"Omani youth must demonstrate a serious desire to work and make use of the many opportunities which are open to them. The country is in serious need of their efforts in innumerable fields."

18/11/1992
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From the Dean

I would like to congratulate the efforts of the editorial team on publishing this new issue of the Oman ELT Journal. I have observed that the sincerity and hard work on their side as well as the contributors helped establish and sustain a platform for academic debates. Academic community will find relevant debates in this issue as usual to motivate them to reflect and research on them. I cannot overemphasize the significance for such a medium to publish for the emerging and developed academics likewise. As for the future, I hope to see issues with an increased frequency and author submissions for further development of the journal.

Dr. Azzah Al-Maskari
It is indeed a great pleasure to launch the fourth volume of Oman Journal of ELT this summer. This issue contains research papers from professionals and senior Omani research students from Sultan Qaboos University. These research papers deal with various issues in ELT and Education. OJELT strongly believes that the Omani research students are the future pillars of Oman. Hence, more publishing opportunities are given to them in order to build a strong research foundation. Through this publishing opportunity, OJELT reflects the national mission of promoting research among students at the universities and colleges in Oman.

This issue contains six research papers. The paper “Views of Curriculum in Foreign Language Teaching” discusses generic theory in curriculum in relation to foreign language teaching and examines the role of policy and power as the fundamental underpinnings in any conceptualization of curriculum. The second paper investigates the “Common Types of Bullying at Omani Schools” and issues related to it. Similarly, “The Role of WhatsApp in Improving Family Relationships” studies the effects of WhatsApp on family members’ interaction and how such interactions bring them closer to each other.

The paper titled “Sexist language and Images in the campus posters in a university in Manila” analyses the manifestation of sexist language and images in the school posters of a university in Manila. Along this line, “The impact of communicative language teaching on TESOL” explores the origin and characteristics of CLT and its relevance to language teaching practices in the present context. The last paper “Feedback and Its Role in Improving Students’ Narrative Writing” examines different types of feedback and their role in improving students’ writing accuracy.

We would like to thank all the contributors and ICT administration for their continuous support. We also take this opportunity to request you to submit your research papers for the next issue.
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Views of Curriculum in Foreign Language Teaching

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Abstract

This paper draws on the generic theory of curriculum in an attempt to discuss how this concept can be viewed in foreign language teaching. The main argument presented is that no consensus can be reached on what a curriculum actually entails because the concept is philosophically and ideologically driven. Hence, it is argued that any definition of curriculum is complex because issues of policy, power and epistemology usually underpin the concept. The paper first discusses how curriculum is defined. Then, it looks at issues of policy and power as the fundamental underpinnings in any conceptualization of curriculum. After that, the paper discusses curriculum with reference to educators’ epistemological beliefs and looks at how different views are inextricably linked to conceptions of learning, teaching and knowledge. Finally, the paper draws on the generic discussion to discuss how curriculum can be viewed in foreign language teaching. It is hoped that this discussion can represent an initial platform for debate in the field.

Keywords: curriculum, epistemology, foreign language teaching, ideology, knowledge, policy and power, socio-constructivism

Introduction

The literature on curriculum theory indicates that it is hard to come to an exact definition of what curriculum actually entails because the concept is generally philosophically and ideologically driven (Wheelahan, 2015; Lawton, 1983; Kelly, 1999). There is an argument that if we widen ‘the meaning of the term so much that it embraces almost everything…[it will
mean] very little’ (Smith, 2000: 7), whereas if we narrow the meaning then curriculum will be used interchangeably with course contents, or more precisely a syllabus, which would eventually be misleading and simplistic (Kelly, 1999; Lawton, 1983). Kelly (1999) for instance maintains that:

Any definition of curriculum, if it is to be practically effective and productive, must offer much more than a statement about the knowledge-content or merely the subjects which schooling is to ‘teach’ or transmit. It must go far beyond this to an explanation, and indeed a justification, of the purposes of such transmission and an exploration of the effects that exposure to such knowledge and such subjects is likely to have, or is intended to have, on its recipients – indeed it is from these deeper concerns…that any curriculum planning worthy of the name must start. (p. 3)

It is argued that curriculum is generally conceptualized within a continuum. At one end, it entails a narrow concept which sees curriculum as a set of knowledge to be transmitted in schools or as a course to run (Prawat, 1992; Taylor, 1990). However, this definition has proven to be inconsistent and simplistic (Kelly, 1999). At the other end, it entails a broader definition which involves a full understanding of the social, political, economic and cultural ideologies that underpin educational processes (Kelly, 1999; Annala, Lindén, & Mäkinen, 2016), where curriculum is seen as a network of knowledge to be explored (Prawat, 1992; Taylor, 1990). The latter view seeks to answer questions such as “which knowledge is taught?”, "why is knowledge taught?", "how is knowledge taught?", and "to whom is knowledge taught?" This second view of curriculum as a network of knowledge subsumes issues of policy and power.

**Curriculum and power**

Any curriculum definition is inextricably linked to issues of policy and power (Al-Harthi and Ginsburg, 2003; Young, 2003; Kelly, 1999; Lawton, 1983, 1989). Power in this context can be defined as:

The ability to achieve one’s goals and to control events through intentional action… [i.e.,] individuals exercise power as a result of their social relationships within institutional structures that provide meaning to their actions and also constrain them. (Tollefson, 1991: 9)
The issue of curriculum and power is currently at the center of debate in education. It is about the nature of knowledge and the extent to which education should, or should not, use knowledge to empower, or to disempower, its users. The central question in this debate is about “who controls knowledge” (Quinn, 1998) because it is argued that knowledge is not neutral; rather, it is a concept that carries connotations for power, domination and control (Foucault, 1980; Bourdieu, 1997; Quinn, 1998). Curriculum can therefore become a tool to exercise and maintain power (Al-Harthi and Ginsburg, 2003) or reversibly as an opportunity to emancipate social actors towards building a just, fair and cohesive society (Wheelahan, 2015; Young, 2014). Young (2003) for instance argues that curriculum can be viewed as ‘a selection of knowledge that [reflects] the interests of those with power’ (p. 554), in contrast with curriculum ‘based on social practices’ (p. 554). Kable (2001) notes that curriculum is a highly political activity. She points out that curriculum policy ‘is always situated within a particular historical, political, social and economic context’ (p. 322) and that ‘[c]urriculum reforms are influenced by power relations and competing agendas and discourses that shape how curriculum comes to be viewed’ (pp. 322-323). Wheelahan (2015) argues that an ideal curriculum is the one that empowers ‘…students to participate in debates and controversies in society and in their occupational field of practice as the basis for their participation in a democratic society’ (p. 760). Young (2014) maintains that curriculum should entail ‘powerful knowledge’ as underpinning principle. He notes in this respect:

The idea of ‘powerful knowledge’ starts by making two assumptions. (i) that there is ‘better knowledge’ in every field, and (ii) that at the root of all decisions about knowledge in the curriculum is the idea of differentiation; that there are different types of knowledge. For any thinking about the curriculum, the most basic distinction is between school or curriculum knowledge and the everyday knowledge or experience that pupils bring to school. It is not that one is ‘good’ and the other is ‘bad’. It is that they have different structures and different purposes. (p. 8)

It is in this respect that recent debate on “prescribed” and “democratic” curriculum has become necessary. A prescribed curriculum is defined as the one where knowledge is decided by the state and handed down to school; teachers are expected to transmit knowledge and students are expected to receive knowledge and reproduce it according to pre-determined sets of rules (Kelly, 1999; Carlson, 1997; Lawton, 1983, 1989;
Squires, 1987). A democratic curriculum, however, is a socially constructed system of knowledge (Kelly, 1999; Carlson, 1997; Lawton, 1983, 1989; Squires, 1987) towards students’ ‘personal enrichment, political empowerment and personal/social/moral adjustment and responsibility’ (Kelly, 1999: 224-225). Implementing a prescribed curriculum has always proven to be unsuccessful because this usually conflicts with curriculum users, namely the teachers (Kelly, 1999). This has consequently led recent trends in education to argue for a democratic approach to curriculum (Kelly, 1999; Lawton, 1983, 1989; Carlson, 1997) which aims at producing an ‘equitable, just, and caring society’ (Carlson, 1997: 10). Hence, a democratic curriculum involves all those concerned with the education of children. It is a dynamic curriculum, where individuals constantly reflect and interact towards the construction of meanings; it is a curriculum that identifies discrimination, social exclusion, economic deprivation, and all other forms of human pain and sufferings created by oppressive uses of power and control, and eradicates them appropriately; it is a curriculum as conversation (Applebee, 1994, 1996; Smagorinsky, 1996), which embodies critical dialogue and communication for the purposes of creating democratic social practices (Wheelahan, 2015).

**Views of curriculum**

The literature argues that any conceptualization of curriculum is generally underpinned by our ideological and philosophical conceptions about learning, teaching and knowledge (Lawton, 1989; Kelly, 1999; Annala, Lindén, & Mäkinen, 2016). That is, we view curriculum with reference to our epistemological beliefs about the nature of knowledge and how knowledge should be taught and learnt.

One contributor to modern curriculum studies is Lawton (1983, 1989), who for instance argues that there are generally three major ideologies underlying educators’ views of curriculum and education: “classical humanism”, “progressivism” and “reconstructionism”, although he acknowledges that it would be too simplistic to limit these ideologies to only three categories. For Lawton, classical humanism aims at transmitting cultural heritage, social values and knowledge to a special category of learners who are seen as the future elite of that society (Lawton, 1983, 1989; Squires, 1987). Progressivism advocates the child’s freedom to learn according to their needs rather than to learn what has been decided for them (Lawton, 1983, 1989; Squires, 1987). Reconstructionism can be seen as the synthesis of both classical humanism and progressivism with close
connection to society, i.e., it is a view of curriculum that ‘would...see the individual and society as harmoniously integrated rather than necessarily in opposition’ (Lawton, 1983: 9). Advocating a reconstructionist stance, Lawton (1989) points out that:

Education cannot be value-free. Different value systems or ideologies will generate different curricula. The twentieth-century democratic societies’ attempts are being made to educate all young people instead of focusing on the elite minority favoured by classical humanism. Progressivism is likewise rejected, partly because its view of human nature is unrealistically optimistic, and partly because it fails to relate curriculum to society and the educational needs of individuals growing up in that society. Given a democratic society which nevertheless retains a number of undemocratic features, some kind of experimentalist or reconstructionist approach would seem to be necessary. Reconstructionism assumes that education should be used not simply for the benefit of individuals, but also to improve a society which is capable of development. A reconstructionist curriculum will be common…but not a uniform curriculum, the details of which will be open to debate and will change from time to time. (p. 8)

Within the Reconstructionist view, Lawton notes that the teacher has to ‘be able to relate his or her own teaching responsibilities to the whole curriculum’ (Lawton, 1989: 87). In other words, the teacher, according to Lawton, has to identify different opportunities within the curriculum to help learning to take place, towards a mutual benefit for individuals and society.

From another perspective, Annala, Lindén, & Mäkinen (2016) note that there are four approaches to curriculum: “curriculum as a syllabus of knowledge to be transmitted”, “curriculum as product”, “curriculum as process” and “curriculum as praxis”. Smith (2000) explains that the curriculum as a syllabus focuses on the contents and knowledge to be transmitted to students and on the methods used to fulfil the process of knowledge transmission. The curriculum as product approach is geared towards the measurement of students’ learning outcomes and behaviors, and sees education as ‘a technical exercise [where]...[o]bjectives are set, a plan drawn up, then applied, and the outcomes (products) measured’ (Smith, 2000, p. 3). According to this view, the ‘curriculum, essentially, is a set of documents for implementation’ (Smith, 2000, pp. 5-6). The
curriculum as process approach does not see ‘curriculum [as]…a physical thing, but rather the interaction of teachers, students and knowledge’ (Smith, 2000, p. 6). Curriculum as praxis is seen, according to Smith, as a further development of the process model with an added element of an explicit statement that it serves the benefit of society and democracy, as he points out:

While the process model is driven by general principles and places an emphasis on judgment and meaning making, it does not make explicit statements about the interests it serves. It may, for example, be used in such a way that does not make continual reference to collective human well-being and to the emancipation of the human spirit. The praxis model of curriculum theory and practice brings these to the centre of the process and makes an explicit commitment to emancipation. Thus action is not simply informed, it is also committed. It is praxis. (Smith, 2000, p. 9)

Smith further argues that in the praxis approach, ‘the curriculum…develops through the dynamic interaction of action and reflection’ (Smith, 2000, p. 10).

Furthermore, research indicates that teachers hold different beliefs about curriculum. Kemmis et al. (1983) for instance argue that there are three theoretical views which teachers hold about education and curriculum: a) the vocational/neo-classical, which views the teacher’s role as a transmitter of knowledge and the learner’s role as a receiver of transmitted knowledge; b) the liberal/progressive orientation, which views the teacher as a facilitator who facilitates students’ learning by providing opportunities for learning, and the learner’s role as a constructor of knowledge through discovery; and c) the social-critical view, where the teacher interacts with students towards creating opportunities for critical reflection and negotiation of knowledge, and the learner engages in the process of critical reflection towards constructing knowledge and using it for the benefit of society and community.

Calderhead (1996) maintains that teachers’ beliefs about teaching, learning and curriculum can be put under two categories: the first category is teaching as knowledge transmission, where the teacher is the absolute holder of knowledge and his/her role is to transmit this knowledge to learners. The learners’ role therefore is to seek knowledge from the teacher. Curriculum in this category is seen as a prescribed and top-down process of downloading knowledge, where learning takes place according to pre-
determined sets of rules. Second, there is teaching as social negotiation of knowledge, where the teacher guides his/her learners towards developing a socially constructed knowledge. The learners negotiate their learning process. Curriculum in this second category is based on enhancing the development of social relationships guided by principle of negotiation of learning. Anderson et al. (1991) distinguish between teacher-centered views and social constructivist views of curriculum. The first is ‘direct instruction about facts and skills…in which teachers or texts are the sole source of knowledge that can be conveyed directly to students’ (p. 1). The second, however, is ‘instruction that reflects alternative principles of teaching and learning…[which] emphasize the importance of students thinking and construction of meaning through interaction with others about complex, authentic problems, with teachers playing roles as facilitators and mediators of the students developing understanding as they grapple with the problems’ (p. 1).

**Views of curriculum in foreign language teaching**

Drawing on the discussion above, curriculum in foreign language teaching can therefore be viewed as a continuum, from a narrow view that sees curriculum as knowledge transmission, to a broad view of a socio-constructivist curriculum. Table 1 provides a summary of the main differences between transmissionist and socio-constructivist views of curriculum in relation to foreign language teaching.

**Table 1** Views of curriculum in foreign language teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Language Teaching Methodology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transmissionist</strong></td>
<td>Product (language is an end)</td>
<td>Holder and transmitter of knowledge</td>
<td>Receiver of Knowledge</td>
<td>Prescribed and politically-driven (knowledge transmission for political ends)</td>
<td>Teacher-fronted and grammar-centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socio-constructivist</strong></td>
<td>Process (language is a creator of opportunities for knowledge)</td>
<td>Creator of opportunities for Construct knowledge</td>
<td>Democratic and socially-...</td>
<td>Communicative language teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A transmissionist curriculum is viewed as a syllabus that includes an explicit statement about the set of language skills to be transmitted from teachers to students, which generally emphasizes the learning and memorization of explicit knowledge about the grammatical structures of language (Nunan and Lamb, 2001). Knowledge in a transmissionist curriculum is unchangeable and static. The teacher within this view is seen as the holder of knowledge and students are receivers of knowledge (Nunan and Lamb, 2001). Curriculum under this view is a product in the sense that language is seen as an end rather than a means towards an end, i.e., language classes are generally teacher-fronted and grammar-centered (Nunan and Lamb, 2001), and students are assessed on their ability to reproduce grammatically correct sentences (Carter, 2001). Those who have knowledge of grammar become competent and gain economic privileges, and those who do not have knowledge are categorized as incompetent and are economically deprived (Street, 1984, 1993, 1996, 1997, 1998). The language curriculum under this view is usually politically driven (Carter, 2001) and selective of those who are “competent” over those who are seen as “incompetent”.

A socio-constructivist curriculum on the other hand is a process curriculum. Language learning is seen as a process of interaction towards the construction of knowledge, i.e., language becomes the means of interaction (Nunan and Lamb, 2001; Street, 1984, 1993, 1996, 1997, 1998). Knowledge under this view is socially driven, and critical reflection becomes the basis upon which knowledge is constructed. The teacher’s role is to create opportunities for interaction and critical reflection (Breen and Candlin, 2001; Nunan and Lamb, 2001), and the student’s role is to engage in the process of knowledge construction, the latter of which is used to connect with society towards safeguarding the principles of democracy and social justice (Carlson, 1997; Kelly, 1999). Curriculum in this model is primarily a network of social actors, where a harmonious relationship between teachers, learners, parents, and policy makers exists towards the benefit of their society (Lawton, 1983, 1989; Kelly, 1999; Applebee, 1994). The methodology directing language classes within this view is communicative (Nunan and Lamb, 2001; Breen and Candlin, 2001), where
students and teachers use language as a means to interact in order to construct knowledge.

Summary

This paper attempted to provide a discussion in the form of a literature review on how curriculum can be conceptualized in education in general, and in foreign language teaching in particular. First, the paper discussed issues of curriculum and how it is defined in the literature. It was argued that it was hard to come to an exact definition of what curriculum actually entails because the concept is generally philosophically and ideologically driven, but that curriculum could generally be conceptualized from a narrow school-based set of knowledge to be transmitted, to a broader process of education that fully encompasses the social, political, economic and cultural ideologies, which form the basis of a network of knowledge to be explored.

Then, the paper looked at issues of policy and power as the fundamental underpinnings in any conceptualization of curriculum. It was seen that curriculum could become a tool to exercise and maintain power because it is usually under the domination of political interests. Within this perspective, it was seen that curriculum can be “prescribed”, i.e., knowledge is decided by the state and handed down to school; teachers are expected to transmit knowledge and students are expected to receive knowledge and reproduce it according to pre-determined sets of rules; as opposed to "democratic", i.e., a socially constructed system of knowledge towards the political empowerment of society for the benefit of all individuals.

After that, the paper discussed curriculum with reference to educators’ and policy-makers’ epistemological beliefs. It was seen that teachers’ beliefs about curriculum can be put under two categories. Within the first, curriculum as knowledge transmission, the teacher is the sole transmitter of knowledge, the learners are receivers of knowledge from the teacher, and the educational process is prescribed and top-down. Within the second, however, curriculum for social constructivism, the teacher guides learners towards developing a socially-constructed knowledge, the learners negotiate their learning process, and the educational process is geared towards enhancing the development of social relationships across the different layers of society.
Finally, as a conclusion, the paper drew on the previous literature and discussed how curriculum can be viewed in foreign language teaching. It was argued that curriculum in this field could be viewed as a continuum, from a narrow view that sees curriculum as knowledge transmission, to a broader view of a socio-constructivist curriculum. Both concepts were further elaborated for clarification. It is hoped that this paper could provide a platform for further debate or research in the field of foreign language education.

References


Common types of bullying at schools in Oman

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Abstract

Finding out to what extent does bullying appear in Omani schools is the sole purpose of this paper. It starts with tracking down the literature of this topic and reviewing it. Then, it analyzes the data gathered through a questionnaire that was distributed among Omani female students from Al Khadra School. The targets were 5th-grade students because it is the grade where students mostly change schools, and it is a very sensitive stage for them. The findings were expected, but quite surprising if compared to other studies in other parts of the world. It was found that the majority of Omani students do not get bullied regularly to the point of getting affected by it at any level. One of the most interesting findings is that a great deal of Omani female students skip classes, but that does not imply that being scared of getting bullied is the only reason for such behavior. As a conclusion, this paper recommends the study’s replication, which will include students from different grades and from different schools all around Oman. Besides, it indicates that the teachers should keep in touch with the parents when they notice any change of behavior among any student in the classroom.

Keywords: bullying, behavior, victimization, mental health, students, academic achievement, school, consequences.

Introduction

Schools all over the world, play a huge role in shaping children's lives and affect them in a way or another. Children can be easily affected by anything they absorb while in schools and each one reacts differently to that effect. They differ in the way and effort they show to make friends or socialize (Salmivalli, 2010). Additionally, children are most likely to get mental health issues because of the relentless problems they face in school. Also,
aggressiveness or being a victim of aggression in schools threatens the psychological and social state of children, according to Olweus, Rigby, & Slee (1993). The school is an environment where children are supposed to feel comfortable and safe in order to fully benefit from all the information that they absorb. Promoting different forms of violence in schools is said to ruin the children's mentality and make them harder to deal with. In addition, many of the problems that children face in schools affect them in certain ways and every child reacts differently to each problem as well. One of these problems is bullying, which is a subtype of aggressive behavior in which one person attacks or humiliates another powerless person. This is one of the worldwide problems that happen practically in every school, and it is considered as one of the most convoluted issues that can possibly lead to other problems. Bullying grows really quietly inside schools, but its effects are hard to be seen in children until it goes to higher stages.

Bullying is one of the societal problems that are yet to be solved completely. It is defined by Salmivalli (2010) as a subtype of aggressive behavior in which one person attacks or humiliates another powerless person. This is one of the worldwide problems that happen to be virtually in every school. According to Rose, Espelage, Aragon, & Elliott (2011), bully perpetration and victimization are the most common and pervasive behavior problems in schools. Children can be easily affected by anything they absorb in school and each one reacts differently. Also, their mentality can be easily affected by bullying which eventually affects their performance in school. Also, the personality of every child determines the possibility of him or her being a bully or remaining a victim of bullying. To clear up this point, Craig (1998) points out, "an individual difference or personality perspective relates involvement in bullying to characteristics such as the temperament, gender, and behavioral tendencies of bullies and victims" (p. 123). It is important to shed light on this problem in Oman as well due to lack of studies on it. It affects the children to a certain degree and that should be taken into consideration. In addition, knowing to what extent this problem appears in Omani schools will help in shedding the light on it and preventing its unwanted consequences in the future.

There are many psychological and sociological studies that have been conducted on bullying in schools all over the world. This chapter contains
two parts related to bullying in schools. The first section contains previous studies on how bullying can affect the children psychologically. The second section discusses the academic effect of bullying on those children. Most of these articles focus more on the motives of bullying and how it begins in the house of the bully. The articles vary in the way of presenting the concept of bullying and its effects, but they all share the same idea of how serious it is and how it must be prevented as soon as possible.

Psychologists all over the world study the psychological effects of any kind of bullying on children. There are studies meant to analyze the psychological effects of bullying and how it affects the child's mentality on so many levels. Most of these articles are based on studies that have been made in some schools all over the world to study the psychological effect of bullying on children. Also, children who get bullied in schools are more likely to doubt themselves which affects their mental health and overall behavior. Thus, their self esteem drops down which causes depression, anxiety, and other mental issues associated with their low self-esteem.

In many schools, children who suffer from anxiety and other mental problems are reported to be more likely to get bullied. According to Salmon, James, & Smith (1998), children who suffer from different levels of anxiety are more likely to be bullied by their peers who do not have a similar problem. It also featured how gender also affects the way children respond to bullying as it indicate, “boys in year 8 in school A with high anxiety and lying scores were most likely to be bullied. Girls in year 9 in school B with low anxiety and lying scores were least likely to be bullied” (p.925). Further, the study shows that bullying interventions have more impact on the direct bullying characteristic of boys and less indirect bullying among girls. The study also points out that some bullies as well as the bullied children might suffer from different levels of anxiety. It further argues, "our data support the idea that bullied children are more anxious and bully equally or less anxious than their peers" (p.925). A similar opinion comes from Wolke, Woods, Bloomfield, and Karstadt (2001) who declare that approximately 8–46% of children experience being bullied in primary school; most of these children report having both physical and mental effects afterwards. It claims that “adverse effects of peer victimization on psychological maladjustments such as anxiety,
depressive feelings, low self-esteem, or loneliness have been found in studies of predominantly secondary school children" (p.197). The children and their parents were interviewed and they report occurrence of common health problems. The study showed that victims and bullies are most likely to have high psychosomatic health problems such as poor appetite, and worries about going to school. In addition, the researchers found out that the victims are more likely to face illness and physical symptoms to avoid going to school which is an expected result of their unsettled mental state after getting bullied.

Furthermore, Craig (1998) points out that "anxiety may result as a function of repeated exposure to bullying which may result in physical or psychological harm" (p.124). The study examines gender, grade differences, indirect aggression, depression, and anxiety among bullies and victims. The results show that across both grade levels, male bullies report more physical aggression than females. The author points out that bullies who are involved in different types of aggressive strategies experience low levels of anxiety and depression, while the victims experience high levels of anxiety and depression. Another article which discusses the relationship between bullying and gender is by Crick and Grotpeter (1995) who study the gender role and how it is associated with bullying effects on different levels. According to the authors, there has been a lack of attention to gender differences in the expression of aggression which is important in order to know how it plays a role in affecting the bully and the victim's mentality. They find out that boys exhibit significantly higher levels of aggression than girls, and that girls' attempts to harm others would focus on relational issues such as damaging another child's friendship. Both genders show aggression differently and it is due to psychological motives. As Crick and Grotpeter state, "further study of relational aggression is warranted, particularly given that this form of aggression is significantly associated with social-psychological adjustment problems" (p.721). They indicate the fact that bullying is an individual problem and every child has his or her own motives to bully one another which will lead to serious mental health problems for both the bully and the victim.

On the other hand, Salmivalli (2010) declares that inclusion in the peer group is a motive that is more serious than the aggressive behaviors of both genders. He believes that the bully's main motive is to show up in front of
his or her peer group and to rise up their ideal ego picture. The author also declares that "it has been suggested that bullying is motivated by the bullies' pursuit of high status and a powerful, dominant position in the peer group" (p113). He also states that bullies have their own reasons to believe that their behavior helps enhance their peer status, and those reasons are related to their psychological nature. Also, bullies are driven by a quest for high status, and they tend to choose a specific kind of targets who seem to have mental issues which make them considered as easy victims. The author explains more by saying that "the association between victimization and its two known risk factors, social anxiety and peer rejection, is strongest in classrooms that are high on reinforcing bullies and low on defending the victims" (p.114).

The academic part of the problem is associated with the children who are most likely to skip or drop classes which cause them to have fewer academic achievements than their colleagues. Many researchers focus on the academic effects of bullying and its consequences. Also, these articles aim to shed the light on the importance of informing both the teachers and the parents about the child's academic state. Children get affected easily by anything they absorb especially in school where they meet up with different kinds of students. Their psychological state can affect their academic state in different ways, which should be taken into consecration when studying the problem of bullying in schools.

Getting bullied makes the victims feel scared when they go to school in fear of facing the bullies every day, which may eventually lead to affecting their school performance. According to Bowers, Smith, & Binney (1992), "they may resort to absenteeism to escape torment in school, path of action often leading to school failure and social isolation" (p.371). The study investigated the background of the bullies and why they show such an aggressive behavior in the first place. Findings show that most of the bullies with over-controlling parents are most likely to harm others, which is another reason for them to have low academic achievements in school. Another article that supports this idea is by Rose, Espelage, Aragon, & Elliott (2011) who declare the importance of providing a safe environment for the children to enhance their academic achievements. According to the researchers, "When positive behavior supports are successfully implemented, they serve as a vehicle to decrease problem behavior and
increase academic achievement" (p.2). Bullies and their victims are able to achieve a good academic performance in school if they were put in a positive environment that supports both of them. In addition, bullies who have low academic achievements tend to choose victims who also have low academic achievements and that is because they are considered as easy victims.

Supporting this idea, Malian (2012) declares that children with learning disabilities get bullied more often than those who do not have this academic problem. The study shows that those children with disabilities are bullied and are themselves bullies at times. Also, children who have low academic achievement tend to also have a low self-esteem, thus they have a greater likelihood of being victimized by bullying. Malian stressed that students with learning disabilities have fewer friends and are teased significantly more than non-learning disabled students. In addition, they are easy targets of bullying because the bullies find a reason to bully and humiliate them by using their weakness point, which is their low academic performance. It was also found that well-liked students are associated with less bullying. As Malian stated, “students with learning disabilities self-reported significantly more incidents of being bullied than their non-disabled peers" (p.7). It was inferred that children who have low academic achievements due to their learning disabilities suffer from getting bullied, but there is a high possibility that those children can be bullies.

There are studies which argue whether poor academic achievement leads to bullying or being bullied leads to poor academic performance (e.g. Woods & Wolke, 2003). It states, "aggressive behavior of bullies towards peers could be considered as a reaction to frustrations and failures in school" (p.136). However, they collected data from some boys at Greater Stockholm and they did not find evidence which suggests that aggressive behavior was a consequence of low grades in school. Although, it was found that both the bully and the victim had lower average marks than neutral children. Also, rejected children were reported to have higher levels of school avoidance and significantly lower school performance compared to popular children. The psychological state of those children also plays a part in determining how much they can do well in school. By not achieving high levels of academic performance, they become more likely to be victims of bullying or bullies themselves. However, the authors are not
convinced that having poor academic achievements leads to being involved in bullying, and they state that "direct bullying behavior is not largely associated with decrements in academic achievement in primary school" (p.152). Conversely, they found out that bullies often have average or high academic achievements, which was quite surprising.

To sum up, there are several studies conducted on the psychological and academic effects of bullying all over the world. These studies show how one issue like bullying can lead to other serious problems for both the bully and the victim. Children can be easily affected by anything they absorb in schools and each one reacts differently to that effect. Also, children who suffer from mental problems are most likely to get bullied than those who do not suffer from such problems. There is also a high possibility for the children who do not suffer from those mental issues to suffer from them eventually after getting bullied. In addition, the studies indicated the fact that most bullies were reported to have psychological problems that motivate them to bully others. Additionally, the personality of every child determines the possibility of them being a bully or a victim of bullying and that is due to the psychological state of every one of them. Studying these effects is important to help those children to enhance their mental health by educating them about it. Moreover, children can be easily affected by anything they absorb in schools and each one reacts differently to that effect. Their mentality can be easily affected by bullying which eventually affects their performance in school. Children's low academic performance can be severely affected by their psychological state after getting bullied which affects their future. Further, having low academic performance in school increases the possibility of getting bullied.

As a whole, a study about such problem in Oman must be conducted because this problem does exist everywhere and that should be taken into consideration. Therefore, this study will shed the light on the importance of studying this issue in Oman after knowing about its relentless effects. Chapter Three of this paper shows a study conducted in an Omani school. It will show up to what extent this problem exists in Omani schools and to what extent it affects the Omani students.
Methodology

The data were obtained through a questionnaire which was distributed to 50 Omani female students. The questionnaire is divided into three sections. The first section includes the personal information such as age and the grade level of the student. The second section has the agreement scale which includes 10 likert scale questions in which the students will respond by to statements by ticking strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree. Five questions are related to the psychological effect of bullying and the remaining were related to the academic effect. In the academic effect section, the respondents are asked on the effect of bullying on their academic performance. In the psychological aspect, the respondents are asked about their mental state in relation to bullying. Data analysis was performed through frequency counting.

The participants of the study were 5th graders who are about 9 to 10 years old at the time the data were gathered. All of them were females, and were probably unaware of the subject of bullying.

Results and Discussion

This chapter discusses the data obtained from the questionnaire in order to answer the study’s research questions.

With regard to academic performance, the first statement is, "Getting bullied is a normal practice in my school." I made this statement to know from the students if bullying is considered as a normal practice that everyone faces at their school or not. As seen in Figure 1, there were 2% who strongly agreed, 10% agreed, 32% were neutral, 28% strongly disagreed, and 28% did not agree. The results varied which was expected because every student will see the answer differently depending on whether she has ever got bullied or not. Also, I was expecting a high percentage on agreeing to the statement, but every school differs from the other when it comes to the extent of bullying actions. In addition, it turned out to me that bullying does not appear intensely in this school and that is because the students did not approve it. One reason could be that they do not know what bullying actually means and that is why they are not able to notice it around them. But this could also mean that bullying actually does not appear widely in their school and that is normal considering that bullying
actions vary from one school to another. A study by Wolke, Woods, Bloomfield, & Karstadt, (2001) among 1639 students who were aged 6-9 year old in 31 primary schools shows that approximately 8%–46% of children in the UK have been bullied in primary school. This indicates the fact that bullying in Omani schools does not appear as much as other schools all around the world, and that bullying actually varies in each school.

Figure 1: Academic Performance and Bullying

The second statement is, "Getting bullied does not affect my academic performance." This statement aimed to know if the students’ academic performance got affected in a negative way after getting bullied or not. Based on the responses, 14% agreed, 10% strongly agreed, 26% were neutral, 40% strongly disagreed, and 10% did not agree. The results of this statement depend on whether the student gets bullied or not, so if the student does not get bullied a lot, then she will definitely disagree with this statement. Also, those results show that almost half of the students do not agree with the statement. One reason could be that they do not get bullied to notice any change in their academic performance. Additionally, this is understandable considering the fact that they are still at a young age and have not been through a lot to be severely affected. Woods, & Wolke (2003) interviewed students aged 6-9 year-olds from a primary school in the UK about this argument, and the results showed that there is no direct relationship between bullying and having a low academic achievement.
However, the final findings showed that underachievement in school leads to direct physical bullying behavior.

The third statement is, "I get bullied by my teachers." This statement aims to know if the students get bullied by their teachers. Data indicate that 16% agreed, 6% strongly agreed, 14% were neutral, 40% strongly disagreed, and 11% did not agree. The results may be indicative of the possibility that it is quite rare to find a teacher who abuses his or her students, especially in the Omani society. Notably, 40% of the students strongly disagreed to the statement, which is the highest percentage among the responses. Few students agreed, which is also normal considering the fact that some teachers may act differently towards other students and show anger if they were not pleased with them. Also, every school varies from the other when it comes to having abusive teachers in it. This school seems to not have many teachers who dare to bully the students. This statement is similar to another one in the psychological effect statements, i.e. "I never face troubles with any teacher" and the results were quite similar. This indicates that the teachers in this school are not causing a major issue related to bullying.

The fourth statement is, "I have never missed a class in fear of getting bullied." This statement was included to know if bullying has affected them to the point where they are too afraid of attending classes with fear of facing the bullies the. Also, missing classes appears to affects the student's academic achievements; thus, it is important to know what the students think about that. As seen in Figure 2, data indicate that 20% agreed, 10% strongly agreed, 18% were neutral, 28% strongly disagreed, and 24% did not agree. The results were quite surprising because there are who strongly disagreed which means that a lot of them may have skipped class due to bullying. In addition, this also shows that bullying has affected them to the point where they may be too afraid to go to class because of bullying. However, it should be considered that bullying might not be the only reason for those students to miss classes because they might just not feel like attending for whatever reason. Moreover, they may skip classes just because they are bored which could be one of the main reasons considering that they are still at a very young age. So this finding is not a real proof of
the existing of bullying in this school. It is also possible that the students do not really understand of the context of bullying.

In this section on psychological state and bullying, the first statement is, "I feel thrilled and excited every day to go to school." It seeks to know from if the students feel excited to go to school, because it may determine whether bullying has affected their spirit to that point or not. According to the data, 38% agreed, 46% strongly agreed, 12% were neutral, 10% strongly disagreed, and 4% did not agree. The results were expected from the participants who were at an age when all they think about is to meet up with their friends in school. A very high percentage strongly agreed to this statement which means that they do not face major troubles in school which causes them to feel afraid from going there. Other reason could be because they are treated nicely in school which makes them thrilled and excited to go there and experience what they like in a safe environment. This is an important result because it shows to what extent this school have in providing a good and a safe environment for the students that makes them eager to go there. Also, this proves that the majority of the students do not get bullied and do not get affected by it.
Bullying and students' excitement to go to school

The second statement is, "I never face troubles with other students during the lunch break." This statement was made to know from the students if they face any problems with other students during lunch break or otherwise, because that is the time when students interact with other students from higher grades. Based on the responses, 26% agreed, 42% strongly agreed, 9% were neutral, 12% strongly disagreed, and 2% did not agree. The results seem to be unprecedented because students are said to face some troubles during the lunch break for it is a time when all students socialize. However, the results show that the majority of the students do not face any problems with other students during the lunch break. One of the reasons could be because they do not interact with the other students as much, and they stay away from those they do not have affinity with. Other reason could be because there are not too many bullies in that school, and the few ones are afraid of doing such an act in fear of getting punished. Also, the school laws prevent such actions to happen and most of the
students do not dare to break the rules because they are aware of the consequences.

The third statement is, "I never face troubles with any teacher." The objective of this statement was to know from the students if they face problems with their teachers or not, because that determines the possibility of them having a bad relation with their teachers. The students’ responses show that 38% agreed, 40% strongly agreed, 4% were neutral, 8% strongly disagreed, and 10% did not agree. The results show that most of the students agree with this statement which means that they have a good relation with their teachers. With reference to the statement "I get bullied by my teachers" in the academic part of the questionnaires shows similar results with this statement. The results clear the point that teachers in this particular school have a good relation with most of their students, which provides them with a peaceful environment to study in. Also, some teachers are aware of bullying effects and how much it can damage the student academically and psychologically. The final data show that most teachers in this school do not dare to bully their students severely because they are aware of the consequences. However, there seems to be teachers who do not know how much their attitude can affect the student and that is due to lack of awareness about such topic all around the area we live in.

The fourth statement is, "I have a good relation with everyone in my class." This statement aims to if students face problems with their peers in the class as this determines the possibility of them having a bad relation with each other. In the responses, 28% agreed, 42% strongly agreed, 22% were neutral, 3% strongly disagreed, and 2% did not agree. The results were expected because the majority of the students normally have a good relation with their classmates who share the same age and environment like them. However, there are exceptions in some cases and the results show various percentages of few students who face some troubles with other classmates. Other reason could be because they are in a class environment where the teacher is mostly there, so the bullies cannot do much even if they wanted to. However, the classroom is one of the places where students bully each other the most. According to a study by Salmivalli (2010) suggested that the classroom environment affects the students because they
may get bullied or witness bullying behavior in schools which affects them academically and psychologically.

Figure 4: Students’ relation with people around them

Aside from the quantitative data, open-ended questions were asked to the participants. The first question "Have you ever been bullied and how did you deal with it?" was answered by 40 students out of 50, and 36 students said that they have never been bullied before and that they feel completely safe in school. The only 4 who said that they got bullied wrote very brief sentences about their experiences. All of those students said that they got physically bullied by other students in the lunch break, and only one of them said that she told the teacher about it. Also, one student said that she experienced name-calling by one of the students a couple of times. The answers show that there are few students who admitted getting bullied and they did not know how to deal with it. This shows that the students are unaware of bullying as a concept and they are still too young to know how to react when getting bullied. In addition, the students who answered saying that they have never been bullied were properly confused about the meaning of bullying, thus they could not tell if what they have once gone through was bullying or not. Bullying is a normal thing that anyone goes through at a certain point, but it becomes a huge issue if the person keeps getting it intensely to the point that it starts to affect him or her. In those children's cases, they may have been bullied at least once in their life but it

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did not affect them to the point where they felt it is a kind of bullying, which is an issue they know nothing about. The problem is with educating students in schools about such issues at a very young age, so they know how to react properly to it and do the right thing.

The second question "What kinds of behaviors do you not like about your classmates and teachers?" was answered by 39 students out of 50, and 25 of them said that there are no kinds of behaviors they do not like about their classmates or teachers. However, the other 14 gave a list of the things that they do not like about their classmates and their teachers. The majority of the students said that they do not like lying which is something they notice a lot with their classmates. Also, one of them said that her classmates talk behind her back and make fun of her which is something she finds extremely uncomfortable. Other students said that their classmates tend to physically harm them sometimes by hitting them using their bare hands. However, none of the students mentioned any behavior they do not like about their teachers. The answers show that students get bullied physically and sometimes by name-calling and those are two of the most common types of bullying. In addition, the students in this school seem very comfortable with the teachers and have no hard feelings towards them.

**Synthesis**

The questionnaire helped in collecting the needed information to determine up to what extent bullying exists in an Omani school. This is to note that due to the limited number or respondents, results may not be generalizable. Results-wise and with reference to other studies, it can be inferred that every school differs from one other when it comes to the extent of bullying. Also, it turned out that bullying does not occur widely in this school which was quite expected considering the fact that it is a small school and there is no huge age difference between the students. In addition, this school, in particular, includes students from 1st grade to 6th grade which means that the age difference is not a huge problem. The major findings show that there are few students who got bullied in 5th grade and they did not know how to deal with it due to the scarcity of the bullying incidents. Moreover, the types of bullying those students received were mainly name-calling and physical abuse. The majority of the students are not in approval of getting bullied or being afraid of other students in their school for any reason.
Overall, it seems that the school has made the students aware of the necessity to maintain a peaceful environment.

The study’s research questions discuss the possible problem of bullying from an Omani perspective. It focuses on the extent of this problem in schools and how much it affects the children psychologically and academically. In this chapter, the most salient findings are discussed. Also, some of these findings are discussed in connection with previous literature.

Firstly, most of the participants confirmed that they do not see bullying as a normal practice that happens regularly in their school. But this matter varies from a school to another, according to a study by Wolke, Woods, Bloomfield, & Karstadt, (2001) in the UK in which they found out that 8–46% of children have been bullied in primary school at least once in their lives. It should also be noted that a number of the participants which were Omani female students were affirmative in saying that bullying does not affect their academic performance. Moreover, the majority of the participants were never bullied by their teachers.

Also, there were a lot of Omani female students who have tried skipping classes, but the fear of getting bullied could not be the only major reason for that act. In addition, most of the participants had never faced troubles with other students during their break time which is usually a phenomenon in other institutions worldwide.

Another finding of the study is that a great deal of Omani female students have a good relation with everyone in their class. This does not go along with a study by Salmivalli (2010) in the UK where he collected data involved 7000 students from different classrooms to find out the reasons behind the variation of victimization in classrooms among students. He found that almost every student get bullied in class because of individual differences.

Interestingly, the most common type of bullying, according to the participants, are physical abuse and name-calling.

Finally, the majority of Omani female students have a good relation with their teachers.
Conclusion

The study stemmed from the idea of establishing relation between bullying and mental health, but then it specified to focus on the extent of bullying in Omani schools and the common types that are used among students. Further in the study, it was decided that the paper would focus on two main parts which are the academic and psychological effect of bullying. Many people do not know a lot about such issue, which was the main inspiration to choose this topic. Nevertheless, it was the author’s decision to raise awareness about a topic that people tend to ignore thinking that it is not as important as educating the students academically. Limitations of the study were evident when it came to collecting the data because the students were not that cooperative and did not show seriousness when answering the questionnaire. The findings were quite expected but quite shocking comparing to other studies in other parts of the world. It was found that the majority of Omani students do not get bullied regularly to the point of getting affected by it at any level.

For further studies, this paper could be replicated in a different school and it might give different results depending on the environment in that school. Thus, it is important to educate both the teachers and the students in each school about bullying and what it means. Second, this study could be re-conceptualized to focus on Omani male students in different grades, which is beneficial to come up with different methods to raise awareness about the issue depending on the student's perspective.

Adding more practical recommendations, parents at home should be educated more about this issue because bullying can start from the home of every bully. Also, the teachers should keep in touch with the parents when they notice any change of behavior on any student. In case the teachers or the parents noticed any change on the child, certain actions must be taken. All in all, it is never too late to ensure the bullies or the victims that there is a way to change and fix what is broken. Some of them will need more time than the others, but each child deserves to live a normal life to achieve other important things in life that are hard to be achieved with a damaged personality.
References


Appendix

Introduction:

My name is Buthaina Salim Al-Nassri and I am conducting a research for my English course "Research Project." This questionnaire aims to answer my research question, "To what extent do Omani children get bullied in schools? And by which common types?" This questionnaire can be answered in five minutes maximum, and the answers will be anonymous. Your cooperation is appreciated, thank you.

Bullying: humiliating or abusing one another, mentally or physically.

Section one: Personal information.

Age        Grade

Section Two: The agreement scale.

Academic aspect:

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<tr>
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<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<td>1. Getting bullied is a normal practice in my school.</td>
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<td>2. Getting bullied does not affect my academic performance.</td>
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<td>3. I have never missed a class in fear of getting bullied.</td>
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<td>4. I get bullied by my teachers.</td>
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<td>5. I get bullied by other students.</td>
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Psychological aspect:

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<td>1</td>
<td>I feel thrilled and excited every day to go to school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I never face troubles with other students during the lunch break.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I never face troubles with any teacher.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I have a good relation with everyone in my class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I feel generally safe in my school environment.</td>
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**Section three : Open-ended questions.**

Have you ever been bullied and how did you deal with it?

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What kinds of behaviors you do not like about your classmates and teachers?

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34
The role of WhatsApp in developing family members' social interaction

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Sultan Qaboos University

Abstract

Technological communicative tools have effectively changed the nature of people's social interaction and relationships. Devices such as mobile phones which are equipped with applications like WhatsApp, WeChat and Instagram, for instance, have provided people with the chance of contacting their acquaintances and family members without their physical presence, and which have also enabled them to remarkably improve their social relationships. Thus, this study aims to examine the effect of WhatsApp in enhancing social interaction between family members and bringing them closer to each other. It attempts to analyze the findings of a questionnaire distributed to 10 female participants and study 8 WhatsApp conversations. The study reveals that WhatsApp paves the way for effective interaction between family members specifically brothers and sisters. It also finds that the use of WhatsApp emojis helps in developing domestic relations and in accounting for gender differences regarding using them.

Keywords: technology, WhatsApp, emojis, social interaction, family members, family ties, gender differences.

Introduction

This is the world of business where everyone is preoccupied with their own responsibilities, while simultaneously being distanced from social interactions. Thus, this social distance which arises as a result of the engrossment in everyday tasks and responsibilities affects the way people interact with each other. Nonetheless, to ensure that there are very few obstacles and boundaries affecting the enhancement of human communication, this entails a profound look into the place of technology and social media applications in improving interpersonal relationships and enhancing family ties. As stated by Choudhary et al. (2015, p.2506), "New
innovations and advances in science and technology in the present day have made considerable and significant changes in the lifestyle of people all around the world." Hence, the focus of this paper will be on the exploring the influence of technology on improving social communication and examining the place of WhatsApp, specifically, in enhancing family relationships and connecting family members with each other.

Generally speaking, the enhancement of social interaction among people is often associated with technology. As Adib and Ismail (2016) put it, "Modern technology has basically made changes in every aspect of our personal lives such as education, entertainment, and communication" (p.2). In other words, the intervention of technology into the lives of humans has considerably influenced and revolutionized the way they interact with one another in the social framework. More specifically, the propagation of social media platforms enables users not only to be in touch with those they are acquainted with, but also to establish social bonds with people from different parts of the world. Choudhary et al. (2015) state that "Communicating with each other has become easy and faster with the advent of social networking from one part of the globe to the other and distance is no more a barrier now a days" (p. 2510). For this reason, the introduction of technology including all the social networking websites constitutes as an important communicative means replacing face to face interactions.

Families are the first place where social interaction could ever be effectively achieved and developed. Nonetheless, in the case where some family members are away from the other members for factors like work or study, face-to-face interaction gets weakened and these members become busy fulfilling their responsibilities and preoccupied with their work. As Adib and Ismail (2016, p. 3) put it, "Staying away from family members means it is not possible for these people to engage in the traditional, face to face interaction with their family members." In such a circumstance, technological tools such as mobile phones and computers are necessary to be in connection and maintain close relationships with them. In view of the fact that these devices are equipped with applications such as WhatsApp, Snapchat, and Instagram, staying away from family members will no longer be a problem, since these applications allow for more contact and interaction.
According to Church and Oliveira (2013), WhatsApp is almost the most popular application used for communication and it is a medium thereby users are capable of expressing a sense of community and connection with their acquaintances as well as their family members. In a study conducted by Choudhary et al. (2015) regarding the role of WhatsApp usage in enhancing family relationships, the researchers found that such an application paves the way for much domestic interaction and closeness between family members who live far away from each other. Thus, it is noteworthy to point out the affordances WhatsApp provides users with and which enable them to enhance their relationships with their family members and interact with them using different communicative styles. For example, the use of emojis and emoticons are important in maintaining good relationships not only with family members, but with all WhatsApp users. These emojis and emoticons, in essence, come to express emotions and replace body language and facial expressions that are features of face-to-face situations.

Gender differences with regards to the use of emojis to express emotions are often taken into consideration when it comes to the study of social communication of both males and females. Provine, Spencer, and Mandell (2007, p. 300) define an emoticon as "a character or small image (e.g., smiley face) placed in the text to denote facial expression or convey emotion." However, emotional expressiveness of females is often described differently than that of males. In a broader sense, women and men stereotypically express different types of emotions, the former of whom tend to be more emotional than the latter. In addition, each of them is associated with certain emotions to reveal and communicative functions to serve. Kelly and Hutson Comeaux (as cited in Parkins, 2012, p.46) find that "emotions of happiness, sadness and fear are believed to be more characteristic of women, whereas men are believed to be more characteristically angry." As opposed to males, in addition, these researchers reveal that females tend to use emojis and emoticons to build social bonds and assert solidarity with whoever they interact online.

**Methodology**

The first method used for data collection is a questionnaire distributed to 10 female members from different families. Basically, the questionnaire involves only one main section where the participants are asked to state
their degree of agreement on 10 different statements, generally with regards to the importance of WhatsApp in the development of family relationships. The aim of this method is to find out whether WhatsApp has allowed them to interact with their family members better than face-to-face interactions. It also seeks to examine whether such an application has enabled them to improve their relationships and become closer to each other. (The questions of the questionnaire are available on p. 18-19). Since the questionnaire is based on stating the degree of agreement, some of the findings will be presented as charts using Excel program, while some others will be shown in a table.

Data analysis

The second method to collect data is analyzing 8 samples of WhatsApp conversations randomly selected and which are provided by two female participants from two different families. Each participant provided 4 WhatsApp conversations which they had with different family members, both males and females. Of the 4 samples, 2 will be female conversations, while the two remaining ones are the conversations each female participant had with two different male family members. In order to differentiate between the two female participants, they will be referred to as F1 and F2 in the analysis section.

Through these conversations, the focus will be placed on the variable of gender with the intention to examine gender differences with regards to the language as well as the type of emoticons or emojis used. The analysis of these conversations will take two different steps. In the first step, they will be compared to my hypothesis and literature review to see whether the interlocutors' relationship has improved via WhatsApp. The second step, however, will focus on analyzing them based on the language used and the type of emoticons and emojis both genders used.

Results and findings

Relating the findings to my hypotheses, I observed that the findings match my expectations regarding the role of WhatsApp in improving family relationships. The following table presents the findings of all statements except for statement 4 and 5 which will be shown in charts.
The findings presented in the previous table generally reveal that the highest percentages represent the statements on which the participants either agree or strongly agree. The participants' responses to the questionnaire overall imply their family relationships have improved through technology in general and WhatsApp in particular.

As for the two remaining statements, the findings are presented in the following charts:

### Chart 1 of statement 4

The previous chart presents the findings of the fourth statement. 40% of the female participants strongly agree that WhatsApp has developed their relationship with their sisters. However, the percentages of the participants who agree, disagree, and who are neutral are 30%, 20%, and 10% respectively. The findings of the fifth statement are presented in the following chart:
Regarding the role of WhatsApp in developing the participants' relationships with their brothers, 30% of them strongly agree with the statement. The percentages of the participants who agree, disagree, strongly disagree, and who are neutral are respectively 30%, 20%, 10%, and 10%.

The WhatsApp conversations do not fully match my hypothesis and the literature review specifically when it comes to gender differences with regards to the use of emojis. The conversations are shown as two sets based on the female participant they belong to and the gender of the family member whom they contacted.

With relation to my hypothesis, both of the following conversations F1 had with her female family members show that her relationship with them is very close, and both conversations are characterized by the use of language and emojis suggesting closeness.
How are you dear mother?

I am fine my dear daughter. How are you? 😊😊

I am fine. I just miss you 😍❤️

Is my little brother fine now?

May Allah make our assemblies full of joy

He is fine 😍
Similarly, the following conversations F1 had with two of her male family members show that she has very close relationships with her brothers. Like the previous conversations, these are also characterized by the use of language suggesting intimacy and the use of different types of emojis.

Rahmani

Do you have money?

Yes, I do

How much do you need?

I need 5 Rials if you have

Yes, I have 😍

I thought you need a large sum of money

Ok 😊❤️

Shame on you that you ask a merchant such a question 😌

Ok, forgive me 😊❤️

Hand the money to Hilal

Ok
Happy birthday dear sister, wish you live a life dedicated doing good deeds😊😊

Thank you darling😊😊😊😊😊😊

I thought my birthday is on Monday, but I knew it is today after I read my friends' messages😊❤️

Hhhhhhhhh

You're so funny

We miss you❤️❤️

Have lunch with us༺✿༻

❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️

I have a meeting with regards to my presentation❤️❤️

I am coming back next week for sure

All the best😊

Inshaallah🌹

The following two conversations show that F2's relationship with her two sisters is close and intimate. The language and type of emojis used are indicative of that.
Is there anything new?

Not really. Everything is as old as we are hhh والله

Hhh, do you think so

Ohhh by the way

today 😊😊😊

really 😊😊😊

Huda told me so, but I forgot to send you 🙋

Please, come and take me 😊😊

Ok 🙋

I love you so much 😊😊
Female-male conversations:

The following conversations suggest that F2's relationship with her two brothers is not close with both of them. This is clear when it comes to the language and emojis used in both conversations.
Why do you send me whenever you are in need of something? It's also better that you ask about me. You send me whenever something isn’t in a good condition.

It's good that I ask when I need something than not asking at all.

Aha

Ok

Ok

You should be the one who is supposed to send me.

You are the man

I thought we lost you 😢

How are you? 😍❤️❤️❤️

I am good

How are you and how is your study going?

We miss you. When will you come back home?

Everything is fine.

I miss you too 😞😢❤️

I am coming the day after tomorrow 😍❤️❤️❤️

👍❤️❤️❤️

Tomorrow, I might come to Muscat. Would you like me to come and take you?
Discussion and analysis:

It can be noticed that my hypothesis is supported from the findings. The WhatsApp conversations and the participants' responses to the questionnaire reveal that such a medium plays a vital role in improving family members' social interaction.

The fact that the participants show strong agreement on the statements with regards to the development of social relationships through WhatsApp suggests that their interactions with their family members have been strengthened. Adib and Ismail (2016) state that "Technology seems to be a medium that permeates family life easily" (p.1). This, in essence, comes to be true when considering that almost 70% of the participants strongly believe that social media develops social relationships better than face-to-face communication. As for WhatsApp, in particular, 30% of the participants state that they interact via WhatsApp better than they do offline. Basically, the role of WhatsApp in improving family relationships is demonstrated in the study through the development of the two female participants' relationships with their brothers and sisters, as shown in the charts (p. 9 and 10). Based on the findings, a total of 60% of the participants state their agreement on the role of WhatsApp in improving their relationships with their sisters. Similarly, 60% of them also report that their relationships with their brothers have become better through WhatsApp usage. Accordingly, it can be said that this might be a result of the online communication between family members which is only afforded by WhatsApp despite the long distance, as stated in the literature review. While face-to-face communication is not possible under such a circumstance, online interaction using any social media platform will be
the only easiest and available means to maintain intimate domestic relationships. So, this accounts for the role WhatsApp has played in enhancing the female participants' relationships with their sisters and brothers.

Linking this to the findings of statement 7 concerning contacting family members privately rather than through WhatsApp family groups, this contributes much to the improvement of the relationships between family members. Though family groups could also bring family members together since every member participates in the interaction, contacting them privately becomes much more effective and contributory to strengthen domestic ties and enhance one's relationship with the other members. 50% of the participants say that they prefer contacting their family members privately. This, consequently, suggests that they value and care about one another that they interact privately. Basically, this might be attributed to factors like their closeness in real life as well as a member's desire to talk with certain family members about matters which he/she does not want to reveal in the WhatsApp family groups. This is true when considering that 50% of the participants agree that they sometimes converse via WhatsApp about topics which they barely talk about offline. Of these 50%, 20% of the females strongly agree on that. It is noteworthy to mention that the development of the participants' relationships with their sisters and brothers could also be linked to the frequency of their contact and how often they send each other. As statement 9 reveals, 50% of the participants state that they contact their family members almost daily which, accordingly, strengthens their relationships. It ought to be said that this is afforded by WhatsApp which, despite of their physical absence, encourages them to maintain intimate relationships by contacting one another frequently.

Based on the WhatsApp conversations, there are differences between F1 and F2 with regards to the relationship of each one of them with the family members they contacted. This is shown through linguistic features and the type of emojis used. As illustrated in the literature review, attributing the development of family relationships to WhatsApp application could be analyzed on the basis of the affordances it provides users with, one of which is to do with the use of emojis. Though some of the conversations are characterized by the use of these emojis, they simultaneously show gender differences with regards to the way language and these emojis are
used. F1 seems to have a very close relationship with the two female family members as well as the two male members she conversed with. On the contrary, F2 does not seem to have an intimate relationship with one of the male members she contacted, while she is close with the rest. All female-female conversations of F1 and F2 show very clear closeness between the interlocutors, which is revealed through using the smiling faces with tears of joy and the faces with heart eyes. In addition to emojis, using words like الحلوة/غلاتي/الدلوعة also shows much intimacy in their relationships. This is equally similar to the female-male conversations, excluding the one naked of emojis, where almost the same emojis and language are used. Though these males use the smiling faces with tears of joy and those with heart eyes, they still show differences in the way they use them. Based on the literature review, emotional expressiveness is associated to females more than men. Accordingly, it must be said that the use of the kissing faces and those with heart eyes should also be a female characteristic. Nonetheless, some of the male family members, use such types of emojis which do not match the type of emotions stereotypically associated to them, yet this could be seen as a sign of their closeness to their sisters. When it comes to the conversation naked of emojis, it does not show intimacy in the interlocutors' relationship since there are no emojis used, nor does the language suggest closeness in any way. Instead, it reveals that they rarely interact with each other neither through WhatsApp nor in face-to-face situations. It also implies that if one starts a conversation, it will be for the need of something rather than communication. This is clear when the male says, وبعدين نتتي ليش تجي وقت الحاجة / Why do you send me whenever you are in need of something?" to which her response was بعدني زين يوم/ بعدني زين يوموبعدين نتتي ليش تجي وقت الحاجة ولا ما أسأل البر "It's good that I ask when I need something than not asking at all." Furthermore, the female interlocutors used different types of emojis within the same message almost in all conversations, while this is not the case with the male family members. This, in fact, does not only demonstrate the fact that they are more emotionally expressive than males as illustrated in the literature review, but it also shows how close they are to each other.

**Conclusion**

With the high trend of WhatsApp usage in everyday communication between people and family members, social relationships have witnessed
radical changes, and people come to know much about each other though they are not physically present. WhatsApp has been proved very crucial in strengthening social interactions and maintaining closeness between family members when face-to-face interaction no longer allows them to connect. In other words, due to people's engagement in everyday life responsibilities and tasks, face-to-face communication does not guarantee an effective interaction between them, as their time and attentions are dedicated to fulfilling these duties. On the contrary, WhatsApp allows them to be in a constant connection even if they are living away from each other. More than that, the importance of such a medium is also considered with regards to the use of emojis which come to mimic features like emotional expressiveness and body language found in face-to-face interactions. Some of the participants used different types of emojis which are dissimilar to those that are stereotypically associated with them.

References:


The Role of WhatsApp in Improving Family Relationships

This questionnaire is meant to be given to 10 female family members aiming to examine the effect of using WhatsApp on enhancing family relationships. It seeks to study the extent to which technology generally develops social interactions and the place of WhatsApp bringing family members closer. The answers of the questionnaire are confidential.

B. Read the following statements carefully and choose the appropriate option: SA= strongly agree, A= agree, N= neutral, SD= strongly disagree, D= disagree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I believe social media enhances family relationships better than face-to-face interactions do.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. WhatsApp allows me to interact with my family members better than I do offline.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I mostly use WhatsApp to contact my family members more than contacting friends.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. WhatsApp has developed my relationship with my sisters.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. WhatsApp has developed my relationship with my brothers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I spend more time contacting my family members through WhatsApp than I do offline.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I prefer to contact my family members privately rather than in WhatsApp family groups.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. I feel free to discuss topics with my family members using WhatsApp which I do not talk about offline. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐

9. I contact my family members via WhatsApp almost daily. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐

10. I have more than one WhatsApp family group. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐
Sexist language and Images in the campus posters in a university in Manila

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Ibra College of Technology

Roger Bingculado
Far Eastern University

ABSTRACT

In sociolinguistics, a considerable number of studies have been done on linguistic and visual sexism in different forms of media. However, there appears a need to shed light on the perceived issue of sexism in the academe in the form of school posters. The study focuses on analyzing the manifestation of sexist language and images in the school posters of a university in Manila. Using the concepts of Pingree (1974) and King (1991) in determining sexism in campus posters, 80 posters were photographed and compiled for functional categorization and analysis. Results of the study include how women are depicted in the posters and specify the various stereotypes that are used to pertain to womanhood. It was also found that posters appear to have sensitivity towards use of gender biased language and visuals in contrast to previous generations. Additionally, certain viable recommendations on elimination of sexism are discussed.

Keywords: sociolinguistics, sexist language, sexism, Far Eastern University

Introduction

A few years ago, University of Waterloo, a Canadian university, got involved in a controversy when a poster which was claimed to be sexist circulated around the campus. The poster, said to discriminate women who were running for positions in a leadership council, bore the image of Marie Curie, a Nobel Peace Prize winner. It indicated “The brightest woman this Earth ever created was Marie Curie, the mother of the nuclear bomb. You
tell me if the plan of women leading men is still a good idea." The incident resulted in various calls for immediate actions to be taken to stop the offensive remarks on women (Dobson-Mitchell, 2011) and for the university to create a female-friendly environment (Cain, 2011).

The said incident was just among the several known cases of sexism in school posters. To make matters worse, there are those posters which are sexist in terms of language and imagery without being identified as such. This may in fact concern other higher educational institutions. Inevitable as it seems, the same situation may indeed happen even in large and highly reputable universities where different student oriented activities are exercised. Part of these activities involves campaigning and advertising in the form of printed posters. Consequently, in order for the said posters to be approved, a screening process is conducted by concerned offices specifically those that deal with Student Affairs. However, it appears that in most cases, there are no clear-cut guidelines that are used in the process of the approval of the said posters since there is the absence of explicit specifications in their respective student handbooks with regard to the avoidance of sexist language in the posters.

It is then the study’s aim to look into the possible existence of sexism in a university campus posters due to the seemingly lack of attention given to it. Furthermore, the study intends to look into the formation of guidelines by the university administration in order to prevent sexism in the posters in the future.

An important component of this study is the definition of the term gender bias. According to Costa (1994), gender is a social construct and a dichotomy that exists in all societies. Sexism is another term that is used alongside gender bias. Linguistically speaking, it is the use of language that lessens either sex, at most times women, and thus promoting gender inequality (Kintanar, 1998). Meanwhile, the American Heritage Dictionary states that sexism includes attitudes, conditions, or behavior that support stereotyping of roles (1996, p.1654).

Relating women with domestic chores, nursing, secretarial jobs and associating men with politics, chief positions, managerial posts, and jobs that require decision-making may be considered as stereotyping, thus may include gender-bias. King (1991) coined the term negative stereotyping
stating that stereotyping may have threatening or non-threatening effects based on the stated context.

The contrasting concept of negative stereotype is the non-threatening stereotyping or the positive stereotyping. This takes place when men are typecast as providers of finance, morality and discipline leaving the parenting task to women (Cohen, 1993). This is the same with Mabanglo’s (1996) claim that women are thought to be hardworking, partiend and skillful in mothering jobs and that men are strong, responsible providers and individuals, thus creating harmonious relationships between the two gender groups.

However, it may be important to take into consideration the detriments of negative stereotyping when manifested in written and spoken discourse. This happens when one gender becomes discriminated. In the local society for example, Mabanglo (1996) observed that women who work in entertainment joints such as beerhouses are addressed as ‘Dear’ or ‘Sweetheart’ by men who are not their husbands which clearly depicts a demeaning treatment to the female gender. King (1991) believes that such practice is unfair and is therefore sexist in nature.

The inappropriate endearment of men to women may be considered as a linguistic discrimination. This in consonance with Lakoff’s (1973) claim that language at times discriminate women. Bernardo (1997) supports this through his study which found out that sexist language is not present among the words of Filipino speakers but evident in their thoughts. Similar to this is Mojica’s (2000) research on gender differences of students’ constructed dialogues. She found out that the males’ usage of linguistic features such as codeswitching, tag questions, among others are taken as the male students’ aspiration to gain solidarity with the opposite gender. The use of different linguistic features of female students, on the other hand, was interpreted as their desire for speech empowerment and authority assertion.

In another point of view, Sapir-Whorf’s hypothesis or the linguistic relativity hypothesis (1956, in King, 1991) states that language is dominant over thoughts and perceptions. It postulates that linguistic stereotyping influences or shapes the strategies in which a speaker forms his thoughts.

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In response to the calls for gender sensitivity, attempts to eliminate negative stereotyping have been continually proposed by different scholarly works. This could be attributed to the observed gender bias and negative stereotypes towards women in various areas of the society where men is usually favored to be dominant as opposed to the reverse notion for women (Devito, 1991; Ollenburger & Moore, 1992).

Shute (1981) argued that in order to eliminate sexism in a society, sexist language, like replacing sexist terms with non-sexist terms, should be a requisite. Another proposition for elimination of gender stereotyping is the one by Sykes; (1985 in King, 1991) formula of criteria in determining sexism in language. Her concept states that discrimination through language takes place whenever there is a difference with how men and women are treated, moreso if women are less favored due to ‘gender’.

In sociolinguistics, the difference theory, originally proposed by Tannen (1990), states that men and women are on different wavelengths when it comes to communicating. In her observation, men, on one hand, engage in conversations to establish independence and women, on the other hand, communicate to maintain intimacy and close relationship.

Another theory which is also appears to be based on language is the dominance approach In this concept, men are exhibit as the dominant gender, while women take the inferior and subordinate roles (Coates, 1998). Due to the perceived difference in speech, there appears male supremacy and a male-centered language and reduction of value of the women’s speech.

Overall, the difference and dominance approach implicate on the male and female gender’s contention for power and dominance through language. King (1991) adds that the differences between men and women are likely to dictate that one of the two parties will be favored and the other will be less heard. Though other feminists like Cameron (2008) argue that there are problems with both the dominance and the difference approach because the linguistic history has already created the markedness of male-associated forms, Coates (1998) believes that the difference approach can be taken positively since it could highlight the communicative strategies and characteristics of women.
The current study adopts King’s (1991) classification of sexism as part of its framework which will be relevant in the analysis of university posters. These classifications are: a) irrelevant reference to physical appearance or domestic relationships; b) inappropriate forms of address; and c) women ignored or objectified in visual images.

Analysis of sexism on posters requires categorization of women’s images. Pingree (1974, in King, 1991) came up with a 5-level scale that describes the portrayal of women in the society. The portrayal of women in society are the following: the woman as an objectified, two-dimensional, non-thinking figure; the woman is placed at home or assigned to do tasks specifically for women like nursing and teaching; the woman as professional but is positioned at home; women are equal to men; and men and women as individuals.

There appears to be a scarcity of literature that focus on the analysis of gender bias specifically on campus posters. However, several studies have been found relevant in conducting the current study particularly in terms of the findings dealing with linguistic and visual sexism. One that is worth mentioning is that of Leelin (1991) which aimed to investigate attitudes and images in children’s literature. It made use of five popular classical fairy tales for qualitative analysis. It was found in the study that the fairy tales promoted sex-roles stereotypes that restricted the role of women. This was due to the roles of the majority of the roles of the protagonists of the fairy tales like Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty among others, in which they tend to be weak as they waited to be rescued by their princes.

In a similar concept of research, six award winning short stories were used for analysis on how sexism is portrayed in the said form of literature. Ramos (1993) concentrated on lexical and theme formations of the then Palanca award winning pieces. Similar to the study of Leelin, it was find out that sexism was present in the said short stories. It specifically pointed out that the literature pieces contained themes that suggest gender stereotypes.

In 1995, Estacio and Ko made a study on the perception of fourth year high school students on sexism in Filipino comics. The top five popular comics in Manila were chosen for content analysis for the plot, situations and characterization. Apparently, sexism was found to be present in Filipino
comics. Additionally, women were given stereotyped roles in the comics as they portray family and domestic oriented roles.

A famous feminist, Kilbourne (2000) examined the influence that advertising has on consumers, focusing particularly on how it contributes to the problems that girls and women already face in terms of economics, violence, and physical and emotional health. She claimed that women whose self-image is shaped by ads depicting them as childlike and ineffectual are particularly susceptible to the premise that the purchase and use of certain products will make their social, emotional, and financial difficulties disappear.

Meanwhile, a study on male and female language that I could be cited is that of Baalen (2001) which stressed that linguistic device like hedging shows the weakness of the female gender. However, he pointed out that there is a developing trend that male and female language is becoming similar due to the use of such linguistic feature. Further, it was observed that the female gender is becoming more aggressive in their way of expressing themselves.

Moreover, Miciano (2004) made use of a Chivas Regal ad in letting students to look at the connection of the ad’s presentation and the product being promoted. The study revealed that the students who participated did not see any connection between the woman and the alcoholic drink. Furthermore, the study found out that the students considered the “faceless” woman in the ad unfair due to discrimination, and the ad was sexist.

There have also been scholarly works on sexist language in the academe. These studies include Baç (1997) and Esen (2007) which looked into sexism in school textbooks in Turkey. Another is that of Cheng and Ghajiareh (2009) which focused on the prevalence of gendered language in academic discourse such as teacher-student talk and student-student talk. Another is that of Dart and Clarke (2006) which tackled sexism in classroom interactio patterns in science classes, and it was found that interaction patterns of girls are not significantly different from that of the boys. As a whole, while there are studies on academic discourse, it seems that there is dearth of studies on the sexism in posters which are instrumental tools in expressing gender bias, may it be visually or
linguistically.

Given the seemingly limited number of studies centered on gender-bias in different forms of media, it may be necessary to conduct a study concerning the matter in an educational institution which is a venue to uphold societal values such as equality. Additionally, the current study is conducted due to the researchers’ attempt in contributing to the field of sociolinguistics particularly to the seemingly scarce literature on sexist language in university posters and advocacy in promoting a gender sensitivity in the society. Additionally, the study may be of significant value to the community since its result may affect the administration’s supervision down to the students’ utilization of posters.

This study, therefore, seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Does gender bias exist in the university campus posters?

2. If gender bias exists, how is it reflected
   a. in the language assigned to the poster
   b. in the visual signs displayed

**Methodology**

This section of the study discusses the procedure carried out in the study. This descriptive study attempted to gather empirical data that looked into the possible manifestations of sexism in the campus posters.

Eighty-three (83) posters seen on the walls, façade, grounds and bulletin boards of the premises of a university in Manila, were photographed for analysis (See Appendix). This includes those which are in the form of tarpaulin. Additionally, the researchers have sought the assistance of the university Student Affairs Office to retrieve previously posted posters in order to gather enough data. The obtained posters were converted to jpeg format to reduce the file size. After the collection of posters, the posters were marked with a specific number for easily filing. Then, classification according to purpose and functions of the posters was conducted.

The categorization of posters according to function are the following: 1) Advertising posters which are used to announce an event or a new product;
2) Informative posters which inform or educate people about something including events that previously happened; 3) Affirmation posters which feature inspiring or motivational sayings; 4) Propaganda posters which are associated with political campaigns and updates; and 5) Administrative posters that are intended for the school administration, faculty and non-academic personnel regardless of the purpose. The categorization was done twice with a two-day gap in order to observe consistency.

The language and images in the posters were then analyzed according to Sykes’ criteria in finding out the existence of sexism in linguistics. Like the categorization of the posters, analysis was also performed twice with a two-day gap for the purpose of consistency. The guidelines were used in deciding whether the captions and pictures in the posters show unfair treatment to either of the two genders. Furthermore, the said guidelines were utilized in determining if the basis for the difference in the treatment to either gender is gender related. Existence of these conditions has been regarded as gender bias. Next, the images of women in, if there were any, were analyzed according to the “level of consciousness scale” designed by Pingree (1974, in King, 1991).

Two inter raters were asked to conduct additional deliberation on the collected data a week after the researchers’ analysis is done. This provided a more valid and accurate categorization using Sykes’ and Kings’ criteria, and Pingree’s scale of consciousness level as discussed earlier. The decision of two out of threes raters prevailed as the judgment of the researchers was taken as one. The data are presented in frequencies and percentages in tables as necessary. A qualitative description of the posters is also presented in the paper.

**Results and Discussion**

This section of the paper presents the findings on the analysis on 84 posters in terms of its functional classification and possible manifestations of sexist language and images.
Table 1: Frequency of posters by category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>62.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informative</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affirmation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propaganda</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>83</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows the number of posters per category. It appears that most of the posters posted on the bulletin boards are intended for announcements of upcoming events. The posters that are intended to disseminate other types of information and those which are for student politics come in second and third, respectively, in terms of frequency. Not too much posters were found to be associated with non-student organizations probably because the administration, the faculty and the non-academic personnel have their respective offices that result in the lack of the need to post announcements on bulletin boards.

Gender Bias in Campus Posters

In Table 2, it is shown how the campus posters show or otherwise not gender biased language and images.

With the use of Pingree’s level of consciousness scale on how women are represented in visual images, the table shows the classification of school posters. Levels 1, 2 and 3 are said to contain gender bias due to the generally inferior and unfair treatment to the portrayal of women expressing that women are non-thinking individuals, exclusive to specific jobs, and incapable of some things that men specialize in. Meanwhile, Levels 4 and 5 do not denote any kind of stereotype as there is portrayal of equality between the male and the female gender and individuality of men and women, respectively. The operational definition of individuality in this study is that the posters did not specific or target a particular gender in the image or quote employed.
Table 2: Categorization of Posters With and Without Bias

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale of Consciousness Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - Women as objectified two-dimensional, non-thinking decorations</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - Women as stereotypes whose place is in the house, and who are identified with certain occupations</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Women as inferior</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - Women expected to be equal with men</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>38.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - Women and men as individuals, targeting no particular gender</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statistics in Table 2 indicate that most of the posters are generally not linguistically and visually sexist as 62% of the subjects were found to belong to categories 4 and 5. Specifically, it was found that most of the posters promote equality among men and women with 38.55% frequency. A considerable number of posters (24.09%) were also found to address no specific gender as they are in the form of announcements. According to a university official, posters in bulletin boards are primarily used in disseminating information, awareness building, and cultivation of the culture of reading, thus, no gender specification is necessary. However, it is noteworthy to mention that a significant number of the posters denote negative stereotyping since 18% of the posters were found to express that women are inferior. Overall, it appears that though there is no explicit guideline stated in the handbook of student organizations, gender fair images and captions are employed in the school posters.

Qualitative Analysis on Randomly Selected Posters

Poster # 1)

In this particular poster found in front of the National Service Training Program (NSTP), it was intended to promote student initiative in maintaining cleanliness in the university by means of the slogan that says Kayganda sa Mata Malinis na Morayta. The poster also bore an image of a woman holding a broom stick that seems to stereotype women as street
sweepers and in general, the gender in charge of cleanliness. Hence, the poster is an example of level 2.

Poster #6)

This poster was created the official literary folio of the FEU, Tampipi. Through the poem found in the poster, it was clear that the intention was to commemorate and promote nationalism among Filipinos. Linguistically, the poster did not promote gender bias. However, the image of four young boys seems to treat the female gender unfairly. The absence of women may denote that only the male gender is able to express its love for the country. This could be an example of Level 3.

Poster #8)

The poster of a student organization which advocates childhood education belongs to level 4 because of the equal treatment to both genders. It showcases the achievements of the organization in its aim to educate people from the marginalized sector. Several photos of the activities were on display and it featured an almost equal representation of male and female students of the university as individuals who conduct charity work.

Poster #17)

A poster situated at the lobby of the features boasts one of the university’s achievements by means of displaying graduates who topped the board exam. Although it could sometimes be inevitable for the said college to be gender fair in showcasing board passers in posters due to unpredictable results in licensure examinations, this particular poster seemed to have given fair treatment to both genders as the female gender was well-represented in this poster. The poster is an example of Level 4.

Poster #26)

The poster disseminates an announcement made by the Athletics Department in relation to a scheduled basketball game. Though the poster displays a male basketball player, inevitably, it does not denote any gender bias. The use of the male figure serves as an attention getter for students to be aware of the basketball match, to be participated in by men. It belongs to level 5 because it targets no gender in particular.
Poster #33)
For advertising purposes, a theater organization created a variety of posters that feature life’s realities as depicted in the play Dreamweavers. Poster number 33 belongs to level 1 because of cultural influence which apparently is not meant to be biased against the female gender. It is a common notion that during a death procession, a casket is to be carried by men and women follow while weeping. The female gender does not have any significant function in this particular poster since they only function as weepers and part of the procession formation.

Poster #46)
As stated in the earlier discussion, women are stereotyped for certain occupations such as working as secretaries and teachers. In the Philippine context of education, teachers are usually in the image of women. Poster number 46 is an advertisement from the Human Resources department in which it intends to hire pre-school and grade school teachers. On the poster is an image of a woman holding a book and teaching in front of students. This is an example of level 2 because of the attribution of women to certain jobs.

Poster #69)
The poster of the a Mass Communication society gives an equal exposure to both male and genders as it featured the faces of its officials. There seem to be no argument in the placement of man’s in the centermost part of the poster since the highest ranking official is apparently a man. However, the organization could have a choice on whether to feature the other officials which constitute a number of females. The fair representation of the male and female gender in the poster is categorized as level 4.

Poster #73)
The poster belongs to level 3 because it depicts the inferior image of women in the society. Although it is used as a promotional material for a theatrical event, the use of the line ‘I can already have a boyfriend. I will not bring hotdog and rice to school anymore’ may give a negative notion because the female gender is perceived to yearn to have a boyfriend in order to achieve a certain level of contentment.
The present study demonstrates the seemingly changing direction of how discourse in the academe with regard to sexist language. Compared to earlier studies (e.g. Frantz, 1994; ), there appears more awareness on being cautious on what to put in posters, linguistically or visually. In a country like the Philippines, the prevalence of social media use may have influenced the prudence of students in employing poster content that may be thought of as unethical, unfair, sexist or gender biased. Although not entirely eliminated, language and visuals favoring the male gender is seen to have declined. One possible factor is the constant women empowerment or girl power campaigns of private and public organizations. On national television and other media platforms, one would usually how women portray roles that previously were dominated by men. The countless contribution of women in the workforce may also have contributed to this sociolinguistic phenomenon. It may be safe to say that the current generation slowly deviates from the traditional patriarchal society as depicted by Coates (1996).

In line with the foregoing, it is interesting to stress the importance of being normative when it comes to one’s perception when it comes to the gender bias language and visuals. While some would simply dismiss notions of sexism in what they read, see or hear, there are those who prefer to strictly uphold equality of both sexes in a linguistic manner. Perhaps there is discrepancy in what is sexist language because it depends on who is affected by it. Innuendos for instance are subjective in nature, and it cannot be disproved that in discourse, sexism can be metaphorical (Mills, 2008) or indirect due to its implicit nature.

**Conclusion**

Realizing the need for quantitative and qualitative measurement of the possible existence of sexism in school posters, the researchers gathered 80 posters for analysis. Two main research questions were addressed and several findings were found.

It was found out through Sykes’ (1985) framework in determining unfair treatment on either gender that majority of the campus posters are not sexist in nature since there was only less than 25% of the collected posters that were thought to contain sexist language and/or image. In the said sexist posters, the choice of the image of a man or men in the posters could
probably be an effect of a stereotype in which men are thought to be authoritative and perceived as the one who is in-charge of the decision making. This is despite the fact that the male and female genders handle key positions in the academe, particularly in the said university. In another view, women are chosen to be in posters because of the roles they play in the society. For instance, in Philippine context, a teacher is perceived to be in the image of a woman. Overall, positive stereotyping is seen in the posters found in the campus.

With due respect to the Student Affairs Office, it is suggested that the office should make it a point that the student organizations are able to observe the guidelines mandated by the student handbook. It could be understood that those in charge of the content and layout of the posters are not aware of the possible sexism in the posters. It would thus be logical to suggest that a regular orientation be conducted among student organizations on the guidelines on posters. In addition, it would probably be advisable that a separate section on the guidelines on sexist language posters be allotted in the student handbook for clear emphasis on this particular matter. It is, however, important to give proper credit to OSA in its efforts in seeing to it that the posters they approve for posting are generally not sexist. This is evident in the few instances of sexist posters that were gathered.

In the field of linguistics, the current study demonstrates the important role that language plays in sending messages through school posters. Language in this regard does not serve its primary function based on the posters’ categorization alone, but also create implications concerning a variety of linguistic subfields. This is supported by the presence of a variety of linguistic devices present in majority of the posters. Additionally, it could be of interest for future researchers to discover if language makes stronger impact over images in school posters.

Several limitations can be cited with respect to the study’s outcome, particularly with the data. Firstly, the number of posters seems to be too few for analysis. The researchers were not too successful in obtaining a complete compilation of posters that were approved by the Student Affairs Office due to the fact that the research was conducted at the latter part of the academic year. Another reason for the lack of posters is that some areas were under renovation during period that the posters were being gathered. A considerable number of posters deemed significant for the data could
have been obtained from the said building. Additionally, student organizations which are possible sources of archived posters were on vacation at the time that the data were being obtained. It is further suggested for future research to gather sources during a regular semester in order to obtain more data. This can also pave way for analyzing posters which are exclusively produced by student organizations. Also, it may be possible to analyze advertisements from the television monitors that are installed in various parts of the campus, as well as the digital forms of advertisements that students use nowadays. It may also be interesting to investigate the effect of the discourse of the Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte who is known to be sexist and misogynist as evident in his discourse (Haynes, 2018). It should be noted that this manuscript was conducted prior to his administration.

In this manner, the study also intends to recommend useful and realizable methods in the elimination of sexism in school posters. Redundant as it may seem, the avoidance of masculine generics in the rules of gender and number agreement is still an effective way of eliminating linguistic sexism. A concrete example of this is assigning neutral labels to certain positions which are dominated by the male gender like using stage performer instead of actor in posters involving theatrical concerns. This, however, may pose problems in certain cases when there is no available term to replace the masculine generic terms like man in statements like Man was created in the image of God. Studies relating to morphological systems of sexist language still need to be conducted in order to shed light on this issue. In this regard, the concept of gender neutralization is highly suggested (Pauwels, 1998; Kintanar, 1998). Moreover, to promote gender fairness in posters, it is proposed that women are given equal exposure like that of men especially those which depict responsibility and authority. This exempts cases when dominance of men in the poster is unavoidable such as board exam results.

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The impact of communicative language teaching on TESOL

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Introduction

The era of globalization has led to the growing demand for the use of English which evidently has a significant influence on English language teaching, and the ongoing worldwide demand for English language usage has resulted in the growth of TESOL into a successful global industry. From the previous decades until the current generation, practitioners in the field of ELT has considered Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as an effective way to teach English.

CLT is a principled approach to language teaching based on the Humanistic Learning Theory which sees the learner as a whole person in the learning process and stresses self-actualization which describes the personal growth and self-esteem of the learners. In language learning, “humanistic techniques engage the whole person, including emotions and feelings as well as knowledge and behavioral skills” (Richards & Rodgers, 2002, p. 90). It is also believes that CLT engages learners in authentic purposeful communication. It focuses on meaning and fluency over accuracy, and the sequencing of language is based on the communicative function and task difficulty rather than linguistic complexity.

Hymes (1971) explains that communicative language teaching is based on the notion of communicative competence which refers to the learner’s ability to produce the language in appropriate contexts. Thus, all instructional materials, curricula, syllabi and teaching activities are designed to develop the learner’s communicative competence.

The main feature of CLT is to enable the learners to use the second language through the integrated practice in the four language skills. In the same line, Halliday (1976) states that language is not an isolated system.
but a tool used to carry out different varieties of functions in social interactions. CLT has been distinguished from other traditional teaching approaches for its influence and importance on teaching English as a Second Language because it focuses on communicative instructional activities, student-centered approach, authentic teaching materials, teacher’s role as facilitator, fluency over accuracy and teaching grammar inductively.

The origins of Communicative Language Teaching

The origins of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) resulted from the rejection of the British Situational Language Teaching approach, as well as the Audiolingualism method which was widely used in the United States for teaching English as a foreign or second language in the 1960s. Firth (1957) stressed that the sociocultural context of language use which includes learners’ beliefs and behaviors, and the objects of linguistic conversation should be studied. The British linguists emphasized the need to focus on communicative competence in language teaching rather than focusing on structures. Likewise, in the United States, Chomsky (1957) argues that structural linguistic theory fails to acknowledge creative and unique capacity to construct language.

The growth of European Economic Communities and the movement of immigrants and guest workers from 1960s and onwards led to the Council of Europe to develop a notional-functional syllabus which is derived from neo-Firthian Systematic or functional linguistics that demonstrates language in a meaning situational context. In 1976, Wilkins proposed the notional-functional syllabus which was a basis for the development of the communicative syllabi for language teaching. Wilkins defined “notional” categories as concepts like time, sequence, quantity, location and frequency, and he illustrated “functional” categories such as request, denials, offers and complaints. The contribution of Wilkins had a magnificent impact on the development of communicative language teaching as he proposed that learners need communicative meanings to understand and express. It is a very practical syllabus which is, according to Van Ek (1975), based on a threshold level that is a way of describing language ability for major European languages in terms of what learners should be able to do with the language. Furthermore, Van EK and Alexander (1980) assert that the specifications of this threshold influenced
greatly the design of communicative language programs and textbooks in Europe.

Littlewood (1981) assumes that CLT gives due care to function and structural aspects of languages in which learners use procedures to work in pairs or groups implementing the available language resources in communicating and problem-solving tasks, and thus the national primary syllabus of English was on the basis of the communicative approach. Howatt (1984) made a distinction between two versions of the communicative approach. The ‘weak’ version which is identified as ‘learning to use English’ asserts that opportunities should be provided for the learners in order to use their English to communicate purposefully and the ‘strong’ version which is referred to as ‘using English to learn it’ assumes that language is acquired through communication, and that means using language to stimulate the development of the language system itself.

Savignon (1972) illustrated in a study of adult classroom acquisition of French using practical language exercises based on communication strategies as part of the teaching program; the learners were encouraged to ask for clarification, information and to negotiate meaning. Consequently, the learners were also asked to take risks and to practice communication rather than memorizing patterns of grammar. The reactions of the learners to the test formats were supportive to the notion that even beginners have good responses to activities that allow them to focus on meaning rather than formal features. Savignon emphasized that the purpose of this program was to engage the learners in communicative and interactional practices.

**What is Communicative Language Teaching?**

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been considered to response to grammar-based approaches. However, it does not reject grammar teaching. CLT embraces the goals and processes of classroom learning and teaching practice which shows language competence in terms of social context and social behavior. Hence, the purpose of language and language teaching in Communicative Language Teaching is primarily communication.
The principle of communicative competence is presented in syllabus designs, materials development, teaching techniques and assessment. In addition, there are specific themes related to CLT such as cooperative learning, authentic materials utilization, and task-based, process-oriented, inductive (discovery oriented) and learner-centered approaches. Richards and Rodgers (1999) mentioned that the dimension of CLT is in its student-centered and experience-based view of teaching English as a second language. As Applebee (1974) highlights, “The ideal curriculum consists of well-selected experiences…The means for selection and weaving appropriate experiences into a coherent curriculum stretching across the years of school English study” (119).

According to Japanese Ministry of Education, CLT is used to develop the learners’ ability to understand and express themselves in a foreign language and it enables the students to foster a positive attitude towards communicating using a foreign language and increasing their interest in language and culture, thus, deepening international understanding (Wada, 1994 in Celce-Murcia, 2001).

Savignon (1991) claims that Communicative Language Teaching was derived from multidisciplinary perspective based on linguistic, psychological, sociological, philosophical and pedagogical research. Moreover, the focus of CLT is on preparing and implementing programs and methodologies that enhance the development of functional language capacity through the participation of learners in communicative events. The selection methods and materials are based on an analysis of both learners’ needs and styles of learning to be appropriate to the goals and context of teaching.

Furthermore, Savignon (1972) argues that both grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods were developed for placing the burden of acquisition on teacher explanation of grammar and controlled practice with persistence on the accuracy of the learner. Savignon assumes that the abstract tradition in linguistic inquiry has contributed to neglecting the social context in both language teaching and language acquisition research that hinder comprehending and accepting communicative competence as a target for learners. When language use is displayed as social behavior, learners’ identities and motivation are said to interact with the language use. Learning in context influences the development of competence
through varieties of activities such as content-based and task-based programs which are suited to focus on communication to develop language skills through expression, interpretation and negotiation of meaning.

Likewise, Littlewood (1981) and Johnson (1982) suggest that there are some principles of the learning theory which are inferred from the practices of CLT in order to promote the learning of second language. The first principle is the communication principle which refers to activities that include real communication for promoting learning. Second is the task principle which refers to activities involving language use in order to perform meaningful tasks that enhance learning. Meanwhile, the third principle is the principle of meaningfulness in which learners use a meaningful language in the learning process. Therefore, the activities of learning are well selected for involving the learners in authentic and meaningful language use in order for the learners to obtain a purposeful communication.

By the same token, Krashen and Terrel (1983) developed the Natural Approach which views language as a vehicle for communicating meaningful messages. They claimed that through this communicative approach, the acquisition of a second language can occur if the input is comprehended by the learners. The goal of Natural Approach is that the group members have mutual interests in each other’s opinions and feelings and they can express themselves comfortably when engaged in classroom discussions. Evidently, the aim of learning is communicative competence and this is seen in the list of advantages of the Natural Approach. These include providing comprehensible and meaningful practice activities and allowing the learners to communicate in meaningful situations that match their level of competence. However, the notion of language exposure and acquisition takes time and it seldom focuses on accuracy.

Moreover, Stephen Krashen developed a theory which is compatible with CLT principles. Krashen distinguishes acquisition from learning by stating that acquisition is the essential process that is involved in the development of language proficiency and it is the unconscious development of the system of the target language as a result of the real use of language for communication. On the other hand, he defines learning as the conscious demonstration of structural knowledge that occurs in instructional settings, and cannot lead to acquisition. Hence, Krashen and
other theorists of second language acquisition assert that language learning exists through the communicative use of language rather than the practice of language skills.

**Characteristics of CLT**

Richards and Rodger (1999) identify some characteristics of Communicative Language Teaching that views language as follows:

1. Language is a system for expressing meaning.
2. The essential function of language is to interact and communicate meaningfully with people.
3. The functional and communicative uses of language are reflected through the structure of language.
4. The primary units of language are not only its grammatical and structural features but also its categories of functional and communicative meaning.

In Communicative Language Teaching, there is common satisfaction with the complexity and correlation of the language skills in the written and oral communication in which the learners have the experience of communication and negotiation of meaning. Clearly, in the communicative language teaching, reading and listening skills are said to be active as the learners have to actively negotiate the meaning by drawing on past knowledge and experience to activate their schema to construct meaning.

On the contrary, traditional language teaching regards the four language skills in two different categories: productive or active skills such as writing and speaking while listening and reading skills were described as receptive or passive skills. Savignon (1972) points out that the four skills of language were inadequate in language use and the shortcomings of the audiolingual method have widely been acknowledged.

**Communicative Competence**

Communicative Language Teaching is a principled approach based on the idea of competence. Communicative competence began in the 1970s and it has become a useful concept that has attracted researchers and curricula
developers; it is said that it offers a framework to integrate linguistic theories with teaching practice.

Chomsky (1965) held that linguistic competence was to characterize the ideal native speaker who is able to produce grammatical sentences in a language. In reaction to Chomsky’s concept of competence as abstract grammatical knowledge, Halliday (1970) illustrated that linguistics in communicative language teaching is concerned with describing the speech acts or texts through the study of the function of language use, and thus the focus would be on all components of meaning. Also, Hymes (1971) reacted to Chomsky’s characterization of the linguistic competence of the ideal native speaker by proposing the term “Communicative Competence” which represents the use of language appropriately in social context and his focus was on language as social behavior.

In addition, Savigon (1972) characterizes Communicative Competence as the language learners’ ability to meaningfully interact with other speakers rather than performing tests based on grammatical knowledge. Moreover, Berns (1990) asserts that the definition of Communicative Competence requires comprehension of the socio-cultural contexts of language use in order to be appropriate for the learners.

Canale and Swain (1980) have identified four different elements for Communicative Competence. The first element is sociolinguistic (sociocultural) competence which refers to the understanding of the social context in which language is used in order to raise the cultural awareness. Secondly, strategic competence refers to the coping strategies that learners use to clarify meaning by initiating, terminating, maintaining, repairing and redirecting communication. Third, discourse competence is the ability of learners to interpret different text types such as poems, telephone conversation, novel and other different types of communication. Finally, grammatical competence which is called linguistic competence by Chomsky is about being able to understand lexical, morphological, syntactic and phonological features of language.

In addition, sociolinguistic perspectives have become important in understanding the implications of norm, appropriacy, and variability for Communicative Language Teaching. The use of authentic materials which show different social contexts in which English language learning takes
place to distinguish Communicative Language Teaching approach from the traditional approaches. Therefore, teachers should highlight social contexts of the language by using everyday source of English such as face-to-face interaction, written texts, films and newspapers. Teachers should also highlight the variety of English that is presented all over the world in context. This provides the learners a variety of language experiences they need to build their communicative competence. However, in second language acquisition, learner identification and motivation interact with opportunities and contexts of language use to influence the development of competence.

**Grammar and Communicative Language Teaching**

Grammar is important for the development of communicative ability; thus, communication cannot occur without structure or grammar, but language works along with the participants’ willingness to cooperate in the negotiation of meaning. Savignon (1972) did not claim that teachers should disregard teaching grammar, but replace the structure drills of language laboratory with meaning-focused self-expression which was seen to be a more effective way for developing communicative skills without loss of morphosyntactic accuracy. Savignon supports the integration of form-focused exercises with meaning-focused experience. To illustrate, learners appear to focus best on grammar when it is associated with their communicative needs and practices.

Therefore, in teaching grammar in CLT, it may be safe to say that meaning is over grammar/structures of language. The misconception that grammar is not important, but communicative competence basically means that meaning-focused approach should be prioritized rather than form-focused approach in order to communicate effectively. In CLT, grammar teaching is based on the inductive approach where language is encouraged to be used which consequently will be able to induce the rules through the variety of examples used.

When teachers use communicative approaches, teaching grammar promotes meaningful interaction between second language learners and the second language itself in which they will have the ability to implement the grammar patterns in conversations, discussions and dialogues used in their daily life. Therefore, teachers should provide English learners with
opportunities to achieve target language competence through exposing them to different methods and theories and choose the best technique that matches the learners’ learning styles. However, grammar rules are not always presented which might lead to committing many mistakes, and also the absence of frequency of error correction makes the learner unsure or unaware of the accuracy of the communication.

**Types of Learning and Teaching Activities**

Different kinds of materials are used to support and promote communicative language teaching, such as task-based, text-based and realia or authentic materials. Richards and Rodgers (1999) point out that learners are provided with activities and exercises that enable them to obtain the communicative objectives of the curriculum. The purpose is to engage learners in communication and to involve them in communicative processes, such as information sharing, negotiation of meaning and interaction. As a whole, it is seen that the activities of the classroom are usually made to focus on completing a variety of tasks.

Byrne (1978) believes in designing tasks that students have to accomplish by requesting information, such as incomplete plans and diagrams. Also, Geddes and Sturtridge (1979) provide “jigsaw” listening in which learners would listen to different audios and then they interact with other students in order to communicate their content. Littlewood (1981) developed two types of activities. Firstly, there are activities of functional communication such as completing maps, solving problems from shared clues and following directions. The next is classified as social interaction activities, such as conversations, discussions, dialogues and role plays. An example of Communicative Language Teaching activities is Information Gap Activity wherein students are given a task to accomplish (e.g. family tree map, timetable, film review) given that each student has partial information about the topic. The students have to communicate to combine and synthesize individual bits of information in order to solve a problem or make a decision.

**Learner and Teacher roles**

CLT emphasizes the communication process rather than the mastery of language forms, and this leads to a wide variety of roles for learners and
teachers which are different from those roles found in traditional second language classroom instructions.

In CLT, The learner becomes an active participant in the learning process. Breen and Candlin (1980) describes the learners’ role in CLT as negotiator between self, learning process and learning objectives. Students are expected to interact with each other rather than with the teacher. This role of the learner is cooperative rather than individualistic. Learners should contribute as much as they gain, and thus they learn interdependently. However, Nunan (1987) suggests in her study that in CLT, opportunities for genuine communicative interaction may be seldom and patterns of classroom interaction might provide little genuine communication between the teacher and the learner or among learners themselves.

Meanwhile, Breen and Candlin (1980) explain that the teacher’s first role in CLT is to facilitate the communication process between learners through various activities and texts. The second role is to act as a participant to guide learners through the procedures and activities they face. The teacher also acts as a researcher and learner at the same time in order to have appropriate knowledge, capacities and actual experience of the nature of language and organizing abilities. Another role is that the teacher acts as a needs analyst and counselor who understand the different needs of individual students and being able to address these needs. As a needs analyst, the teacher must be able to identify and respond to learners’ language needs and identify their reasons for language learning (e.g. career, job, status, communication with native speakers). Also, the teacher should raise the learners’ awareness of other cultures. Moreover, the teacher acts as a group process manager wherein the teacher monitors, encourages, and motivates to supply the gaps in grammar, lexis and strategy. On a related note, one of the drawbacks of the CLT among teachers is they might feel uncomfortable with such procedures especially the non-native speakers with less training. Also, teaching might cause anxiety among teachers who are used to using error correction as the major instructional responsibility of the teacher.

**Structural-Based Approach versus Communicative Language Teaching Approach**
Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) made a distinction between the features of Audiolingualism Method and the Communicative Language Teaching Approach as follows:

**Table 1:** Distinction between Audiolinguialism and CLT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Audiolingual Method</th>
<th>Communicative Language Teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focuses on linguistic competence</td>
<td>Focuses on communicative competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure and form</td>
<td>Meaning is more important than structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorization</td>
<td>Language is not memorized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language is de-contextualized which means that it is presented to learners out of context</td>
<td>Language is always contextualized and put in context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native speaker pronunciation</td>
<td>Pronunciation is comprehensible and language has to be understood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drilling is a central part of teaching and learning process</td>
<td>Drilling is uncommon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language is developed through habit formation</td>
<td>Language is developed through trial and error rather than habit formation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy is primary goal and errors are not tolerated</td>
<td>The focus is on fluency of the speaker rather than the accuracy of the language.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

Communicative Language Teaching is best regarded as an approach rather than a method. CLT occurred at a time when British language teaching was ready for a paradigm change. Situational language teaching could not reflect an appropriate methodology for language learning and teaching in
the seventies and beyond. Also, the learners who are taught through grammar-translation or audio-lingual methods are not often capable of communicating effectively outside the classroom. Therefore, CLT attracted those who searched for a more humanistic approach to teaching in which the priority is on the interactive process of communication. Communicative approach has raised important issues for the training of teachers, the development of materials, and the systems of testing and evaluation.

In the age of globalization where English language is viewed as a social behavior, the impact and importance of CLT for TESOL is realized in viewing the language learner as a partner in the learning process and an active participant in social interactions and self-assessment of development. CLT improves the qualities of English Language teaching as it involves the learners in pragmatically authentic purposeful communication and the learners are actively engaged affectively and intellectually in the learning process.

In summary, CLT encourages developing the intercultural dimension in the language instruction through using authentic materials from different origins with different perspectives in order to give the learners the intercultural competence and the linguistic competence as well. Thus, the learners will have the ability to meaningfully communicate with people of other cultures. As an afterthought, Richards and Rodgers (1999) raised two important questions regarding CLT, whether the CLT approach is equally suitable for ESL and EFL situations or not, and how we can apply it in situations where students have to take grammar-based tests.

References


Feedback and Its Role in Improving Students ’ Narrative Writing

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of feedback in improving writing skills for grade seven students. Ninety-four female students from two different classes in Aiysha bint Masuod Al Amriya School for Basic Education (7 - 11) participated in this experimental study. The pre-test was writing a story in a narrative form. Students were given different types of feedback as a treatment: written, model and oral. The post-test was another narrative writing that was similar to the former. Findings show that there is a significant influence of feedback in improving students' writing accuracy, especially in the simple errors that can be understood easily. It is recommended that teachers must give students feedback on their writings to learn from them and improve their writing skills. For further research, control group is needed to compare between the experimental group and the control group; continuous and intensive feedback is also needed.

Keywords: feedback, writing skill, school, improving, error.
Introduction

English language has become globally widespread and it has been part of the curriculum of many countries around the world, including Oman because of its advantages and useful purposes. One important purpose of learning and teaching English language is the need to communicate. This purpose can be fulfilled by focusing on the different skills in the curriculum which are listening, reading, speaking and writing. Therefore, teachers should implement different approaches and methods which help students improving their different language skills. It is worth to mention that each skill has its own strategies and techniques to be improved and taught properly. One of the important language skills is writing which is considered as a productive skill. It enables students to express their ideas and feelings in a written form. It requires students to have different sub-skills and language use competence such as vocabulary, grammar, coherence and cohesion; that is why it is the most difficult skill compared to the other language skills. Thus, teaching writing is not an easy mission.

Omani English language curriculum includes plans and goals to teach writing as an important skill in the process of teaching language. Students start learning writing skills in their first stages of basic education. They start by writing phrases and simple sentences. Gradually, they are taught to write a full paragraph and full essays in different types such as informative, narrative, expressive, descriptive and persuasive. These writings can also be presented in several forms, some of which are stories, emails, letters and reports depending on the purpose of writing. In grade 7 level, students are expected to write simple sentences in a paragraph of 60 words. They have already learned how to compose narrative, informative and expressive writings in different forms such as e-mails, stories and factual reports. Each type of writing has specific instructions and guideline. For instance, while narrative writing is expressed in past tense forms, informative writing is always in present tense.

The process of teaching and learning writing is complex, since it involves different parties, procedures and steps. Moreover, there are a lot of techniques used by teachers and students to improve writing skills. Therefore, literature is rich in this field and researchers focus on different matters such as giving instructions, correcting writing papers and using
ways of improving writing. One of the common ways of improving writing is giving feedback in several ways.

**Defining the Problem**

Writing is an essential skill that enables students to communicate and express their thoughts. According to the Ministry of Education in Oman, grade 7 students are expected to be able to write paragraphs of 60 words with correct simple tenses. However, it has been found that most of grade 7 students have difficulties in writing. They make fundamental mistakes in grammar, vocabulary and punctuation and they also have problems with expressing connected ideas. Though students are given clear instructions and guidelines before writing tests, they repeat their mistakes. Therefore, it was important to find an effective treatment which could achieve a progress in students’ writing level. One of the common treatments which is used to improve students’ writing skill is giving feedback in different ways.

**Literature Review**

In this part, previous studies and research on ways of improving students writing, feedback, its types and effectiveness are discussed from different aspects.

According to Graham and Perin (2007), "No single approach to writing instruction will meet the needs of all students" (p. 11), that is why several ways of improving students writing are found. Teachers have to diversify their strategies to help all students improve their writing skills. A very helpful way for writing improvement is giving students instructions and strategies. It impacts on students' writing progress positively (Graham & Perin, 2007). Another way is collaborative writing in which students make efforts together in planning, drafting, revising and editing their work. Students have positive attitudes towards this way of writing. Moreover, peer writing is similar to the collaborative writing but the difference is that more than two students are involved in the latter (Comer, Clark & Canelas, 2014). Self-correction is also a useful way in which students write and edit their own writing and "it improves students' thinking from surface to deep" (Yang, 2010, p. 1202); however, the majority of students do not prefer this way as they need to put in a great deal of effort themselves. Some of
students argue that they make the errors, so they do not know the correct form. Another way to improve students' writing, according to Semke (1984), is that practice helps students the most to improve their writing. All these ways could work depending on the different conditions surrounded, especially on students themselves and their preference and style of learning.

In all language skills, feedback plays a magnificent role in improving students' academic level. However, it is different from one skill to another. Writing skill needs continuous feedback, since it is an effective way of helping students to improve their writing. In the following paragraphs, feedback types and its effectiveness are elaborated.

Studies and experiments in improving writing by giving feedback show different types of feedback. Ferris and Roberts (2001) cited that one distinction of feedback is whether the feedback is direct or indirect. Direct feedback is when students are provided with clear corrected forms for each mistake, so they are supposed only to replace their mistakes with the corrections for the final draft. In contrast, indirect feedback is when the teacher indicates to the error without writing what the exact mistake is, so the student will find out the problem and solve it. The direct way is also explained as the explicit way of giving feedback (Bitchener, Young & Cameron, 2005), whereas the indirect is implicit. Another division between feedbacks is either they are coded or encoded. Coded feedback is when teacher underlines or marks the error of the student and writes what type of mistake it is, while encoded feedback is when the error is only marked without writing what is the mistake (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). An example of the coded feedback is to write sp as an indication of spelling error and ww as a mistake in the choice of word, etc. Hyland (2006) stated different forms of feedback which are the oral and the written feedback. In addition, he differentiated between types of feedback according to their sources. First, the teacher feedback is from the instructor. Second, peer feedback is the responses and comments of the peer to the writing. Third, computer-mediated feedback is provided by computer’s programs when the writing is typed.

Should teacher spend hours correcting students writing mistakes and writing feedback? This is one of the most important questions for teachers who want to improve their students’ writing production. Truscutt (1996)
argued in his article, “The case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes” that grammar correction should not take place in writing classes and there is no considerable research evidence that error correction can improve students’ writing accuracy. In addition, Gue´nette (2007) stated that he experimented different types of feedback including the direct and indirect methods, self-correction and group correction, explicit and implicit ways on both the form and content, but regardless the different techniques, good students respond well and low achieving students always need to be reminded, pushed and encouraged. He concluded that no matter what the teacher does, some students get the benefits from instructions and feedback and some of them do not. Contrasting Truscutt's (1996) results about the feedback, many researchers agree in the importance of feedback (Bitchener, Young & Cameron, 2005), since studies found that there are always significant differences between the control group, in which there was no provided feedback, and the experimental group. However, scholars got different results when it comes to the most effective way of providing feedback to students wiring. There are diverse ways that had been examine in previous research papers. Semke (1984) explored five types of feedback which are, "writing comments and questions rather than corrections, making all errors and supply the correct forms, combining positive comments and correction, and indicating errors by means of a code and requiring students to find corrections" (p. 195). He found that correction does not improve students writing, but rather students develop their writing through practice. However, Chandler (2003) reported that, "direct correction is best for producing accurate revisions" (p. 267). It is worth to mention that direct correction is the preferable way for both teachers and learners, yet we cannot conclude that it is the most effective way (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). On the other hand, there are many studies which found that there was no significant difference between the different types of feedback (see e.g. Kepner, 1991; Polio, Fleck, & Leder, 1998; Robb, Ross, & Shortreed, 1986; Semke, 1984 and Sheppard, 1992, as cited in Bitchener, Young & Cameron, 2005).

**Research questions and aims**

This research aims to find the effect of feedback in improving students’ writing skills. Throughout the research, it is expected to find to which extent feedback affects students’ writing level and which types of feedback
are effective. For example, the feedback will be on grammar, spelling, punctuation and organization of the paragraph and the researchers are looking forward to investigate whether feedback is effective in all these study concerns or in some of them only. The answers and findings of this research will be useful for future teachers’ practices in improving students’ writing skills.

Methodology

In this study, the participants were 49 female students of grade seven at Aiysha bint Masuod Al Amriya School for Basic Education (7-11). They are from two different classes; class A includes 33 students and class B has 35 students; nineteen students in both classes have been excluded because they were absent in one of the research stages at least or did not bring their pre-test back to the teacher. Most of the participants were Omanis, yet there were some other nationalities such as Sudanese, Iraqi, Egyptian and Pakistani. However, all participants speak Arabic fluently and learn English as a foreign language.

The instrument used to collect data is through experiment which includes three main parts. A pre-test was developed to see students level before giving them the intervention. Second, students were given treatment which is different ways to improve specific skills. A post-test was conducted to observe the effectiveness of the treatment.

The pre-test (see appendix 1) is a narrative writing test in which students were required to write a paragraph of 60 words with the use of six pictures and eight important words as guide in 40 minutes. The writing papers were corrected by the teachers who gave each student a written feedback as one way (treatment) to improve students' narrative writing. In addition, the teachers allocated a whole lesson, which is 40 minutes, to give oral feedback on students' writing. During the feedback lesson, students were given their papers back and were asked to read the comments. The teachers gave students a model writing (see appendix 2) and asked them to look at their papers to compare. After that, the teacher highlighted the common mistakes and errors among students in the board. The post-test (see appendix 3) was a similar narrative writing given to students after one day.
The researchers did not face a lot of challenges to design and choose the pre- and post-test. The only difficulty was during the lesson of treatment. Although students were told that their scores might be better in the second test so the teachers would help them if they got higher mark, some students were not interested in giving them feedback on their writing. In addition, there was a lack of discipline in one of the classes. It is worth to mention that the curriculum of grade 7 needs time to be finished, so the teachers found difficulty to allocate lessons for implementing the experiment. They planned to give students feedback on two lessons, but they could do it in one lesson only.

**Results**

The experiment has been implemented in two different classes of grade seven students. The results of each class will be reported and discussed in one section.

**Class (A) Results**

Since this study is experimental, students were given a pre-test which is a narrative writing test. Then, they were given the treatment; class (A) students had different treatments which are written feedback to each student, oral feedback for the whole class and a model writing provided during the treatment lesson. These ways had been used to investigate whether feedback influences students' writing accuracy positively in the post-test. The pre- and post-tests' grades were compared, in addition to the comments given in the pre-test. Students made errors and mistakes of different levels. In table (1), the types and frequency of students' errors are reported.

**Table 1: Types and frequency of students' errors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The error</th>
<th>Number of students (pre-test)</th>
<th>Improved (post-test)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capital letters</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The correct tense of writing (past)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*Tried :2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double subjects</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double verbs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The effect of feedback is divided into three categories: improvement, tried but not fully succeeded and no improvement (see table 2). Since twenty-six students only participated in the experiment, collecting data was manual. The number of students whose writing improved was 18; six of them got better mark in the post-test. Most of the improvements (see table 1) were in length, punctuation and capital letters, which are easy to observe, understand and correct. Although spelling correction was clear in their written feedback, only one student out of eight got improved in spelling. It is worth to mention that those eight students wrote the same wrong spelling words in both tests. Moreover, students who wrote ill-formed sentences found it difficult to write full clear ones. This might be attributed to the complexity of writing a full sentence for those who have not understood how to write it yet. In addition, they might not read the feedback nor they were paying attention during the lesson of treatment.

Table 2: The effect of feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improvement</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>change in mark</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no change in mark</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tried but not fully succeeded</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No improvement</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be concluded that the oral and written feedback affects students writing accuracy positively.

Class (B) Results
Manual analysis was also used for the second class’ results. Twenty-three students were given written and oral feedback as a treatment after the first writing test. Table (3) below shows the common different errors that students made and the written feedback were provided on them. It also illustrates the number of students who received these feedbacks and who improved. It is clear that the highest improvement is in using full stops, writing capital letters and writing a paragraph long enough because 54%, 60% and 50% of students have improved on them respectively. In contrast, only one student in each of using the correct past tense, spelling and writing full clear sentences has improved. Therefore, it can be concluded that students’ easy errors can be modified by giving feedback. It is worth to mention that most of the students who improved on subject-verb agreement and using the correct past tense are the good students who usually got high marks in writing.

Table (4) below shows the improvement of students in the final grade. It can be said that some students have improved in some aspects but their final mark did not change because they made some other mistakes. In addition, two students got less marks and this could be due to some external factors. However, one of them is a good student who got 5 out of 5 in the first test and got only 3 this time and this can be because the student became confused after the feedback lesson. In addition, the number of students who got the same marks includes the students who got the full mark in both tests, but their writings improved. It is clear that there is significant improvement in students’ writing accuracy in both results of the two classes which indicates that feedback affects positively on students' writing accuracy.

**Table 3 :Types and frequency of students' errors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The error</th>
<th>Number of students (pre-test)</th>
<th>Improved (post-test)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capital letters</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The correct tense of writing (past)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double subjects</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double verbs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation (full stop)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject-verb agreement</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4: The effect of feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improvement</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Got less marks</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same mark</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

As mentioned before, 49 students from different classes were given a treatment for their writing errors as feedback. The types of feedback were written and oral in which the teachers wrote comments for each student’s writing and gave a lesson where they commented on students’ mistakes and corrected them. These feedbacks can also be described as direct feedback as Ferris and Roberts (2001) stated, because the teachers gave the corrections for the students. In addition, it is coded, since students are told what the problem with their writing is (Ferris and Roberts, 2001).

The results of the experiment show the same result in both classes. There is a significant influence of feedback in students’ writing accuracy, especially in the simple errors such as using full stops, writing capital letters, and writing a long paragraph as it was required. The findings contradicted with Truscott (1996) and Gue´nette (2007) who claimed that feedback has no positive effects on students’ writing accuracy. However, Gue´nette (2007) mentioned that feedback could work with good students more often than low achieving students which agrees with this experiment’s findings. Most of the good students avoid making the mistakes which they made in the first writing text. This may be attributed to the fact that not all students read the feedback given by the teacher, whereas good students always care about teachers' comments. The obvious improvement in students writing accuracy concurs with Chandler (2003) findings that direct feedback is one
of the best way for accurate revision. The findings of this study also go in line with the research of Bitchener, Young and Cameron (2005) and others as they claimed that feedback impacts significantly on the students writing accuracy. In brief, feedback is essential for students especially in writing to know what they need to do to improve their skills in writing. Giving students a clean corrected paper which only includes the mark does not help them to get improved.

**Conclusion**

In this study, the effectiveness of giving feedback after writing tests was investigated. Ninety-four students of grade seven participated and were given written and oral feedback after a pre-test which is a narrative writing. After that, their performance in the post-test was analysed. Findings show that there is a clear positive influence of feedback on students’ writing accuracy which most of the studies agree with.

There are some limitations on the research because of certain circumstances. One of them is the absence of the control group. It was supposed to test another class for two times with the same writing tests which were used in the experiment to compare between the two groups. In addition, the feedback was given to students verbally only in 40 minutes and that was not enough to cover all the students’ mistakes and comment on them. However, teachers could not take another lesson for more feedback, because they were late in curriculum and had to complete the book lessons. For further research, it is much better to give continuous and intensive feedback through whole semester or many lessons. It would also be interesting if the researchers can compare between specific ways of feedback to investigate the most effective way among them for the students in Oman.

Since the study concludes that written and oral feedbacks affect students' writing accuracy positively, teachers should use this technique and provide their students with feedback. In fact, teachers in Oman are not required to write any feedback for students. They just evaluate the students’ papers based on their general writing without specific criteria or written feedback. The students usually throw it! Since it works in Oman, teachers who care about their students’ level and improvement should provide students with written feedback or at least oral feedback in general after the test. In
addition, it will be such a great decision for the Ministry of Education to consider providing feedback as one of teachers’ missions or at least to encourage teachers to practice it. In addition, teachers must raise students’ awareness of the importance of the provided feedback and encourage them to read, try to improve it and ask about any difficult matter in language use.

Reference


Appendix – 1

Pre-test
Appendix -2

Treatment

1. Written feedback for each student

(an example)

Good Humans,

I liked the details in the story. Good imagination.

- Use full stop between the sentences instead of comma.
- Clouds were warm they asked although.
- Spelling: they
- Use past tense: became/asked didn’t.

One day, Ali and Sara went to India. They wanted to go to Taj Mahal. Suddenly, it was raining so they could not walk to Taj Mahal. Then, Ali saw a bus and the bus stopped for them. The driver took them to Taj Mahal. Sara and Ali were happy and they don’t know how to think the driver. As they arrived to Taj Mahal, Sara and Ali wanted to see Taj Mahal again.

2. Model writing

One day, Ali and Sara went to India. They wanted to go to Taj Mahal. Suddenly, it was raining so they could not walk to Taj Mahal. Then, Ali saw a bus and the bus stopped for them. The driver took them to Taj Mahal. Sara and Ali were very happy. Finally, they arrived at Taj Mahal and it was very big and nice.
Appendix - 3

Post-test
GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Oman Journal of ELT welcomes articles that

1. Reflect the contexts of English Language Centers in the Colleges of Technology,
2. Find solution(s) to the problems of teaching and learning EFL in Oman,
3. Introduce innovative teaching techniques,
4. Deal with reflective teaching which draw on both teachers' experience and theory of ELT,
5. Discuss materials designing, and technology-aided teaching.

PARTICIPANTS SHOULD CONSIDER CAREFULLY THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA

- Dealing with the main concepts and theories clearly.
- Using a wide range of appropriate sources and integrating the key ideas from the sources into a coherent and analytical framework.
- Examining the issues from more than one perspective.
- Outlining and specifying the limitations of the main implications of theory for policy and/or practice.
- Having clear research questions.
- Justifying the data collection method.
- Having clear research findings, conclusion and evaluation.
- Having a consistent quality of the writing, expression of ideas and references required for publication.

GUIDELINES TO SUBMIT ARTICLES

Articles should

- not have been published previously,
- be between 1000 and 3000 words,
- be typed using Times New Roman, font size 11, with single line spacing,
- have all hyperlinks in the article and in the References deleted,
- conform to the latest edition of the MLA style manual,
- use sub-headings.
The Title of the submission should contain
- The title of the paper,
- The first name and surname of the author,
- Position and affiliation,
- Current mailing address,
- Abstract of the paper in not more than 200 words, font size 12.

DEADLINE
Final date for submission of articles is December 15th, 2019.
Please Email your articles to C. Kodhandaraman at: raman@ict.edu.om
00968-99848627.