it has been found that their male counterpart prefer to use the kind of adverbial clauses that conveys presupposed information. Their clauses, therefore, express high commitment towards the truth of the expressed

proposition. Pre-supposed information often appears in final position. Men, then, tend to use F. A.Cs. to convey high commitment to the truth of the expressed proposition, while females use them in a post-posed manner for the opposite effect (Mondorf, 2002).

In line with what has been said, Holmes (1984) has pointed out to the relevance of positioning in the functional differentiation of hedges. For instance, the initial positioning of 'I believe' can express more certainty than final positioning. This central point is illustrated in the following examples:

'*I believe* that students are responsible for this'

'The students are responsible for this, *I believe*'

The initial placement of 'I believe' may strengthen the assertion, whereas its final positioning may reduce the strength of the speaker's commitment to the truth of the proposition. In the above example, the first case expresses certainty, and the second one expresses uncertainty (Holmes, 1984).

In fact, the factors that influence male and female's speech styles and language preferences differ from one situation to another. The differences cannot be explained in terms of one factor over the others since they all overlap to allow different types of differences to arise.

10. Discussion of a Short Sample of Street Talk between a Girl and a Boy

Male and female's everyday use of language differs a lot. This can be noticed in many different situations: at home, at work and, in the street and so on. In fact, men and women use distinct styles of speech and tend to play different roles when talking to each other. In what follows, there is a short sample discussion that focuses on certain language differences in the way both men and women speak in natural and authentic discourse.

The sample represents an everyday interaction. It is a short dialogue between a young girl and a boy who are native speakers of English. The type of interaction is a street talk. The dialogue is provided below.

Girl: "Ney. Y'know what?"

Guy: "Mmmm?"

Girl: "well, this kinda crazy guy comes up to me, you know? I'm, like, ready to run for the bank."

Guy: "Hah."

Girl: "It is really amazing that these people approach you in daylight, don't you think?"

Guy: "I know. I was at the movies once and some bum started asking me for money."

Girl: "Really? What happened?"
(Kunsmann, 1998)

As the above speech interaction shows, in the American culture, both the boy and the girl tend to use different speech styles. The boy tends to dominate the conversation by using interruptions such as

'Mmmm,' 'yeh' and 'Huh' in order to shift the topic to the one he prefers more: 'I know I was at the movies once and some bum started asking me for money.' The girl, on the other hand, tends to use many expressions of tentativeness as tag-questions: 'It's really ... don't you think,' and tentative phrases such as: 'well, this kinda crazy guy ...,' instead of direct statement 'this crazy guy.' Unlike men, women are more inclined to use a more indirect way of speaking. They also use some expressions like: 'really? What happened?' in order to show interest and to sustain the conversation with the boy.

11. Conclusion

Diverse language contexts and situations show many instances of language-gender differences in male and female's conversations (even writing). Many historical accounts have emphasized language and gender differences. These differences have been attributed to different factors, and have resulted in the introduction of many explanatory theories. One of the prevailing paradigms that should be given due consideration in language and gender studies is that of the social constructivism. Language is a reflection to society and culture is embedded in it. For that reason, studies in language and gender should be oriented towards notions of speech communities, communicative tasks and language contexts.

The aim of the present paper has been to discuss the theories and approaches that underlie men and women's differences in using language in real-life interactions. The theoretical discussion has been made in light of examples taken from different studies. What has been largely noticed in each study is the fact that men and women show different language behaviors. The latter can be approached from different perspectives, especially from the dominance and the difference perspective.

Research in the area of language and gender is of significant value, especially that it paves the way for further interesting research, not only in the English language, but also in the French and Arabic languages in the Algerian context. Despite the theoretical nature of the present paper, we suggest that future research should focus on men and women's use of language (spoken/written) in the Algerian context.

In addition to that, research should also be extended to involve discourse analysis of male and female's writing at the different levels of the language system (syntax, vocabulary, grammar, and so on). The area of language and gender will always be of significant importance and attracts researchers' attention given the interesting information it provides. Cross-cultural studies are also believed to be central in providing new results and important insights about the topic.

The present paper serves as an introduction for the researcher to conduct practice-oriented research in the area of language and gender. More interestingly, it establishes the ground for future research that will deeply focus on the relationship between language, gender and power through analyzing both the linguistic and social/cultural phenomena in a specific speech community.

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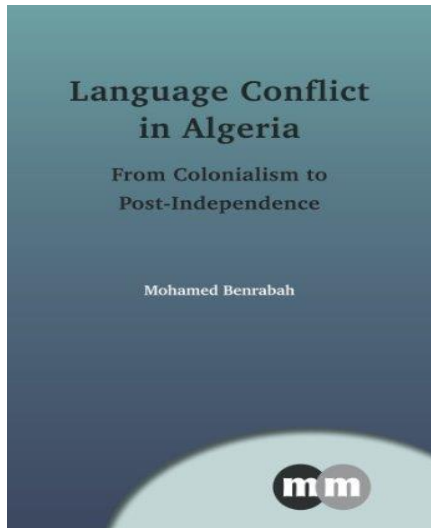
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**LANGUAGE CONFLICT IN ALGERIA: FROM COLONIALISM TO POST-INDEPENDENCE:
BOOK REVIEW**



Author: **Mohamed Benrabah**
Title of the Book: *Language Conflict in Algeria: From Colonialism to Post- Independence*
Year of Publication: **2013**
Publisher: **Multilingual Matters, Bristol**
Number of Pages: xiv + **199**

Benrabah's *Language Conflict in Algeria: From Colonialism to Post-Independence* (2013) is an outstanding book in the Anthropological/Contact Linguistics and the Sociolinguistics of Algeria. Through his book, he could successfully and rigorously deliver a historical and sociolinguistic description and draw a vivid portrait of Algeria from the early days of French colonialism to nowadays post-independence (modern) Algeria. Appreciably, the publication of the volume came with the celebration of the fiftieth independence day of Algeria (1962-2012). Noticeably, for a Professor of Linguistics, the sociolinguistic situation and the language policy/politics in Algeria are at the core of his text. Linguistically, it is written in highly academic English including many specific concepts that describe best '*l'Algérie Profonde*'. Notably, the author built his book on five chapters preceded by a prologue and followed by an epilogue, presented in a logical and chronological order regarding the linguistic and cultural issues and developments in Algeria.

After reading the whole book, we modestly divided it into two main parts respectively the sociolinguistic situation of (pre)colonial Algeria and (post)independent Algeria. First, the author discussed several language conflicts related issues with pertinent illustrations. Also, he introduced language conflicts as emerging from language contact situations where some language users try "*to carve out a space for their own tongue which expands to other linguistic*

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'territories'" (2). After that, Benrabah linked the language conflicts to the linguistic imperialism as: "*the establishment of unjust and violent structures in societies in general and colonized communities in particular generates the necessary conditions for linguistic oppression and conflict*" (4). Moreover, he added that the colonizers imposed their alien language on the colonized and prevented them from keeping and maintaining their mother tongues especially in education. Besides, the author discussed diachronically the French conquest of Algeria and summarized meticulously the long period of colonization till the Algerian Independence in 1962. And he thoroughly described the French linguistic and cultural policies during the French occupation (1830-1962), where France adopted the policy of "*deculturization*".

Second, Benrabah moved to the description of the sociolinguistic situation of post-independent Algeria. He started by the introduction of the different linguistic and educational policies implemented in the country and he made connection with the main reasons behind the post-independence Algerian linguistic conflicts. Importantly, he thoroughly presented the linguistic Arabization directed in Algeria and how it generated several conflicts. According to him, the linguistic issue was twofold: the status of French and the policy of Arabization (53). Also, the Arabization issue was related to agenda, language choice, and the way of implementation. Furthermore, the author asserted that the Algerian language planners were looking for a substitute for the ex-colonizer's language (i.e., French). Moreover, they were motivated by the following two reasons: firstly, French should be replaced by a new foreign language that should be more powerful than French. Secondly, this language should be in peace with the society without any link with colonialism (90). In this respect, the English language is perceived as the ideal language for the Algerian language planners. Finally, he closed his book by a survey of the linguistic issues in Algeria from the Algerian intellectuals and writers' standpoints. For instance, the Algerian intellectuals educated in French started to write remarkably in French against the French colonizer and their works (in French) are writings/answers back to the colonizer (128).

In short, *Language Conflict in Algeria: From Colonialism to Post-Independence* (2013) is a must reading book for everyone who seeks to understand the linguistic issues in Algeria. Besides, it is a source of well documented facts and events that Algerians witnessed through decades of politico-linguistic conflicts and socio-linguistic changes. Thus, we recommend this book to the students and lecturers of Sociolinguistics in general and to those interested in the sociolinguistics of Algeria in particular for a better understanding of mainly the Arabization policy and the present sociolinguistic situation in the country. Moreover, Arab sociolinguists from the Middle East are kindly invited to read the present book for a panoramic outlook of the linguistic situation in North Africa.

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