



# TESOL KUWAIT JOURNAL

Volume 1 Issue 2

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## Teacher Reflection and Professional Development

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### Abstract

Language teachers need to continue their professional development. Teacher reflection helps develop teaching, learning and professional development. Language teachers should be open to and responsible for language teaching and student learning. Teacher reflection should be deliberate, purposeful and structured. Reflection-for-action, reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action are different types of teacher reflection. Shared planning, peer observation, self-reports, autobiographies, and journal writing are some of different approaches for teacher reflection that help language teachers teach, reflect on and develop their thoughts and practices. There are five cyclical steps of teacher reflection, mapping, informing, contesting, appraising and acting.

**Keywords:** teacher reflection, professional development, Arab identity

**Cite as:** Omara, S. (2023). Teacher reflection and professional development. *TESOL Kuwait Journal*, 1(2), 4-7. [https://tesolkuwait.net/resources/Documents/Volume\\_1\\_Issue\\_2.pdf](https://tesolkuwait.net/resources/Documents/Volume_1_Issue_2.pdf)

### Introduction

Teacher professional development is very important; it helps develop language teaching and learning processes. To help develop teaching and learning, language teachers should start individual, peer and group reflection. Gnawali (2008) thinks that reflection helps teachers to “understand themselves, their practices and their learners” (p. 69). As teachers deliver face-to-face, online or blended teaching, they should keep reflecting on and developing their practices. Reflective teachers should be open-minded and their reflection should help link theory and practice. There are different types and approaches to teacher reflection; they help develop more solutions for more emerging challenges. Therefore, they help continue teacher professional development

### Reflective Practice

Reflection is a key requirement for teacher professional development. It is the process that helps language teachers to question their everyday practice. Teachers work individually and in communities of practice to check what went well and what would be better in case it would be conducted differently. Reflection helps teachers to develop their performance through learning from their professional practices. It goes beyond checking previous practices into future improvements. It is beneficial for both pre-service and in-service language teachers. Bailey (1997) thinks that “reflective teaching is extremely valuable as a stance, a state of mind, a healthy, questioning attitude toward the practice of our profession” (p. 15).

Teacher reflection should be deliberate, purposeful, structured, and linking theory and practice. Teachers should practice reflection consciously and purposefully; they reflect because they need to develop both teaching and learning. Through reflection, teachers should link theory and practice by

checking lesson plans and practices in a structured approach. They should reflect on teaching in order to develop students' learning. They should reflect to help change and develop teaching, learning and school practices. There are some principles of reflective practice. Reflective practice is evidence-based; when teachers reflect on their practices, they use evidence to develop practical insights. It involves dialogue; teachers communicate with peers to give, get and reflect on constructive, developmental and non-judgmental feedback. It explores beliefs and practices; teachers' beliefs impact on their teaching practices, therefore it is beneficial to explore such beliefs and their impact on practices. It is a way of life; it helps teachers, educators and professionals to get used to reflection as a part of their personal and professional behaviors and development.

Reflective teachers should be open-minded, responsible and wholehearted. To be open-minded, teachers should have a desire to get, reflect on and act upon different feedback and insights from others including students and peers. They should pay much attention to different possibilities and experiences. They should accept the possibility of errors. To be responsible, teachers should be fully aware of the possible consequences of their actions and practices in classrooms and schools. Therefore, they should plan, reflect on and act upon their teaching continuously. To be wholehearted, they should help to develop teaching, learning and professional development. To develop open-mindedness and responsibility is to develop wholeheartedness.

There are different types of teacher reflection; reflection-for-action, reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. They all help teachers practice critical thinking and continue professional development. Killion and Todnem (1991) think that reflection-for-action and reflection-on-action help teachers analyze previous practices and develop future ones (p. 14). Reflection-for-action refers to teacher reflection on how to relate language teaching content to students' lives. Language teachers reflect on how plan, design and deliver differentiated instruction that meet students' learning needs and profiles. They ask themselves reflective questions such as (How can I best meet my students' needs in this lesson? How will I assess my students' learning during this lesson?). Reflection-in-action refers to teacher reflection on thoughts, actions and practices during teaching. It helps develop decision making, responsibility and accountability. During lessons, teachers ask themselves some reflective questions such as (Are students engaged in this task? Are students learning?). Reflection-on-action refers to teacher reflection on their teaching by the end of lessons or units. It helps teachers analyze and criticize their lessons critically in order to develop language teaching and learning processes and practices. By the end of lessons or units, teachers ask themselves reflective questions such as (How did the lesson go? How would I change my teaching the next time?).

### **Reflective Cycle**

According to Bartlett (1990), the reflective cycle consists of five steps. They are “mapping, informing, contesting, appraising and acting” (p. 209). At the mapping step, teachers observe their own teaching. They collect different evidences about their teaching by using different techniques. They answer the question, “What do we do as teachers?”. At the informing step, they look for the meaning behind teaching plans they have developed in the previous step by sharing their plans with peers. they answer the question, “What is the meaning of our teaching?”. At the contesting step, they try to find underlying reasons for their theory and practice. They answer the question, “How did we come this way?”. At the appraising step, they continue to find out teaching

alternatives. They answer the question, “How might we teach differently?”. At the acting step, they act according to the reflective insights they have developed throughout the reflective cycle steps. They answer the question, “What and how shall we teach?”. They should go on this cycle to keep reflective practice, teaching improvement and sustainable professional development.

There are some misconceptions on teacher reflection. Some teachers think that reflection takes too much time. However, they can do reflection on action during teaching. Some teachers think that reflection focus is on teachers only. However, reflection helps to develop teaching, learning and teacher professional development as well. Some teachers think that reflection is a negative practice or process. However, reflection is a cyclical process that helps to have positive and developmental impact on teachers and students. Some teachers think that reflection is an individual process. However. There are different collaborative approaches and techniques for reflection.

Reflective practice is beneficial for teachers, students, educational leaders and supervisors. It helps to develop confident teachers who keep reflecting on and developing their practices. It helps to make sure teachers are responsible for themselves and their students as well throughout teaching and learning processes. It helps to encourage innovation as reflective teachers find out, develop and implement innovative solutions for different challenges. It helps to encourage engagement of teachers and communities of practice using different individual and collaborative reflective practice approaches and techniques. These approaches and techniques help teachers to get, give, share, reflect on and act upon feedback.

### **Reflective Approaches**

There are different approaches for teacher reflection. Reflection in action is teacher reflection during teaching. It happens during the lesson, so it helps to change practice at the time of teaching. Reflection on action is teacher reflection after teaching. It happens after the lesson, so it helps to develop practice for the future. There are different techniques for teachers to reflect on their teaching. They are shared planning, peer observation, self-reports, autobiographies, journal writing, collaborative diary and recording lessons.

- Shared planning helps teachers to reflect on teaching and learning by getting support from peers to plan lessons together.
- Peer observation helps teachers to go through each other’s teaching. Therefore, they get critical reflection on their teaching.
- Self-reports help teachers to reflect on teaching by completing inventories or checklists that highlight their teaching practices during lessons.
- Autobiographies help teachers to reflect on teaching by keeping reflective and narrative records of their teaching professional experiences and progress. They help teachers to track the most and least effective aspects and possible future modifications of teaching.
- Journal writing helps teachers to reflect on teaching and professional development by keeping regular accounts of learning, teaching and professional development experiences. It helps teachers to reflect, share and check back from time to time to see how different

experiences, events, interactions and sessions develop personal professional development. Journals can be written or virtual.

- Recording lessons helps teachers to reflect on teaching and professional development by keeping audio or video recording of different lessons. Audio or video recordings help to record the moment-to-moment teaching processes as many things happen simultaneously in the classroom.

Critical analysis helps teachers to reflect on teaching and learning by answering and reflecting on specific teaching situations or practices. Teachers analyze a situation or practice in order to develop future performance.

### **Conclusion**

Teacher reflection is a key for teaching, learning and professional development. It is beneficial for teachers, students, educational leaders and supervisors. It helps to link both theory and practice. Individual, peer and group reflection help teachers check how they teach and how they could teach differently for future improvement. Teacher reflection should go systematically through a cycle of different steps. It helps to develop reflective teachers who are open-minded, responsible and wholehearted. Reflective teachers are highly interested in and responsible for teaching, learning and professional development. They help to initiate and sustain school improvement and education change and development across classrooms and schools.

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## Out-of-Class Exposure and EFL Kuwaiti Learners' Vocabulary Acquisition

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### Abstract

The research aim of this study is to investigate how often EFL Kuwaiti learners are exposed to English language media and ESL activities outside of the classroom. Also, it examines whether their current exposure to English is related to the learners' vocabulary knowledge. Finally, it explored whether gender and length of formal instruction affect Kuwaiti learners' vocabulary learning. Data was gathered from 42 EFL participants from various academic institutions. They were administrated by an updated vocabulary levels test (UVLT) and a questionnaire. The findings confirm that EFL Kuwaiti learners are frequently exposed to English media outside of the classroom. The results also indicate a high positive correlation between their vocabulary knowledge and subtitled/non-subtitled TV viewing as an out-of-class activity. Lastly, it was found that gender affects the learners' vocabulary knowledge, yet the length of formal instruction had no significant effect. Further research in the future could explore vocabulary knowledge in more depth with a mixed-method approach.

**Keywords:** English as a foreign language (EFL), vocabulary acquisition, Kuwaiti EFL learners

**Cite as:** Baqer, S. (2023). Out-of-Class Exposure and EFL Kuwaiti Learners' Vocabulary Acquisition. *TESOL Kuwait Journal*, 1(2), 8-20.

[https://tesolkuwait.net/resources/Documents/Volume\\_1\\_Issue\\_2.pdf](https://tesolkuwait.net/resources/Documents/Volume_1_Issue_2.pdf)

### Introduction

To the author's knowledge, there has not been a study that documents exploring the relationship between out-of-class exposure and Kuwaiti learners' English vocabulary knowledge as an exploratory study. It is worth noting, however, that most of these studies were conducted on children and young adult learners of English. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the impact on adult learners above the age of 25 who have already graduated from university. In line with Peter's (2018) framework, this paper attempts to explore the diverse types of input students may be exposed to outside the classroom which may aid in helping them learn English autonomously. The influence of these types of linguistic input on the vocabulary development of English on EFL Kuwaiti speakers will be examined, as well as the frequency of EFL Kuwaiti learners' exposure to English language media outside the classroom. This paper also aims to explore whether the learners' exposure to out-of-classroom media correlates to their existing vocabulary knowledge. Finally, this project will test whether the length of instruction in English and gender may be variables impacting their vocabulary. To the author's knowledge, there have not been any studies that explore the types of incidental learning modes students relied on when learning a second language in Kuwait such as TV viewing, extensive listening, and social media



networks. Therefore, this research aims to fill the gap and hopefully encourage educators to embrace those mediums of implicit input by integrating it within the classroom.

Q1: How often are EFL Kuwaiti learners exposed to English language media outside of the classroom?

Q2: Does the learners' exposure to out-of-classroom media correlates to their existing vocabulary knowledge?

Q3: To what extent are the length of formal instruction in English and gender potential variables impacting their vocabulary knowledge?

## **Methodology**

The quantitative methodological approach will be used in this study to examine how often the participants are exposed to English outside the classroom as well as their daily engagement with the language. It also intends to investigate the relationship between vocabulary learning and the Kuwaiti EFL learner out-of-class exposure and extramural activities, therefore a quantitative method will provide “a structured and regulated approach to achieve the macro perspective” (Dörnyei, 2007: p. 29). Therefore, questionnaires are instruments used to gather and collect information that provides numerical data (Cohen et al., 2011). Many reasons can explain the choice behind opting for questionnaires for this study. For instance, numerical data are indicated within questionnaires, therefore making them suitable as a choice of instrument. Also, structured questionnaires do not require a lot of time to conduct and complete, thus ensuring that all participants will not withdraw from the study. Lastly, since all participants are located overseas, questionnaires allow a larger number to participate at any given time and place. This is why the questionnaires were distributed electronically via email to all parties in different academic institutions.

The second instrument employed to measure the learners' vocabulary is a written Updated Vocabulary Levels (Webb et al., 2017; Janebi Enayat & Derakshan, 2021). This test “measures receptive vocabulary knowledge at specific frequency levels (1,000-5,000) to provide a more valid and reliable measurement of knowledge of the high-frequency words (Song & Reynolds, 2022: p. 772). The test scores provide insight to both teachers and students about where they currently are and how much is required for them to learn in order to reach the necessary lexical targets, which may result in further motivating them towards learning more vocabulary (Webb, 2021: p. 285). In order to demonstrate which words are required to be learned, these scores also indicate the learners' knowledge of various word frequency levels. (Webb, 2021: p. 288). Thus, vocabulary level tests help in selecting the appropriate materials for L2 learners. As for the participants, 42 Kuwaiti EFL participants from different academic institutions aged 18-36 took part in this study and identified different modes of exposure to English outside of the classroom. Most participants have been receiving instruction in English at the university whether in Kuwait or abroad.

## **Findings**

Ongoing research has indicated that both the amount and type of exposure have a great impact on the EFL learners' vocabulary knowledge (Lindgren & Muñoz, 2013; Kuppens, 2010; González-

Fernández & Schmitt, 2015; Peters, 2018; Peters et al., 2019). This study's findings confirm and suggest that some out-of-class English media outlets may have a higher impact on various aspects of vocabulary knowledge (González-Fernández, 2021: p.40). The findings further confirm that like any other EFL learners, Kuwaitis are mainly exposed to English outside of class through various media outlets such as TV shows, movies, songs, social media, and social interactions, both domestically and internationally. To further elaborate, the frequency statistics show that the most popular activity in which learners are frequently engaged in are online activities which consist of social networking and website browsing. This finding was anticipated since communication and interactions have diversified since the 21<sup>st</sup> century due to the vast development of technology and several media channels. Thus, communication and interaction have become more accessible with a click of a button (Abbas et al., 2019). Also, the innovation of social media platforms has revolutionized people's lives since they are highly interactive, thus impelling a redefining of social roles for both teachers and learners due to the increase of learners' autonomy (Lai, 2017: p.14). On the other hand, the results show that reading activities are the least frequent among the participants, therefore access to written text is more limited when compared to audiovisual input as it is corroborated by previous studies (De Wild et al., 2019; Peters, 2018).

Moreover, Spearman's correlation analysis shows that there is a large positive correlation between the Kuwaiti learners' vocabulary knowledge and two out-of-class exposure activities; subtitled media and non-subtitled media. These findings are corroborated by previous literature that investigated the positive effect of TV viewing on vocabulary acquisition (González-Fernández, 2021; González-Fernández & Schmitt, 2015; Perez, 2020; Peters & Webb, 2018, Puimège & Peters, 2019a). However, interaction with others internationally and domestically and the UVLT total score was negative, thus alluding to the fact it has no significance on their vocabulary learning despite it being a frequent activity that many ESL Kuwaiti learners engage in. In regards to online interactions and online reading were both regarded as insignificant which runs counter to previous findings (González-Fernández & Schmitt, 2015; Peters, 2018).

Furthermore, the study also explored gender and length of instruction as predictors of Kuwaiti L2 learners' vocabulary knowledge. To further illustrate, the results from the UVLT illustrate that the female participants have outscored their male counterparts by viewing their average scores. Therefore, gender as a predictor of the learners' vocabulary knowledge could be confirmed as corroborated by p. Previous research further corroborates my findings as the males achieved higher scores on the vocabulary test than the females which could be due to the former's frequent engagement in gaming (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2014; Sundqvist, 2019; Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012; Puimège and Peters, 2019b; Peters, 2018). Nonetheless, gender remains an insignificant predictor of the learners' vocabulary knowledge according to other studies (Peters et al., 2019; De Wild et al., 2022).

Finally, the results showcase that the number of years of receiving formal instruction in English has no implication on the learners' vocabulary size, therefore it is not a predictable factor on the learners' vocabulary knowledge as depicted in the UVLT scores. These findings were

contradicted by previous studies which indicated a positive correlation between length of instruction, vocabulary knowledge, and out-of-class exposure (Puimège and Peters, 2019; Muñoz, 2011; Peters, 2018).

### Conclusion

In summary, this research investigated how often EFL Kuwaiti learners are exposed to English outside of the classroom and in which type of activities they are frequently engaging in. Next, the research aimed to examine the relationship between the different kinds of out-of-class exposure activities and the learners' vocabulary knowledge. Lastly, this research also aimed to explore how gender and length of instruction affect the learners' vocabulary knowledge. The results have shown that adult EFL Kuwait learners aged 18-36, are frequently exposed to extramural English activities. According to the data analysis, the most frequent types are social networking and website browsing, subtitled and non-subtitled TV viewing, interaction with family and friends, and listening to songs. Moreover, the results also exhibited a positive relationship with the following media outlets: subtitled and non-subtitled TV and movie viewing, listening to songs, and online interaction. Finally, the results indicated that gender was an indicator of the learners' vocabulary knowledge while length of instruction failed to play any significant factor.

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## Saudi EFL Teachers' Perspectives on Implementing Creativity in English Language Teaching

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### Abstract

Promoting creativity and innovation in language teaching has gained increasing importance recently as a critical skill required for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Despite the efforts of the policymakers of the educational system in Saudi Arabia to conduct a genuine reform, the issue still needs further investigation. This study aims primarily to assess Saudi EFL teachers' perspectives on implementing creativity in public secondary schools. It also seeks to identify the barriers hindering creativity implementation and how they can be best addressed. 112 male and female teachers from 27 Saudi cities participated in a questionnaire about creativity in language teaching. Four participants teaching English in different parts of the city of Makkah have been interviewed. The findings of this study revealed that Saudi EFL teachers lack an adequate understanding of creativity and how it can be best fostered in their instructional practices. The study suggests offering on-the-job training sessions for the current EFL teachers and assigning core courses about creativity in universities and colleges to equip new teachers with the most critical tools to enhance real innovation in their teaching practices. Finally, the study suggests further research with different tools and larger scales of subjects to elicit additional findings that could fulfil substantial progress in acquiring English as a foreign language.

**Keywords:** EFL, Saudi teachers, creativity

**Cite as:** Alharbi, F. (2023). Saudi EFL teachers' perspectives in implementing creativity in English language teaching. *TESOL Kuwait Journal* 1(2). 21-55.

[https://tesolkuwait.net/resources/Documents/Volume\\_1\\_Issue\\_1.pdf](https://tesolkuwait.net/resources/Documents/Volume_1_Issue_1.pdf)

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Overview

English is the most widespread lingua franca all over the world. Crystal (2003) clarified that English is considered as a global language that is the top priority taught in so many countries regardless of whether English is used officially or semi-officially. It is the language being predominantly used in almost all fields, including science, politics, economics, media, tourism, and education. Therefore, adequate English competence is the first requirement for most job applications. The recently ongoing changes in societies and cultures due to distinctive aspects of social and communicative media have urged educational institutions to implement new methodologies and adopt innovative pedagogies that are based on creativity in language teaching (Stepanek, 2015). Saudi Arabia is one of the countries that has adopted creativity in teaching English in its educational system through all male and female public schools, with a number of centres and initiatives that will be discussed in detail below.

## **1.2. History of Teaching English in Saudi Arabia**

Saudi Arabia, which was unified in 1932, is a significant case study for two key reasons. First, it is considered as the birthplace of Islam for having the holy places for Muslims in the cities of Makkah and Madinah, which makes millions of Muslims from different parts of the world come at different times during the year to visit these places (Brdesee, Corbitt, & Pittayachawan, 2013). Secondly, Saudi Arabia is one of the largest producers of oil in the world. More than 10% of the world's oil is produced by Saudi Arabia, and around 25% of the world's oil is reserved underneath its sands (Nakov & Nuno, 2013). These two significant factors, and consequently the vast revenue coming out of them, have encouraged the policymakers in Saudi Arabia to invest in the educational system in general, and part of that system is teaching English. Jobs in these two sectors demand that Saudi nationals, who apply to work within these sectors, have an acceptable level of linguistic competence in English to be able to communicate with Muslim pilgrims or oil company workers who come from different parts of the world and use English as a language of communication.

English was first introduced to Saudi Arabia in the 1930s in conjunction with the discovery of oil (Al-Johani, 2009). The ministry of education was established in 1954, and due to the segregation between male and female Saudi students, another agency, which is The General Presidency for Girl's Education, was also established in 1960, yet both genders have had access to the same educational content (Al-Johani, 2009; Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). One of the courses presented to both boys and girls in Saudi public schools is the English language, which is the only foreign language taught there as a compulsory course. In 1943, English was officially adopted as a core course for the intermediate stage (grades 7- 9) and the secondary stage (grades 10 - 12). However, there is a lack of consensus on the exact date of introducing English as a compulsory course in Saudi Arabia, as elaborated in the brief review of Alshahrani (2016). By 2012, English teaching had been included in the top three years of the elementary stages (grades 4-6) in an attempt from the policymakers to expand the teaching of English to fulfil a national policy targeting diversifying the economy and minimising heavy reliance on oil revenue (Faruk, 2013). Finally, in 2021, the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia decided to start teaching English from the first year (students aged six years old) in all public and private schools.

## **1.3. Chronology of English Teaching Methodologies in Saudi Schools**

Since English was introduced in the thirties of the last century, as detailed above, and until the publication of this study, the Ministry of Education and the policymakers in Saudi Arabia have adopted various methodologies determining instructional practices of how this foreign language should be taught and presented to male and female learners,

### **1.3.1. The Grammar Translation Method**

The first methodology implemented in teaching English since it was introduced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the Saudi education system was the grammar-translation method (Alqahtani, 2018). In this old methodology, learners were taught basic grammatical rules of the target language and given exercises, while the language used for communication in the classroom was the first language (Al-Nofaie, 2010). The main criticism against this style of learning could be its heavy

reliance on grammatical accuracy at the expense of enhancing language learners' abilities of fluency and communicative competence. Moreover, this classical and traditional method might be argued to diminish the ability of language learners to get actively enrolled in real communication beyond the limits of classrooms due to the teacher-centeredness prevalent in this method (Abdulkader, 2016). Consequently, the failure of this method in preparing learners to perform more effectively in real-life situations urged the policymakers in Saudi Arabia to change it to another one believed to overcome the drawbacks noticed in the grammar-translation method (Abahussain, 2016). Therefore, The Audiolingual Method was decided to be the alternative.

### **1.3.2. The Audio-Lingual Method**

In an attempt to improve oral skills among Saudi students, new textbooks of English were introduced with full adoption of the audiolingual method. Like the grammar-translation method, Alqahtani (2018) states that the audiolingual method was predominantly teacher-centred in the Saudi context. He explains that the teacher was still the central part of the learning process in terms of modelling, guiding dialogues, and correcting students' performance, which in turn, has made language learners heavily reliant on their teachers and, thus, less likely to develop a further communicative ability autonomously.

### **1.3.3. Communicative Language Teaching**

In a practical response to the inefficacy and passivity of traditional teaching methods towards enhancing Saudi students' communicative abilities, and to overcome that, The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia has adopted a new approach, which is Communicative Language Teaching. The shift to include the implementation of the new style started in 1981 to prepare the students in public schools to be lifelong learners who can utilise and exploit the acquired language in real-life situations beyond schools' limits (Alqahtani, 2018).

## **1.4. Saudi Agencies Adopting Creativity**

For over twenty years, there have been some calls for integrating innovation and creativity in the education system, which has been believed to have a positive impact in terms of globalisation, prosperity, and educational progress. Below is a brief summary of three key initiatives: Mawhiba, Tatweer, and the Saudi Vision 2030.

### **1.4.1. Mawhiba**

Mawhiba is an Arabic word, and the best equivalent word for it in English is "giftedness". Mawhiba is an expression used in Saudi Arabia to refer to a government-funded organisation known as "King Abdulaziz and His Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity". The organisation, which was established in 1999, has set its primary goal mainly to identify gifted students in order to offer them the best knowledge that suits and meets their needs (Alamer, 2014). Despite the government announcement that the plans of this entity are based mainly on fostering creativity, giftedness, and innovation, the gifted students have still studied in the same public schools, with the same curricula that any student has, and they have been taught by the same teachers who are not potentially well-trained to address and treat the needs of such special students for the quality of teachers is argued to play a significant role in learners' progress and achievements (Finley, 2008). Although Mawhiba was the first organisation in Saudi Arabia to

use the term creativity in its mission and goals, there was an urgent need to develop more efficient initiatives to foster creativity and innovation in the Saudi education system.

#### **1.4.2. Tatweer**

Tatweer is also another Arabic word which means a development in English. It is a program founded in 2012 with plenty of projects and initiatives. As a matter of fact, Saudi Arabia's accession to the World Trade Organisation in 2005, as well as the need to prepare Saudi nationals who are well-qualified and have adequate skills to meet the standards of the labour market, have urged the policymakers in Saudi Arabia to conduct a fundamental reform targeting the education system (Tayan, 2017). The educational phase of this program was meant to address the central role of education institutions as isolated entities by transferring them into more decentral ones that have genuine partnerships with other community sectors and enable such schools to implement innovation (Alyami, 2014). The five-year period program, implemented first in twenty-five secondary schools for male students and the same for female ones, has aimed mainly to develop the curricula taught, provide on-the-job training for the teachers, and improve the environment of the target schools by turning these schools into completely digital ones (Alghamdi, 2019). Therefore, all teachers were offered the necessary tools, including smart boards, laptops, projectors, and online platforms, to help them prepare their lessons and design further extra-curricular activities. To assess innovation in the schools where this program was implemented, the results showed a potential improvement in the performance of the students in this regard. In a study conducted by Alyami (2014), the participants affirmed that the students in these schools became more self-confident, depended on themselves to conduct original research of their own and gained further communicative skills like debating, negotiating, and expressing their opinions freely. Yet, according to the same study, the program was costly, which made it difficult to generalise. Generally, the program has not reflected the positive outcomes set and expected by the reformers (Allmnakrah & Evers, 2020).

#### **1.4.3. The Saudi Vision 2030**

In 2016, Saudi Arabia announced two promising projects to diversify its economic sources and prosper the nation. These two projects are The National Transformation Program 2020 and the Saudi Vision 2030. As a roadmap for a new Saudi Arabia, the two programs have targeted all ministries and sectors, including education. Concerning the latter, thirty-six initiatives have been launched to foster the education system covering almost all aspects of educational development like teachers' training, learning, quality of pedagogy, school buildings, teaching burdens, and establishment of various specialised centres (Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2018). Two of these initiatives, relevant to the theme of this study, were enhancing student-centeredness and lifelong learning and sustainability to equip the students with the necessary skills to be effective participants within their area and globally (Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2018). The recent reform embedded in the Saudi Vision 2030 targeting education has referred clearly to the importance of including critical thinking and high-order thinking skills in the instruction as well as making schools convenient environments where students can feel free and confident to innovate and produce meaningful outcomes (Allmnakrah & Evers, 2020).



## 1.5. Rationale and Purpose of the Study

Based on the belief that creativity might have a significant role in improving the overall level of language learners and second language acquisition and due to the lack of studies conducted to measure the perception of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia about creativity in language teaching, this dissertation project investigates the factors related to the theme. The study is believed to align with the governmental efforts of the policymakers in Saudi Arabia, aiming at developing the overall level of the students in the English Language based on the fact that it is the primary language in almost all fields and the only foreign language taught in public schools in Saudi Arabia.

The study is also raising creativity and innovation and investigating possible ways of fostering such methods, which go hand in hand with the governmental desire to enhance practical and novel trends in language teaching instead of theoretical and rote styles of learning. Most significantly, creativity might be argued to have a positive impact on second language acquisition and language learners' overall proficiency. Based on that, this study assesses the perspectives of male and female Saudi EFL teachers on implementing creativity in English language teaching in public secondary schools in Saudi Arabia. The project aims to investigate Saudi EFL teachers' understanding of creativity in language teaching, the barriers facing implementing it, and the possible solutions. As detailed below in "The Discussion Section", this study addresses some of the gaps noticed in previous literature investigating Saudi teachers' perception of creativity as it:

1. includes both male and female Saudi teachers,
2. includes all cities of Saudi Arabia, and is not restricted to a specific city, and
3. targets four different sub-scales to meet the objectives outlined.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Definitions of Creativity

Based on how dynamic creativity is, it seems complicated to find an agreed-upon definition that includes all of its aspects (Maley, 2015). Therefore, there is a noticeable lack of consensus on one explicit definition throughout many previous studies concerning creativity in language teaching. Since 1950, when J. P. Guilford, the president of the American Psychological Association, announced that there was an apparent lack of research targeting creativity and called during his presidential address to assess creativity as an intellectual function, many attempts from various scholars and theorists have been emerged to determine the specific features of the construct of this notion (Almeida, Prieto, Ferrando, Oliveira, & Ferrándiz, 2008).

In a review of 42 explicit definitions and 120 collocations, Kamylyis and Valtanen (2010) stated that the concept of creativity has transferred through three different stages historically: "creating from nothing, creating from something, and creating from anything" (p. 209). Attempting to define creativity, several scholars have adopted different approaches from the middle of the last century until today. Some of them linked creativity with novelty that results in valuable actions and behaviours (Boone & Hollingsworth, 1990; Eisenberger, Haskins, & Gambleton, 1999; Mumford & Gustafson, 1988; Seltzer & Bentley, 1999; Stein, 1953). Others have looked at creativity as uniqueness in generating products (Rogers, 1954; Welsch, 1981). Effectiveness in producing novel ideas was also determined as a distinguishing feature of creativity (Bruner,

1962; Cropley & Urban, 2000). Others have found that creativity is mainly about combining and reforming existing ideas and skills (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Koestler, 1964). To other researchers, creativity has meant problem-solving through locating gaps in different sources of knowledge and identifying reasonable ways of connecting unrelated parts for the sake of reaching informed results (Corsini, 1999; Feist & Barron, 2003; Parkhurst, 1999; Torrance, 1966). Originality has been the basis of creativity as defined by Ochse and Ochse (1990), Sternberg and Lubart (1999), Van Hook and Tegano (2002) and Vernon (1989). Finally, Herrmann (1996) has focused on the ability of taking risks to be creative, while it has been seen as an individuals' imaginative capacity to come up with valuable results, as reported by Futures (1999). A summary of all these different definitions of creativity is shown in figure 1 below.

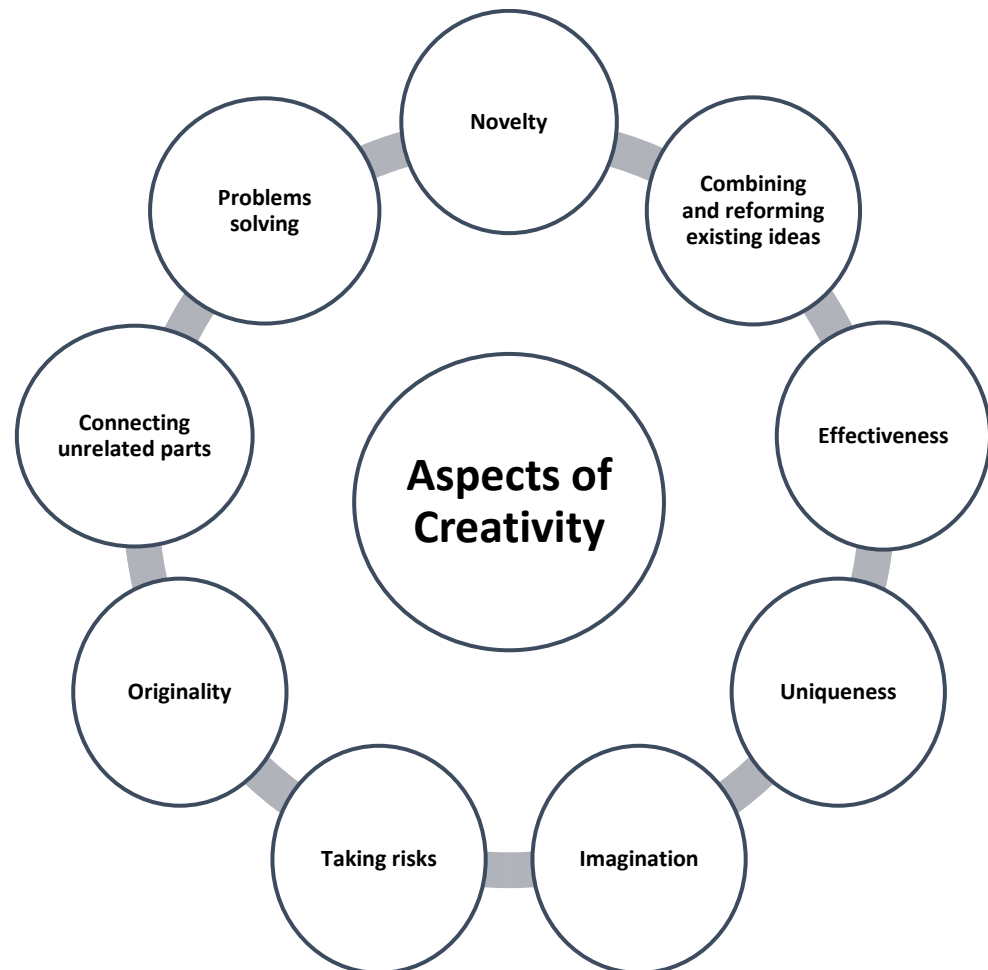


Figure 1: Aspects of creativity

## 2.2. The Four C Model of Creativity

The Four C Model of Creativity serves and is considered as four different types of creativity (Thompson, 2017). In response to previous investigations, in which creativity was restricted under two main domains: the little-c, represented in actions conducted by almost all kinds of people in everyday situations, and the big-C, expressed in prominent attitudes and behaviours within renowned creators and legends, Kaufman and Beghetto (2009) proposed broadening this partition, and consequently, they introduced The Four C Model of Creativity. To them, there is a

potential for other types of creativity existing between the Big-C and little-c classification. According to Kaufman and Beghetto (2009), such a limitation should be addressed, and thus, the mini-c was included in the distinction to bridge the gap between the Big-C and the little-c. Apparently, covering all nuances between two types of creativity, either big or little, might be useless or inadequate (Helfand, Kaufman, & Beghetto, 2016). For example, how should innovative achievements done by normal individuals be best classified? Will such achievements be considered little-c just because these individuals are not famous? Addressing such queries, the mini-c construct, which focuses on the intrapersonal features of individuals, interprets the way in which learners can process the knowledge they receive into meaningful and innovative actions (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007). Therefore, the mini-c construct was thought to create new horizons for educators and scholars in determining creativity within learning environments.

Research for possible categories has not stopped by the inclusion of the mini-c construct for reasonable consideration. In some cases, some individuals come up with outstanding acts within their professions or crafts. Still, they cannot be treated as genius figures to be illegible for attaining the big-c class, nor can they be included in the little-c category either, then the fourth category, which is the Pro-c domain, might be the right place where they should be placed (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009). More importantly, despite the fact that the cultural factor was neglected and not mentioned in this model, it might be possible for any individual to upgrade from one category of creativity within the model into another. Yet, the duration of this transition is debatable and relies mainly on the type of training, the quality of work, and the ability to reflection (Helfand et al., 2016).

### **2.3. Creativity in Language Teaching**

There might be an apparent consensus among educators and specialists throughout a variety of literature that implementing creativity would facilitate the process of learning and help advance the progress of learning outcomes. The ongoing cultural and societal changes have contributed to moving inevitably to further creative and innovative styles of pedagogy as the merely traditional roles of both language teachers and learners have changed into a straightforward sort of partnership (Stepanek, 2015). Creative teachers are believed to be more independent and flexible thinkers who can predict and diagnose learning difficulties and, thus, create and tailor practical solutions (Constantinides, 2015). According to Guilford (1967), creativity is a set of abilities that is based on fluency, flexibility, elaboration, and originality, all of which serve to enhance divergence in problem-solving. Creative teachers are capable of producing a variety of original ideas and developing previous understanding. Such capacity of divergence might be argued to provide practical solutions and help facilitate learning among the students.

When implementing creativity, students have a broader room to express original ideas and connect the knowledge acquired at school with further skills derived from other cultures, especially if the classroom offers a vivid atmosphere that allows the students to take risks and express their views freely (Rosenberg, 2015). Providing a positively relaxing climate inside educational institutions might be an encouraging element in supporting overall students production. All students have inner skills and abilities leading them to imagine, create and

produce outstanding outcomes if they are encouraged and supplied with appropriate feedback (Lutzker, 2015). Encouraging students to participate and collaborate with their partners might be reflected positively in generating unpredictable creative acts (Woodward, 2015).

According to Sternberg (2009), and based on “the investment theory” in his study and other older ones done by him and his colleagues, there are six key aspects that should be taken into consideration to better understand what fosters creativity. Firstly, intellectual skills in looking at problems through a creative scope which yield coping with obstacles in untraditional ways. Secondly, having adequate knowledge about the specialisation enables the person to progress and move forward. Thirdly, the ability to use a style of thinking in order to reach an informed decision. Fourthly, types of personalities which tend to take risks. Fifthly, intrinsic motivation, especially if someone loves where and what he studies or works, he is expected to come up with creative and innovative products without even looking for rewards or encouragement. Finally, a supportive environment that encourages creative production rather than hindering its implementation.

#### **2.4. Barriers to Creativity in Language Teaching**

Regardless of what teachers believe about creativity and whether or not they think they are creative, the process of innovation and creativity can sometimes be hindered or blocked by certain factors. Zhou (2012) states that the enhancement of creativity can be developed or blocked by the interaction of personal and environmental elements. Thus, the quantity of innovative and creative productions is affected by this interaction. Rickards and Jones (1987), as cited by Constantinides (2015), reported that creativity could be blocked due to the nature of the educational institution, which adopts rote learning that does not enhance creativity or is run by some personnel who might not believe that creativity should be implemented.

Other factors are related to the individuals themselves, such as lack of strategies or selecting inappropriate ones, personal values rejecting change and leading to rigidity and negative mindsets and teachers’ perception by ignoring specific solutions due to lack of desire or absence of motivation (Constantinides, 2015; Rickards & Jones, 1987). However, there should be a qualitative shift among teachers to help them develop positive mindsets through informed training and promote their views on the importance of implementing creativity and innovation in their teaching practices (Banaji, Cranmer, & Perrotta, 2010). Moreover, blocks related to self-image can be observed when teachers reject trying new methods with their learners due to a lack of self-confidence and fear of failure (Constantinides, 2015; Jain & Sharma, 2012).

In addition, a lack of adequate training targeting teachers could also hinder and minimise their abilities to identify and include the students who have a higher capability of developing creativity, imagination, and innovative acts than their peers (Piske et al., 2016). Creative teachers are known for their efforts in welcoming and supporting new and unexpected ideas developed by their students instead of suppressing them or considering them disruptive, which will pose a negative impact on students’ imaginative capacity and their desire to share and create original ideas (Beghetto, 2010).

## 2.5. Teachers' Perception of Creativity

Needless to say, teachers, like any other class of people, vary in embracing creativity and adopting innovative practices. Meanwhile, their understanding of creativity might not be the same. In other words, some teachers might not know what is meant by creativity, while others might understand it in an inappropriate way. There is a consensus among teachers that creativity is based mainly on imagination, originality and problem-solving. Yet, however, they have a sort of misconception about defining and recognising innovative practices among their students (Kettler, Lamb, Willerson, & Mullet, 2018).

As found in a study undertaken by Westby and Dawson (1995), teachers' concern about managing classrooms might be one of the reasons inhibiting them from recognising creative potential among their students. Another reason beyond that might be teachers' lack of adequate confidence in their efficacy and the pedagogies they follow in presenting the knowledge required to their students, which makes them undermine or dismiss any creative attempt produced by the students (Beghetto, 2009). A study conducted by Fryer and Collings (1991) found that the teachers who have a strong belief in the importance of adopting student-centeredness seemed to be creative and supported innovation more than the teachers who did not.

Based on the views elicited from some surveyed teachers, the factors believed to either develop or hinder their abilities to foster creativity include the availability of the relevant resources, the limits of the freedom given to the teachers, the sufficiency of teaching time, and the method of assessment adopted by the education system; however, the percentage and the type of these factors vary based on the teaching context (Zhou, Shen, Wang, Neber, & Johji, 2013).

## 2.6. Theoretical Framework

For decades, creativity has been a concept and area of interest for many scholars, researchers, and educators, and thus, many theories have emerged and are believed to be underpinning the approach of creativity (Kupers, Lehmann-Wermser, McPherson, & Van Geert, 2019). As proposed by Rhodes (1961), and based on his observations of the interference amongst the various definitions of creativity, the four Ps of creativity, the Person, the Product, the Process, and the Press, might function to understand the actual dimensions of the notion of creativity. This framework, which has mainly been adopted in a wide range of literature concerning creativity, sheds light on critical aspects, including human attitudes and habits, motives behind actions, environmental impact, and original ideas. That is to say; when individuals genuinely desire to change and adopt new ideas, they might be able to produce innovative and authentic products. The same thing applies to those whose working environments support creativity.

Additionally, knowing that creativity can be seen in different levels and types, it might be argued that restricting creative acts between the big-C, represented in the products of genius figures, and the little-c, represented in everyday creative practices of ordinary individuals, need to be revised. Therefore, Beghetto and Kaufman (2007) devised the mini-c to include nascent attempts as observed in children's creative trials (Aldujayn, 2019). Later, in their study, Kaufman and Beghetto (2009) introduced the fourth construct, the pro-c, to include the products of creative people who are not classified as renowned or famous.

Creativity and innovation are linked to some other theories. For instance, it might be argued that creativity is interrelated with metacognitive abilities, especially when it comes to using creative and divergent thinking in solving problems properly and uniquely, which should be taken into consideration by educators when designing new curricula (Hargrove, 2013).

Finally, since creativity, in its essence, is all about progress and moving forward, it might be rational to link it with problem-solving. Despite the differences, they are closely related in the sense that both prioritise novelty in creating new horizons to look at things differently with lots of imagination, persistence, and a real desire to change for the better (Isaksen, Dorval, & Treffinger, 2010). As it might be irrational to restrict defining creativity as mere problem-solving or imagination, the same thing applies to originality and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, all of which are believed to be the main components and facets of creativity (Runco, 1993).

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research Design**

This study comprises the Mixed Method Approach as it includes both qualitative and quantitative measures in collecting and analysing data. Incorporating the description of the data with relevant graphs and tables, as undertaken in the mixed method research, helps researchers meet the needs within their projects and enables them to best cover all the variables included in their studies in an insightful, broad, valid, and feasible way (Creswell, 1999). Furthermore, operationalising triangulation in a given research might be argued to enrich the data analysis, lead to a better understanding and a more inclusive picture of the issues addressed, ensure that each method complements the other, discover any contradiction that may emerge as the study evolves, and strengthen the study's outcomes through the multiplicity of resources used (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). For example, the use of a qualitative method after analysing the responses elicited via a quantitative tool will help unveil any possible contradiction that may occur in the participants' responses in the two methods.

In descriptive survey research, there is no control group, for it has no intervention to measure, no hypothesis set to examine a change or notice a causality and has a 5-Likert scale of agreement (Cook & Cook, 2008). Therefore, this study is best described as non-experimental, descriptive survey research that detects participants' views, attitudes, and behaviours.

From the quantitative point of view, this study is best described as survey research since it includes a numerical basis as a part of data collection. As opposed to previously traditional methods of surveying subjects, and due to the ever-growing use of the internet to gather information, online surveys come as a practical alternative for they allow researchers access many participants easily, save time in reaching thousands of populations, and cost nothing compared with paper-based ones (Wright, 2005). The use of the quantitative method might be argued to extend the findings to a broader population and allow examining relationships between the variables.

#### **3.2. Research Questions**

This study raises three considerable aspects concerning creativity, which are teachers'

perspectives on creativity, barriers, and solutions. They are embedded in two questions as follows:

1. To what extent do Saudi EFL teachers understand what creativity in language teaching means?
2. What hinder(s) implementing creativity in public secondary schools in Saudi Arabia, and how that/those can be overcome?

### 3.3. The participants in the questionnaire

This study was designed for Saudi secondary-stage teachers in public schools and covered both male and female teachers from different cities in Saudi Arabia and with varying experiences of teaching as well. 112 teachers have taken part and completed this questionnaire. As shown in Table 1 below, they were 49 female teachers representing 43.8% and 63 male teachers representing 56.3% of the total frequencies.

		<b>Gender</b>			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	49	43.8	43.8	43.8
	Male	63	56.3	56.3	100.0
	Total	112	100.0	100.0	

Table 1: Gender of the participants

The teachers came from 27 different cities in the whole of Saudi Arabia. All of them clearly typed the city where they teach except two respondents, who probably typed “Saudi” by mistake instead of writing their cities' names. Most of the participants teach in the city of Makkah, with 41 teachers representing 36.6% of the total subjects. The second city, based on the number of participants, was Jeddah, with 18 frequencies representing 16.1%. The rest of the cities varied between one and nine participants, as shown in Table 2.

		City			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Abha	1	.9	.9	.9
	Adham	1	.9	.9	1.8
	Afif	1	.9	.9	2.7
	Al Khobar	1	.9	.9	3.6
	Alahsa	1	.9	.9	4.5
	Aljubail	1	.9	.9	5.4
	Alkharj	1	.9	.9	6.3
	AlQunfuthah	2	1.8	1.8	8.0
	Arar	1	.9	.9	8.9
	Arrass	1	.9	.9	9.8
	Bisha	1	.9	.9	10.7
	Dawadmi	3	2.7	2.7	13.4
	Dhahran	1	.9	.9	14.3
	Hafr Al batin	9	8.0	8.0	22.3
	Hail	1	.9	.9	23.2
	Jazan	2	1.8	1.8	25.0
	Jeddah	18	16.1	16.1	41.1
	Khamis Mushait	2	1.8	1.8	42.9
	Madinah	5	4.5	4.5	47.3
	Makkah	41	36.6	36.6	83.9
	Najran	1	.9	.9	84.8
	Riyadh	8	7.1	7.1	92.0
	Sabya	1	.9	.9	92.9
	Saudi	2	1.8	1.8	94.6
	Taif	2	1.8	1.8	96.4
	Unaizah	1	.9	.9	97.3
	Urdiat North	1	.9	.9	98.2
	Zulfi	2	1.8	1.8	100.0
Total		112	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Participants cities

Based on the participants' teaching experience, the highest percentage was for teachers who have been teaching for 16 years or more. They were 63, representing 56.3%. The lowest was for those with 5 years or less in their career. It was 8%, only representing 9 teachers. For the other 40 teachers, they were divided equally between 6-10 years and 11-15 years: 20 teachers, 17.9% per each class, as shown in Table 3.



		<b>Experience</b>			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 - 5 years	9	8.0	8.0	8.0
	11 - 15 years	20	17.9	17.9	25.9
	16 years or more	63	56.3	56.3	82.1
	6 - 10 years	20	17.9	17.9	100.0
	Total	112	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Participants' experience in years

### 3.4. Instrument

#### 3.4.1. Questionnaire

A 23-statement Google Form questionnaire was designed to measure the constructs of the study. Such forms are easy to access by the participants using their smartphones or computers. It was administered to the target subjects by posting the link of the questionnaire on some forums, platforms, and social media such as Twitter, Telegram, and WhatsApp in an attempt to collect as many responses as possible. Having taught English in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, for many years, the researcher has forwarded the link to his former colleagues (teachers and supervisors) with whom he still has direct contact.

#### 3.4.2. Semi-structured Interviews

The researcher's previous job was in the city of Makkah, which enabled him to have direct contact with the interviewees. Therefore, after the completion of the questionnaire, 4 teachers from 4 different secondary schools located in 4 different parts of Makkah were interviewed. For the privacy of the interviewees, they have been given various pseudonyms. Ali has taught in the south of Makkah for more than 30 years. Hani has taught in the west of Makkah for 28 years. Sami has taught in the east of Makkah for 19 years, and Rami has taught in the north of Makkah for 20 years. The interviews were held on a one-on-one basis through Microsoft Teams and were recorded. Eight questions concerning the sub-scales addressed throughout the study were predetermined, and the others were not planned, as usually done in semi-structured interviews.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

A spreadsheet has been generated from Google Forms as an Excel format and used in SPSS to produce descriptive statistics in frequency tables for the variables examined. After that, all the items of each sub-scale were combined in a separate table to simplify presenting and understanding them in the result section. As for the responses elicited through the semi-structured interviews, they were coded manually. This is descriptive survey research, and thus, there is no control group, for it has no intervention to measure and no hypothesis set to examine a change or notice a causality or correlation. Therefore, the study does not include any inferential statistics.

### 3.6. Ethical Considerations

Prior to collecting data, the researcher had completed the Ethics Application Form (Appendix

A), including recruitment and consent procedures as well as data protection. There are no serious concerns regarding ethical considerations, for all the participants have been EFL teachers for a long time, as detailed above, and thus, can give their consent by themselves and understand English well. Therefore, no translation has been needed for any document concerning ethical considerations, so the research tools used in this study have been conducted totally in English. Before interviewing the participants, each one of them had received an information sheet (Appendix B) containing the title and objective of the research as well as the contact information of both the researcher and the supervisor. The information sheet explains in detail the participants' rights and how their responses will be treated throughout the whole stages of the research. They were also informed that their participation would be totally voluntary and that they were still free to withdraw at any time during any stage of the study without giving any reason. In addition, the participants have been informed that their data will be anonymised in the collection, storage, and publication of research materials. All data generated by the study will be retained in accordance with the University of Aberdeen Research Governance Framework. The data will be analysed and saved on the researcher's password-protected computer. Each participant has also been given a consent form (Appendix C) to complete, sign, and return to the researcher.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1. Results of the quantitative method**

The questionnaire, which was entirely in English, included six parts. The first part is an introduction explaining the aim of the questionnaire and how the participants' responses would be treated, and it also consists of the researcher's contact information in case any of the respondents might have any queries. The second part included three general pieces of information: gender, city, and teaching experience. The third part was titled Teachers' Self-efficacy, to examine teachers' perceptions about implementing creativity in their teaching practices. The fourth part, Institutional Support, addressed how the participants assess the support they find from the schools where they teach. The fifth part, Students' Prospect, was designed to figure out the overall features of the students taught by the participants. The sixth and final part addressed the Curricula used in the context to highlight any solid or weak aspects that might be noticed in terms of creativity implementation. The researcher, throughout this study, tries to assess all possible elements in the context to best find out about a reliable and valid diagnosis of the issues conveyed.

Each part of these four sub-scales included five statements to be answered through a 5-Likert scale: "Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree". The use of pre-determined, pre-coded, and closed statements are easy to code and analyse and fast to administer (Kelley, Clark, Brown, & Sitzia, 2003). Most of the statements included in the questionnaire were adopted using Teaching for Creativity Scales (TCS) from the study of Rubenstein, McCoach, and Siegle (2013).

#### **4.1.1. Teachers' Self-efficacy**

As shown in Table 4 below, most of the participants said that they clearly understood what

creativity in language teaching is. 44 teachers representing 39.3%, strongly agreed with the statement, and exactly half of the participants agreed, whereas none of the total subjects strongly disagreed, and only one disagreed. In the second statement, approximately one-third of the participants, 32.1% and 51 respondents representing 45.5%, said that they are capable of fostering creative problem-solving in their classrooms. None of the participants strongly disagreed, and only 6 participants out of the 112 surveyed did disagree. 18 participants representing 16.1%, strongly agreed that they have enough time to teach their students to think more creatively, and 40.2% of them agreed. On the contrary, 21 participants disagreed, and only 5 participants strongly disagreed. 23 participants representing 20.5%, were neutral. Slightly over one-quarter of the participants, 27.7%, strongly agreed that they are capable of developing a classroom atmosphere that welcomes imagination, and 46.6% agreed. Only 4.5% of the participants disagreed, and 2 participants strongly disagreed. 22 participants were neutral. 93 participants either strongly agreed (33.9%) or agreed (49.1%) that they were capable of motivating original thoughts among their students. Only one participant strongly disagreed, and 3 disagreed that they were not.

Item	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. I understand clearly what creativity in language teaching is.	44	39.3%	56	50%	11	9.8%	1	0.9%	0	0%
2. I am capable of fostering creative problem solving in my classroom.	36	32.1%	51	45.5%	19	17%	6	5.4%	0	0%
3. I have enough time to teach students to think more creatively.	18	16.1%	45	40.2%	23	20.5%	21	18.8%	5	4.5%
4. I am capable of developing a classroom atmosphere that welcomes imagination.	31	27.7%	52	46.4%	22	19.6%	5	4.5%	2	1.8%
5. I am capable of motivating original thoughts among my students.	38	33.9%	55	49.1%	15	13.4%	3	2.7%	1	0.9%

Table 4: Teachers' self-efficacy

#### 4.1.2. Institutional Support

As shown in Table 5 below, most of the participants said that their schools support implementing creativity. 19.6% of the teachers strongly agreed with the statement, and more than a third, 38.4%, agreed, whereas 6 subjects only disagreed strongly, and 14.3% disagreed. In the second statement, 17 participants strongly agreed, and 49 agreed that their schools' priorities include teaching students to think creatively. 5 of the participants strongly disagreed, and 12.5% out of the 112 disagreed. Around one fifth of the participants, 20.5%, strongly agreed that their administrations encourage them to foster innovative thinking in their students, and 41 participants representing 40.2%, agreed. On the contrary, 13 participants disagreed, and only 2 participants strongly disagreed. 29.5% were neutral. 16.6% strongly agreed that it is a priority in

their schools to increase students' inventiveness, and 34 participants agreed. Only 10 participants disagreed, and 2 participants strongly disagreed. Interestingly, 42.9% of the participants were neutral. 97 participants either strongly agreed (60.7%) or agreed (25.9%) that teacher training is essential to foster creativity in education. Only one participant disagreed, and 2 strongly disagreed.

Item	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. My school supports implementing creativity.	22	19.6%	43	38.4%	25	22.3%	16	14.3%	6	5.4%
2. My school's priorities include teaching students to think creatively.	17	15.2%	49	43.8%	27	24.1%	14	12.5%	5	4.5%
3. My administration encourages me to foster innovative thinking in my students.	23	20.5%	41	36.6%	33	29.5%	13	11.6%	2	1.8%
4. It is a priority in my school to increase students' inventiveness.	18	16.1%	34	30.4%	48	42.9%	10	8.9%	2	1.8%
5. Teacher training is important to foster creativity in education.	68	60.7%	29	25.9%	12	10.7%	1	0.9%	2	1.8%

Table 5: Institutional support

#### 4.1.3. Students' Prospect

Concerning students' abilities to produce creativity, around half of the participants, 47.3%, agreed that their students have adequate imagination that could be developed into creativity, and 22.3% strongly agreed. Only 4 participants disagreed, and one participant strongly disagreed. 46 participants agreed, and 17 strongly agreed that all students could develop original ideas. One-fifth of the participants, 20.5%, disagreed, and only 2 participants strongly disagreed. Similarly, 44 participants agreed, and 14 teachers strongly agreed that all students could contribute innovative thoughts to a discussion. However, around one-quarter of the participants, 24.1%, disagreed, and only 2 participants strongly disagreed. Half of the participants agreed that students could improve their ability to think outside the box, and 25 teachers strongly agreed. Only 6 participants disagreed, and none of the participants strongly disagreed. Finally, around half of the participants, 47.3%, agreed that all students could learn to produce something innovative, and 17 participants strongly agreed. On the other side, 17 participants disagreed, and only 2 participants strongly disagreed. For each item of the five statements concerning students' prospects, around one quarter of the participants were neutral, and their neutrality rates ranged from 20.5% in the fifth statement to 25.9% in the first item. All the statistics described above are shown in table 6 below.

Item	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. My students have adequate imagination that could be developed into creativity.	25	22.3%	53	47.3%	29	25.9%	4	3.6%	1	0.9%
2. All students can develop original ideas.	17	15.2%	46	41.1%	24	21.4%	23	20.5%	2	1.8%
3. All students can contribute innovative thoughts to a discussion.	14	12.5%	44	39.3%	25	22.3%	27	24.1%	2	1.8%
4. Students can improve in their ability to think outside the box.	25	22.3%	57	50.9%	24	21.4%	6	5.4%	0	0%
5. All students can learn to produce something innovative.	17	15.2%	53	47.3%	23	20.5%	17	15.2%	2	1.8%

Table 6: Students' prospect

#### 4.1.4. Curriculum Design

Investigating to what extent the curricula taught can help foster creativity, 41.1% of the participants agreed that the curricula they teach develop their students' creativity, and 17 participants strongly agreed. Also, 17 participants disagreed, and only 2 participants strongly disagreed. 52 participants agreed that creative activities could be enhanced in the textbooks taught, and 16.1% of the participants strongly agreed. Only 5 teachers disagreed, and 3 strongly disagreed. Not far from that, 47 participants agreed that the textbooks used enhance problem-solving among their students, and 14.3% strongly agreed. On the contrary, 9 participants disagreed, while 2 of the total subjects strongly disagreed. About half of the participants, 48.2%, agreed that they could develop pupils' skills to think in a creative way with the current curricula, and 21 participants strongly agreed. 8% of the teachers disagreed, and only 2 participants strongly disagreed. One-third of the participants, 33%, agreed that the content of the textbooks allows enough time for creative activities, and 15 participants strongly agreed. However, one fifth of the participants, 19.6%, disagreed, and only 3 teachers strongly disagreed. Again, for each item of the five statements investigating this construct, more than a quarter of the participants were neutral, and their neutrality rates ranged from 26.8% up to 31.3%, except for one item, there were 26 participants neutral, representing 23.2%, as shown in Table 7 below.

Item	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. The curriculum I teach develops my students' creativity.	17	15.2%	46	41.1%	30	26.8%	17	15.2%	2	1.8%
2. Creativity activities can be enhanced in the textbook taught.	18	16.1%	52	46.4%	34	30.4%	5	4.5%	3	2.7%
3. The textbook used enhances problem solving among my students.	16	14.3%	47	42%	33	29.5%	11	9.8%	5	4.5%
4. We can develop pupils' skills to think in a creative way with the current curricula.	21	18.8%	54	48.2%	26	23.2%	9	8%	2	1.8%
5. The content of the textbook allows enough time for creative activities.	15	13.4%	37	33%	35	31.3%	22	19.6%	3	2.7%

Table 7: Curriculum design

## 4.2. Results of the qualitative method

### 4.2.1. Definition of creativity in language teaching

In terms of defining creativity, none of the four interviewees was able to include all aspects of creativity when they expressed what creativity in language teaching means to them. For example, Rami connected creativity with students' motivation and their ability to learn in a fast and interesting way. Ali also shared with Rami that teaching should be interesting for the students. Still, he emphasised the production of out of ordinary and unusual acts, which refers to uniqueness as adopted by some experts when they defined creativity. Sami pointed to novelty and reinforcing high-order thinking skills, such as applying and analysing the knowledge presented, as two main aspects of creativity. Hani was the only teacher who showed a broader understanding, for he included five main elements of creativity as defined by a number of scholars. His list included imagination, problem-solving, originality, novelty, and connection between different ideas and thoughts. However, taking risks, effectiveness, reforming existing ideas, and innovativeness were not included in any of the interviewees' definitions, although these were identified as significant elements of creativity based on previous literature. To sum up this point, there was no complete definition of creativity noticed in the participants' answers, although some aspects were recognised, as shown in figure 2 below.

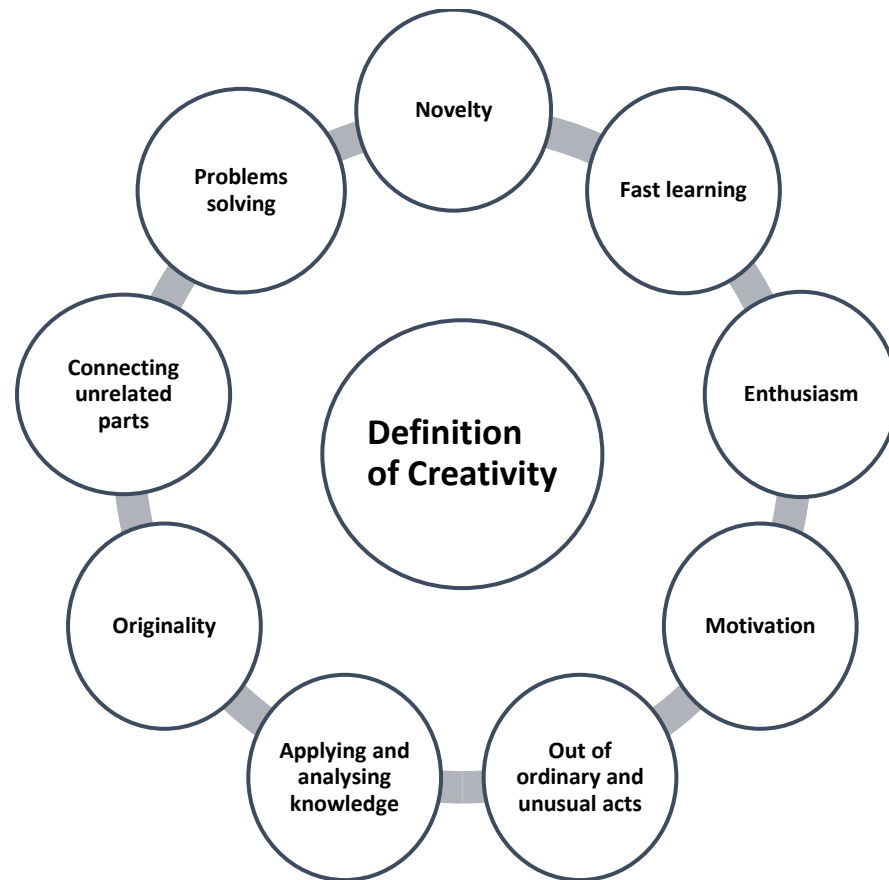


Figure 2: Definition of creativity

#### 4.2.2. Ways of fostering creativity in teaching practices

Although some aspects of creativity were identified in the participants' attempts to define creativity, none of them showed an ability to explain how these aspects can be recruited in their teaching practices, as shown in figure 3 below. For example, Rami said that the integration of technology and gamification were his only ways of fostering creativity. The use of technology was also evident in Sami's answer, but he emphasised contests and prizes as practical ways of pushing learners ahead to come up with creative acts. According to Ali, well-prepared and aware teachers, assigning extra activities, giving students enough opportunity to express themselves, paying attention to students' differences, dividing students into groups, and diversifying the types of questions asked were the methods that should be followed to foster creativity. Hani opines that enrolling students in projects can motivate them to produce new acts. He also emphasised the necessity of coordinating between different ideas, which may encourage students to solve existing problems. Once again, the participants did not show enough understanding of how creativity can be best fostered in teaching practices.

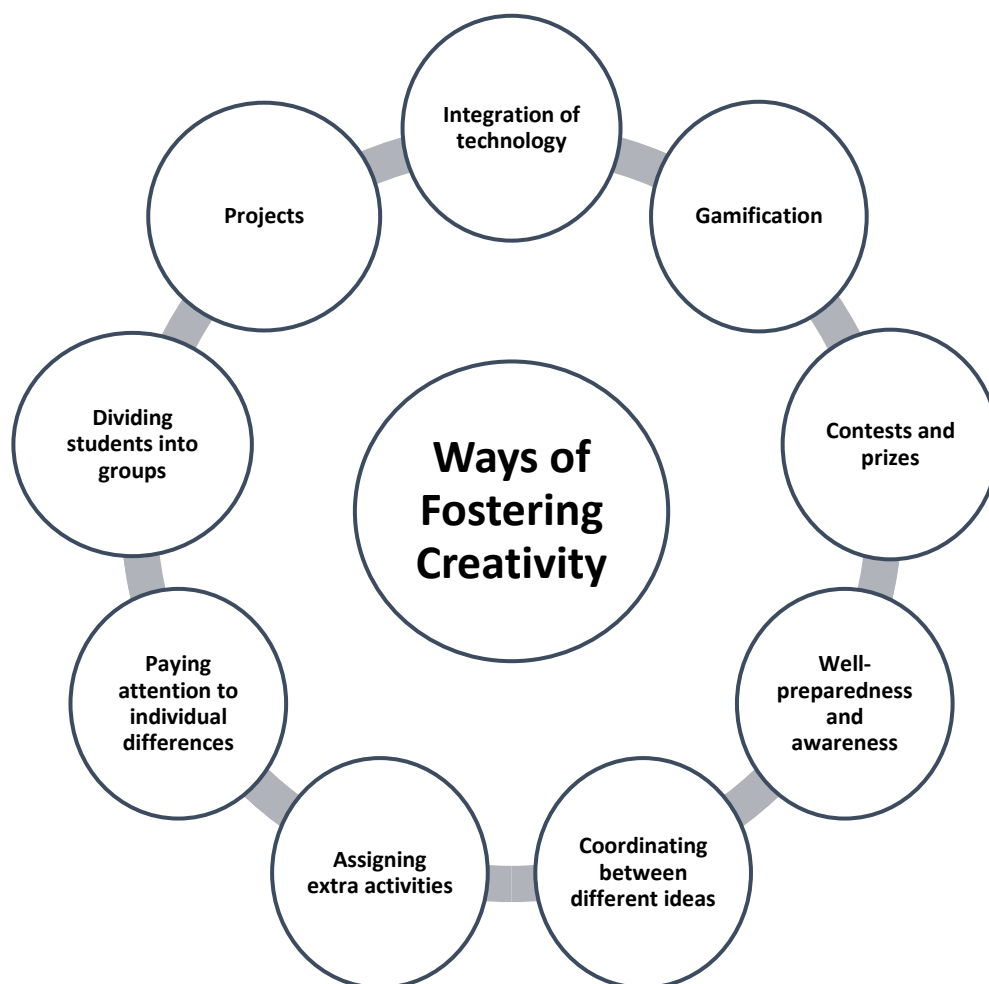


Figure 3: Ways of fostering creativity

#### 4.2.3. Schools' role in implementing creativity

Concerning schools' roles in implementing creativity, three out of the four interviewees agreed that their schools support them through providing the necessary equipment, teaching aids, projectors, computers, internet access, data shows, smart boards, and new instruments. Yet, Rami insisted that they need labs in schools to improve the students' ability in listening skill. The only participant, who was reluctant about his school support, was Ali. He first said: "the school is not usually helping. It is the responsibility of the teacher." Yet, when he was asked the same question in a different way, he mentioned: "Somehow, they are helping in providing some instruments." He concluded: "they are not helping or giving a chance for extra activities. For example, we do not have time or a place for making an English club." Based on the participants' responses in this regard, all of them just emphasised the provision of technical tools in their schools without explaining how their schools support creative and innovative acts produced by the students, which might not be enough since technology is just a helping tool. None of the interviewees raised any aspect of creativity that they mentioned earlier in their definitions of creativity, like imagination, novelty, or problem-solving, as shown in figure 4.



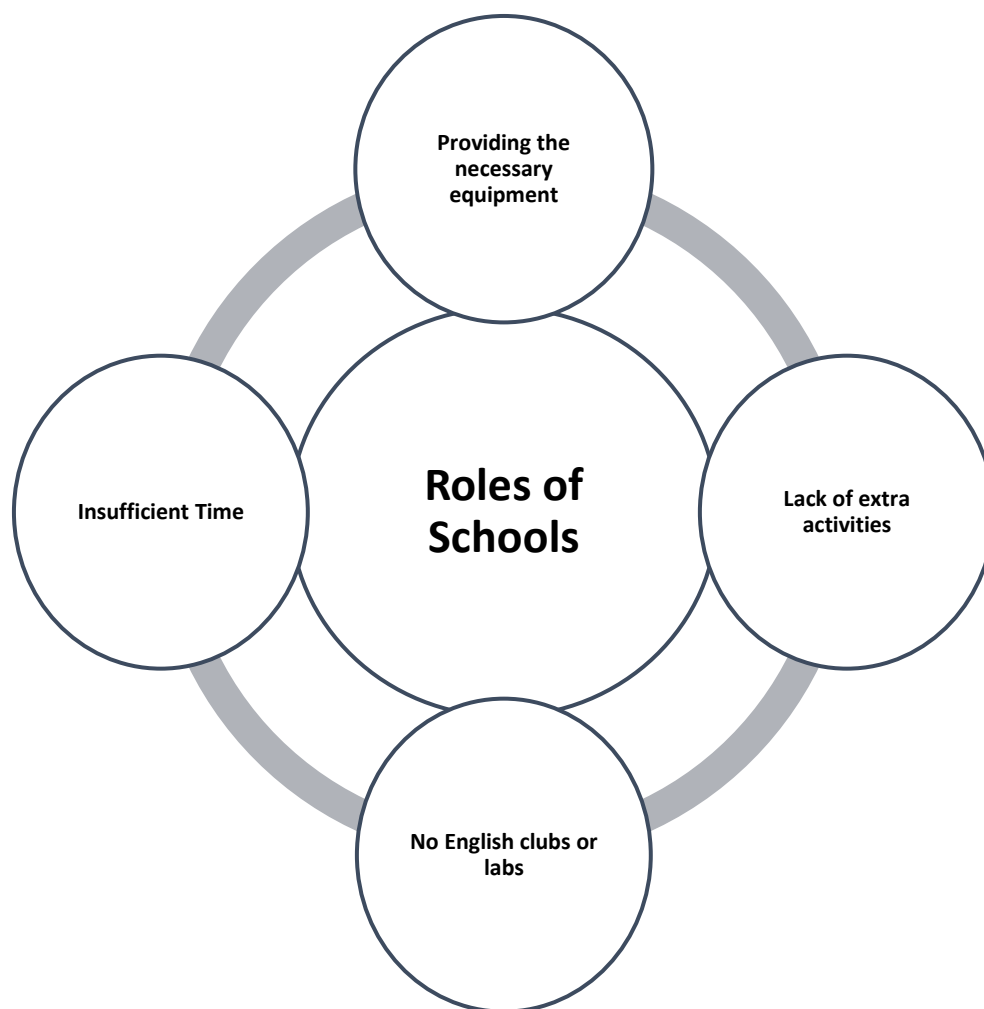


Figure 4: Roles of schools

#### 4.2.4. Students' abilities to foster creativity

Concerning the possibility of fostering creativity based on the current level of Saudi students in public secondary schools, the participants' answers varied, as shown in figure 5 below. Hani said: "Many of them are able through encouraging them and motivating them to do projects about the things they love to read about, or they are interested in." Sami shared the same view as Hani, but he linked his students' achievements in this regard with their outstanding ability to use technology in designing projects. Ali was the only teacher who specified a percentage to classify his students' potential to produce creative acts. He thought that 40% of the students could come up with innovative acts while 60% could not. To him, students' desires and their parents' backgrounds were the main factors in having creative students. As opposed to the three participants above, Rami showed a negative impact on his students. He said: "Some of the students do not believe in the importance of learning English. Their parents and their families do not help them in learning English. Some of them do not have any motivation to learn. They just take English as a usual subject." Based on the responses

elicited, the teachers interviewed showed different visualisations concerning students' prospects.

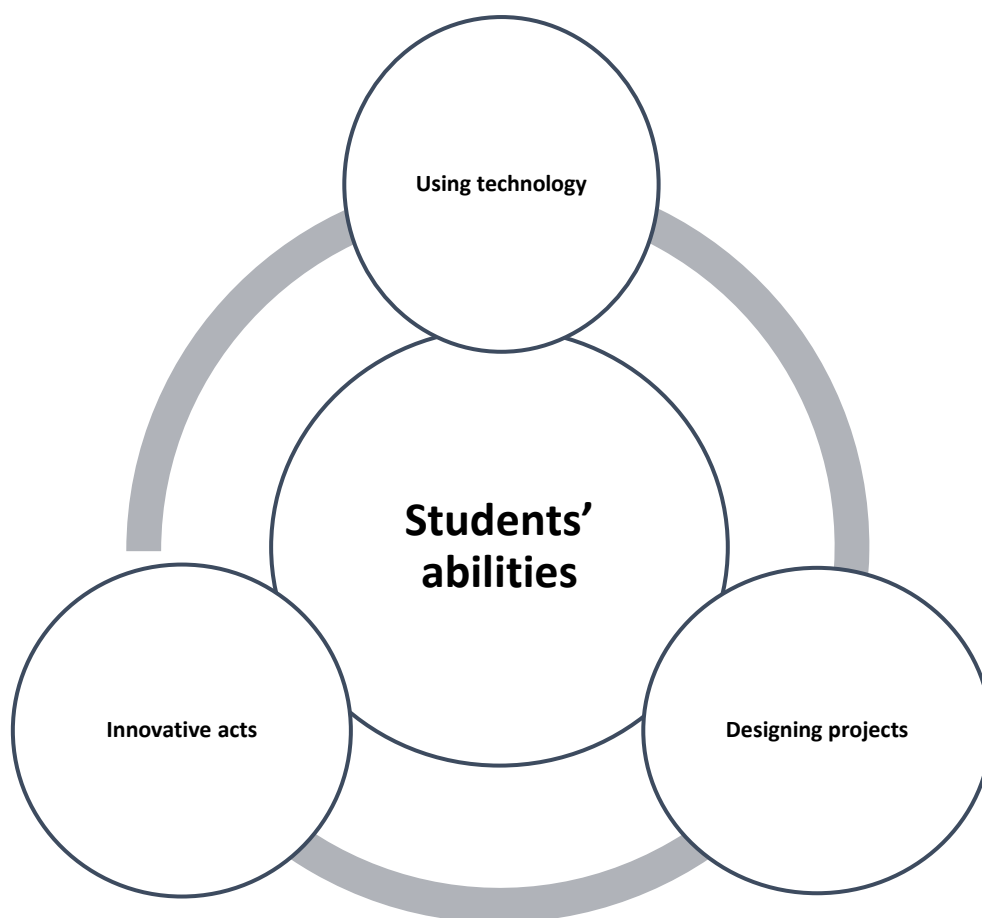


Figure 5: Students' ability to foster creativity

#### 4.2.5. Role of the curriculum in fostering creativity

The four participants teach the same curriculum as the policymakers in the Saudi educational system adopt the same series of textbooks in all secondary schools in the entire of Saudi Arabia. The interviewees' opinions about the curriculum they teach were not the same. Rami, for instance, said he does not depend on the textbook entirely, for the book does not integrate the technology required, which makes him download videos from YouTube, adopt games from some websites, and design further worksheets. On the contrary, Sami believes that the book helps him through the interactive workbook that can be displayed in data shows and the diverse topics included, which motivate the students to search. Ali assured that the textbook is good in presenting the subject through illustrations, tapes, videos, and the workbook due to the types of questions and the exercises included, but he criticised the curriculum for focusing on grammar and vocabulary at the expense of other skills. As opposed to him, Hani appreciated that the textbook included a writing part and a project at the end of each unit. To summarise, the interviewees' views about the role of the curriculum that they teach in fostering creativity can somewhat be considered contradictory.

One teacher does not depend on it for its lack of integrating enough technology, while another one sees that the interaction of the book is a positive feature. On the other side, the third participant criticises focusing on grammar and vocabulary, whereas the last respondent evaluates the book's concentration on writing and projects. Apparently, none of the participants has made it clear how the curriculum taught enhances or inhibits creative aspects like imagination, problem-solving, or self-autonomy, as shown in figure 6 below.

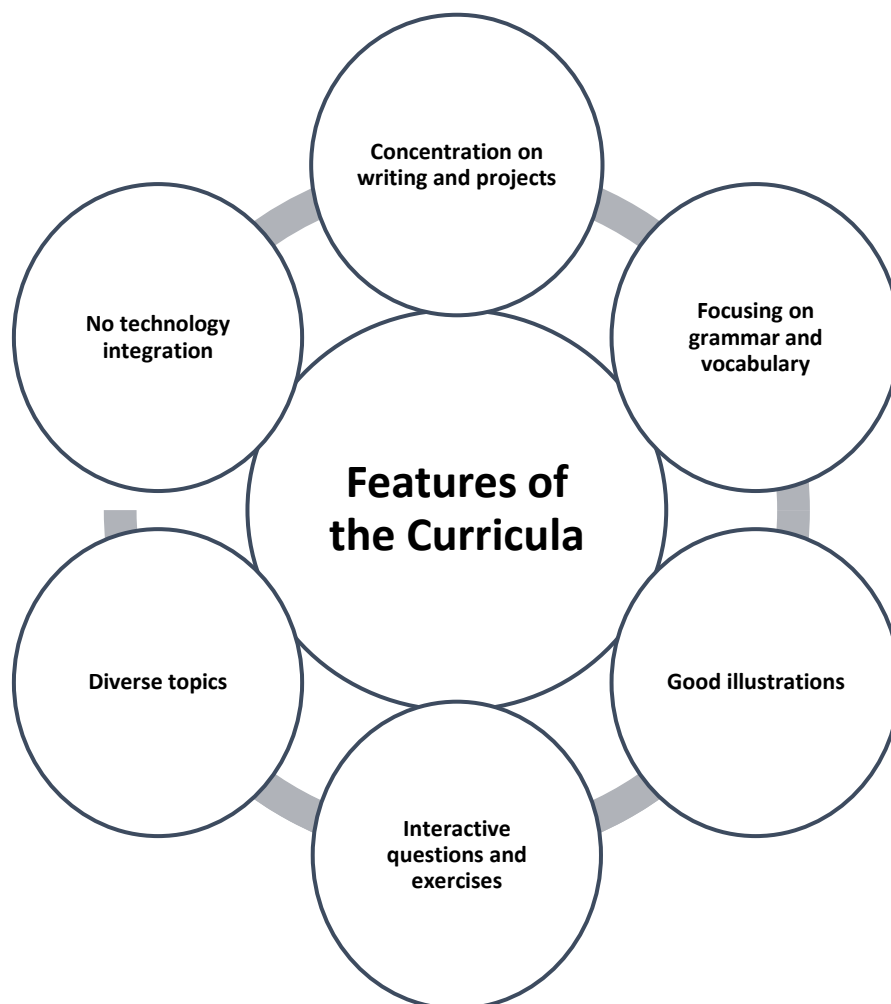


Figure 6: Features of the curricula

#### 4.2.6. Saudi teachers need to foster creativity

Addressing Saudi teachers' needs to foster creativity, Rami focused on supplying schools with enough tools of technology and offering labs to improve students' level of listening, while for Sami, the focus should be on giving creative teachers more credit and support as all teachers are treated similarly no matter how their performance or efforts are. Sami also criticised the English department, supervisors, and principals for not creating opportunities to enhance communication between the teachers to share their experiences and, thus, interact with each other and benefit from one another. He added: "The supervisors and the principals of the schools do not give the chances

to their teachers or their creative teachers to go outside the school and express themselves in a formal and official way.” According to Ali, teachers should be given enough freedom to adopt the practices suitable based on the needs of their students. He also thinks that lack of enough time due to teaching loads might inhibit fostering further creativity. For Hani, adopting collaborative learning, open discussion, presentation, and dividing students into groups are what he thinks necessary to promote more creative practices. He also highlighted the importance of assigning more homework for the students and feedback. So, the participants’ opinions varied here as well. An illustration of the responses elicited is shown in figure 7 below.

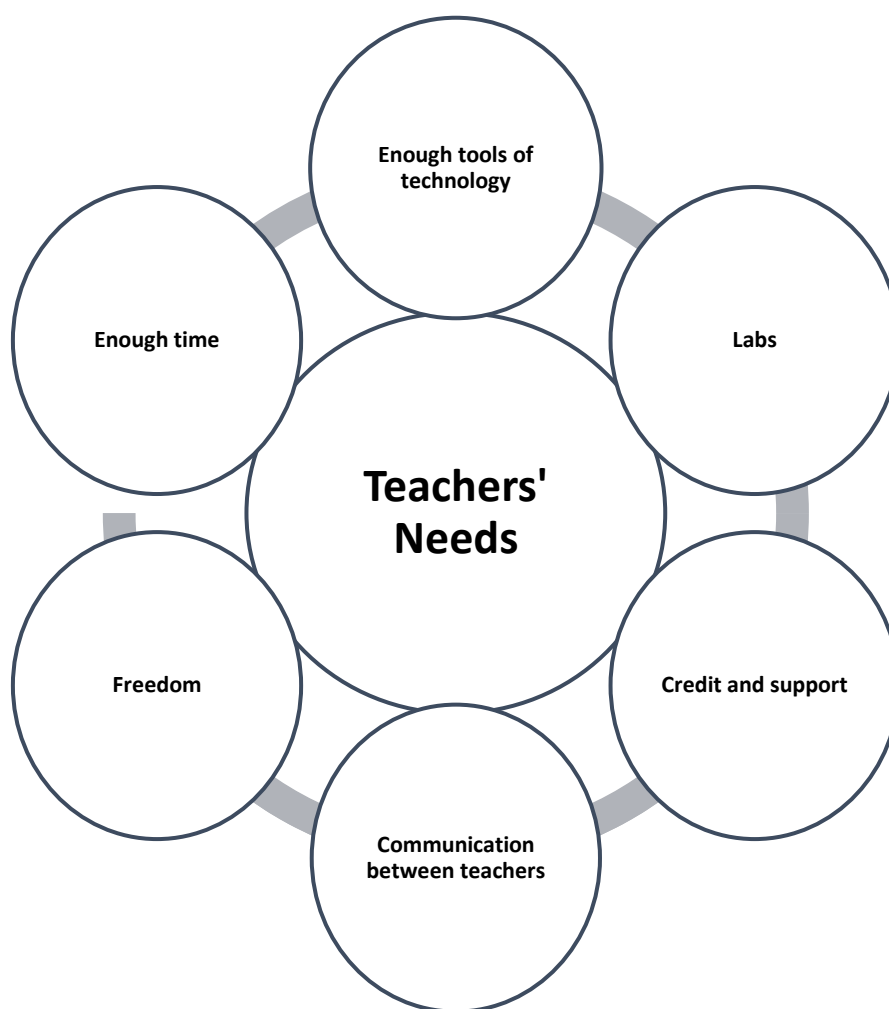


Figure 7: Teachers' needs

#### 4.2.7. Barriers hindering creativity in Saudi secondary schools

As for the barriers hindering creativity in Saudi Secondary schools, all four participants agreed that the level of some students and their poor overall standards in English as the only foreign language taught in Saudi Arabia might inhibit implementing creativity, as seen in figure 8 below. Ali and Rami thought that the previous opinion of some students, affected by their parents, that English is difficult or not an important subject might be a critical factor in this regard. Rami also

focused on students' lack of motivation. To Sami, some teachers' lack of using technology is a significant obstacle blocking creativity, whereas Hani thought that the limitation of time of the classes is what hinders creativity. Hani and Ali highlighted that due to the lack of practising English in the Saudi community made the students unable to make adequate use of it beyond the limits of the classrooms and in their everyday situations. Therefore, several factors emerged to hinder creativity based on the participants' responses, but they agreed only on students as a critical factor in this sense.

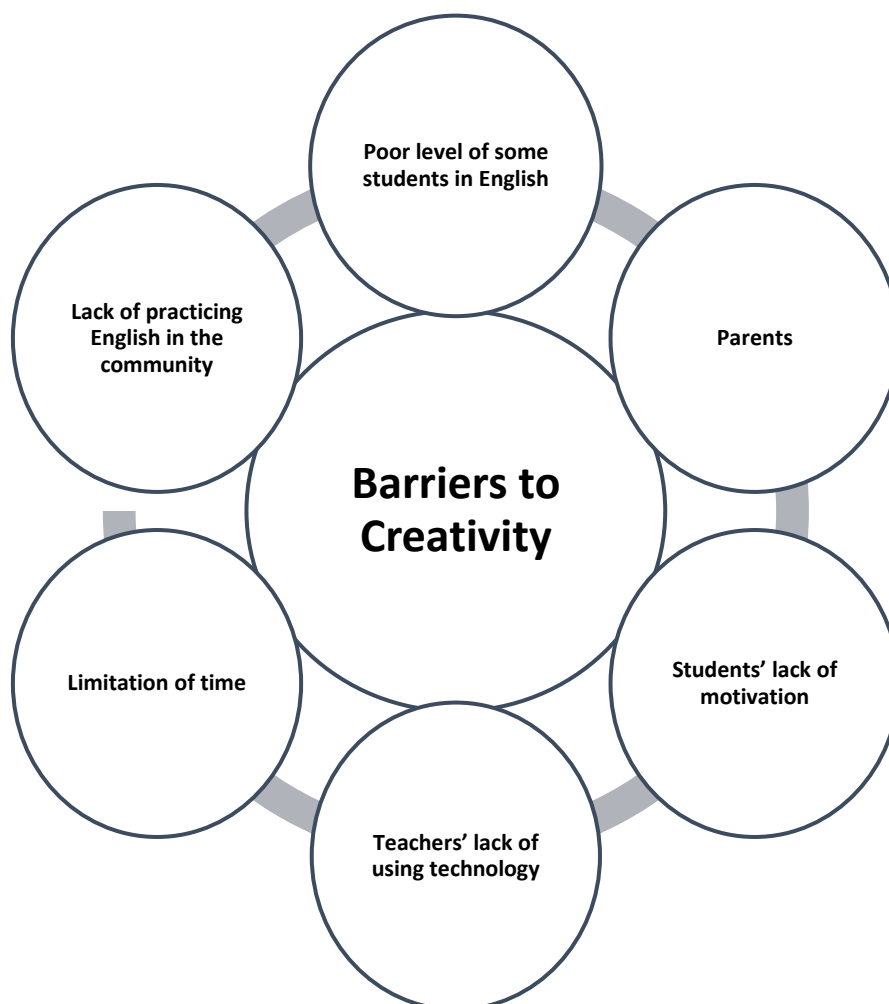


Figure 8: Barriers to creativity

#### 4.2.8. Possible solutions

Three participants out of the four interviewed suggested different solutions. Rami thought the barriers could be overcome by encouraging students who are less motivated. Sami shared the same view but suggested assigning rewards to do so. Sami also suggested involving teachers in specific courses to improve their levels in dealing with technology, whereas for Ali, giving teachers more freedom to adopt what they see suiting their students' needs seems an efficient solution. Apparently, none of the interviewees mentioned teacher training, especially on-the-job

training, or even courses designed by specialists to raise teachers' awareness about implementing creativity in language teaching, as shown in figure 9 below.

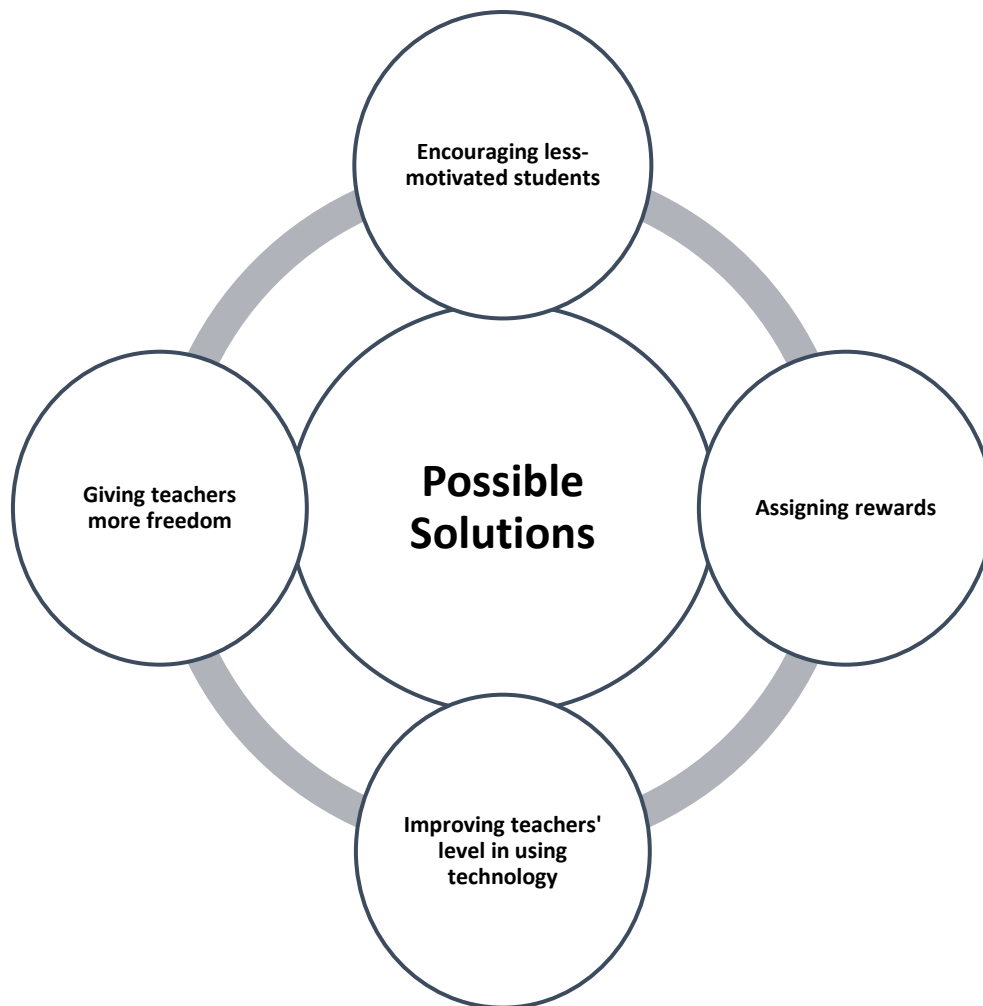


Figure 9: Possible solutions

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Overview

To start with, there is a considerable lack of studies addressing creativity implantation in EFL teaching in the Saudi context. Ismail and Kassem (2022) state: "These studies are not only a few but also iterative... there is a remarkable gap between the empirical and critical studies addressing the issue of creativity and its relationship to teaching English in Saudi Arabia" (p.142). As for this study, the aim is to investigate the perspectives of male and female Saudi EFL teachers in public secondary schools in a variety of cities across Saudi Arabia on implementing creativity in foreign language teaching. It also aimed to find out the barriers hindering the implementation of creativity and how such difficulties can be best overcome. To address the questions raised throughout this study, 112 male and female teachers from 27 cities in Saudi Arabia took part in a 23-item questionnaire. After that, 4 male teachers from different

parts of the city of Makkah were interviewed. Below is a discussion of the most significant findings and a comparison with the previous literature that investigated creativity implementation in Saudi EFL classrooms.

## **5.2. Teachers' perspectives on creativity**

Most of the participants in the questionnaire showed that they understand clearly what creativity in language teaching is. Still, when 4 of them were interviewed, they did not show adequate understanding of the topic. It seemed to them that creativity and innovation are just the capabilities of integrating technology into teaching practices. This confirmed the findings of previous studies such as Aldujayn (2019), Al-Qahtani (2016), Bojulaia and Pleasants (2021) and Masadeh (2021). For example, Al-Qahtani (2016) reported that the participants surveyed in his study, who were 45 Saudi EFL teachers in all three stages and 6 supervisors, showed an unclear concept of creativity, and most of them did not put sufficient effort into their instructions to foster creativity. Similarly, Masadeh (2021) reported that the 56 Saudi EFL teachers surveyed in his study, who were selected from different stages in one Saudi city, had a confusing attitude about creativity and did not reflect satisfactory knowledge about the critical characteristics of creativity. Based on the questionnaire in this study, the majority of the participating teachers believe that they are capable of fostering creative problem-solving in their classrooms, developing a classroom atmosphere that welcomes imagination, and motivating original thoughts among their students. Although these findings confirm the results of the study of Al-Jarf (2007), none of the interviewees raised these issues when asked to explain how they can foster creativity in their teaching practices. This finding was also confirmed by Aldujayn (2019), where it was stated that the participants were not confident about how to incorporate creativity, although they pretended they did so. Although Aldujayn and Alsubhi (2020) claimed that the 85 female Saudi EFL teachers included in their study, who teach in secondary schools, had a positive attitude about creativity, they did not determine the city where their samples were taken, nor have they used a qualitative method either.

## **5.3. Barriers hindering creativity in Saudi secondary schools**

### **5.3.1. Time constraint**

The interviewees in this study agreed that they do not have enough time to teach their students how to think more creatively, which confirms what has been found in the study of Al-Qahtani (2016). Interestingly, more than half of the teachers participating in the questionnaire of this study believe they have enough time to enhance creativity among their students.

### **5.3.2. Students' abilities**

The majority of the participants taking part in the questionnaire have stated that their students have adequate imagination that could be developed into creativity, can formulate original ideas, can contribute innovative thoughts to a discussion, can improve their ability to think outside the box, and can learn to produce something innovative as confirmed by Al-Jarf (2007). On the other hand, the interviewees in this study believe that the poor level of some students in English and their lack of motivation due to rare opportunities to practising English in the Saudi community had a negative impact on their abilities to produce creative and innovative acts as confirmed by

Al-Qahtani (2016). However, this opinion contradicts what has been found in the study of Al-Jarf (2007). Moreover, teacher-centeredness and following old-fashioned methods of instruction might be argued to hinder creativity (Al-Qahtani, 2016).

### **5.3.3. Institutional support**

Most of the teachers surveyed in this study's questionnaire believe that their schools support implementing creativity and that their schools' priorities include teaching students to think creatively. They also agree that their administrations encourage them to foster innovative thinking in their students. Although more than half of the participants believe that it is a priority in their schools to increase students' inventiveness, the other half of the participants were neutral in this regard. However, this point of view has not been supported by previous literature. On the contrary, the teachers interviewed in this study claim that they do not have adequate support from the schools where they teach, which has been confirmed by a number of previous studies such as Aldujayn (2019), Aldujayn and Alsubhi (2020), Al-Qahtani (2016), and Bojulaia and Pleasants (2021). Ismail and Kassem (2022) reported that speaking and listening skills are not assessed in secondary and elementary schools in Saudi Arabia, which subsequently might have a negative impact on implementing creativity. As opposed to what they have reported, the directory published by the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia clarifies that part of the marks specified to assess the students' progress is based on evaluating their abilities in these skills.

### **5.3.4. The curricula design**

The majority of the teachers participating in the questionnaire adopted in this study believe that the curricula that they teach develop their students' creativity, have innovative activities that can be enhanced, implement problem-solving among their students, develop pupils' skills to think in a creative way and allow enough time for creative activities. On the other hand, the interviewed participants were divided. Some of them believe that the textbooks that they teach concentrate mainly on writing and projects and have interactive questions, exercises, illustrations, and diverse topics. In contrast, some of them criticise the books' focus on grammar and vocabulary and say that they do not feature a sufficiently adaptable integration of technology. However, other studies have found that the textbooks adopted in Saudi public schools do not provide adequate support to implement creativity, as reported in the study of Al-Qahtani (2016). Yet, he did not specify which stage textbooks need to adopt further support of creativity.

Finally, some of the concepts outlined in the theoretical framework above, upon which the methods of this study had been based, were identified by some of the interviewees. They have highlighted some aspects but have not mentioned all of them. However, all the concepts were present in the items included in the questionnaire adopted by this study.

## **6. Conclusion**

### **6.1. Summary**

The topic of creativity and innovation has been adopted heavily in a variety of sectors, including the educational system. It has been a priority for policymakers to ensure that all constituents of education are qualified sufficiently to implement such values. Saudi Arabia is one of the countries that have announced, through various initiatives adopting creativity for the sake of diversifying



its economy and stopping its heavy reliance on oil revenue. Therefore, preparing students for occupying future jobs requires a fundamental reform of the education system and the instructional methodologies applied, as announced in The Saudi Vision 2030. As a result, The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia has set specific goals and agendas that necessitate implementing creativity in all subjects presented in all stages in its public schools.

Since the beginning of EFL teaching started officially, in conjunction with the unification of the country in the 1930s, more than one methodology has been adopted as a framework for teaching English as the only foreign language taught there. Recently, the calls for equipping students with 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills, including creativity, have increased noticeably.

Due to the importance of implementing creativity in language teaching, a number of journal articles and scientific dissertations have been published to shed light on this issue. Nonetheless, it has been criticised that the Saudi context still needs to be studied in-depth in terms of implementing creativity.

This study aims to investigate Saudi EFL teachers' perspectives on implementing Creativity in English Language Teaching and to assess such perception in secondary schools specifically. The project also aims at finding out the barriers facing implementing creativity and the possible solutions. Conducting the Mixed Method Research through a questionnaire and some semi-structured interviews, the study has found that Saudi EFL teachers lack a sufficient understanding of the topic, and for them, creativity and innovation mean the capability of integrating technology in their teaching practices only. Despite pretending to be familiar with the topic, none of the interviewees demonstrated an adequate understanding of how creativity can be best fostered in teaching practices. As explicitly expressed by the interviewees and to somewhat by the teachers participating in the questionnaire, there are three main barriers believed to hinder creativity. First, having insufficient time to encourage students to think more creatively. Second, the overall low level of the students in English and their lack of motivation due to rare opportunities of practicing English outside their classrooms. Third, the shortage of adequate support from the schools.

## **6.2. Recommendations of the study**

More than 86% of the participants surveyed in this study believe that teacher training is essential to foster creativity in education, which goes in line with the study of Al-Qahtani (2016). The policymakers of Education in Saudi Arabia should offer on-the-job training sessions periodically to help language teachers in public schools get acquainted with the recent developments on how to implement and foster creativity and innovation in their teaching practices. In addition, organising specialised conferences and workshops about creativity and innovation in language teaching by the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia and inviting experts and scholars in the field and making such meetings available to Saudi EFL teachers might improve their perception of creativity and encourage them to adopt such strategies in their instructions. Moreover, assigning core courses for creativity and innovation in language teaching and critical thinking in universities and colleges to teach novices and student teachers might be argued to offer suitable environments for language learners through which they can develop their cognitive processes in

creative thinking (Ismail & Kassem, 2022).

Based on the participants' responses, there seems to be a gap between schools' administrations and teachers and bridging such a gap might be argued to enhance improving the outcomes of learning processes. In addition, giving teachers a sort of freedom to choose the methodologies suitable for their students' needs might trigger teachers' enthusiasm and enhance their principled pragmatism in a constructive way. Moreover, supporting creative teachers and giving them appropriate credit might probably push them forward into the further implementation of innovative and creative acts. Simultaneously, allowing more contact and communication between language teachers on a periodical basis could have beneficial impacts on instruction styles, for they can benefit from each other's experience in adopting new strategies and techniques. Empowering teachers with the necessary sources and tools to implement creativity might deepen their knowledge and nurture their enthusiasm to embrace such values positively.

As explicitly expressed by the participants interviewed in this study, parents affect their children's attitudes in looking seriously at learning a foreign language. In other words, parents stand as a crucial factor, amongst other elements, in the success or failure of students' achievements. Therefore, informing parents about the importance of their roles in enhancing their children's progress might create successful results and improve students' intrinsic motivation. Also, increasing direct contact between schools and parents might enrich learning outcomes.

### **6.3. Limitations**

As with any research in this field, this study has some limitations. First of all, although 112 teachers participated in the questionnaire adopted in this study, which can be considered satisfactory to some extent, more participants would have been believed to give a broader understanding of the issues investigated. Secondly, despite the surveyed subject having come from 27 cities, most of the cities included were represented by one participant or two, as shown above. Therefore, having more participants from different cities might give a more comprehensive image of the findings. Thirdly, although the 4 participants interviewed are male teachers in different parts of the city of Makkah, it might be advisable to have more participants of different genders and from multiple places. Nonetheless, the researcher has called through several invitations to involve female participants via a variety of platforms, but no female respondent has agreed to volunteer. Fourthly, the target subjects throughout the study were Saudi EFL teachers in secondary public schools. Having various participants from public and private schools and from all the stages might create a more comprehensive visualisation of the topic. Finally, this study is mainly descriptive and entirely based on descriptive statistics. Subsequently, no correlation or causality has been tested, nor has any hypothesis been set primarily in the project.

### **6.4. Suggestions for future research**

Due to the lack of research conducted to investigate creativity in language teaching in the Saudi context, more studies are still needed to cover all the possible factors relevant to this issue. Most of the previous studies, including this one, used questionnaires as quantitative tools and

interviews as qualitative ones. Therefore, the need to adopt further methods and different types of research to determine correlations between multiple variables is urgently recommended. For example, conducting experimental, cross-sectional, or longitudinal research might be more generalisable to wider environments and provide holistic perspectives. Further examples of research tools may include adopting pre-tests and post-tests, focus groups and observations on enriching the field with more precise and detailed evidence. In addition, checking potential relationships between cities and promoting creativity amongst Saudi EFL teachers might unveil hidden factors impacting the issue and, thus, lead to further practical solutions. Moreover, this study investigated teachers' perspectives based on four sub-scales: teachers' self-efficacy, institutional support, students' prospects, and curricula design. Therefore, examining other factors and determining further variables might deepen an overall understanding of the issue. For instance, teachers' levels of education and length of experience might have a role in implementing creativity. However, the study by Masadeh (2021) reported that no significant differences had been observed in terms of teachers' experience with adopting creative thinking strategies.

Finally, language learners, as a fundamental component of the learning process, should be taken into consideration. For example, interviewing students to figure out their perception of implementing creativity and adopting further innovative practices in the teaching of English as a foreign language might inspire researchers to consider different constructs and deepen extra understanding of the issue in an insightful and precise way.

To sum up, implementing creativity and innovation in contexts where English is considered a foreign language is a critical issue due to the ongoing significance of English as the most widespread language worldwide. Therefore, diversifying research methods and considering any possible potentials might lead to a better understanding of the issue, which consequently cause a positive change in education and instructional practices.

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## SEL and Student Engagement

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### Abstract

Social emotional learning and student wellbeing at school is a broad topic that encompasses the modern classroom and students to re-engage them in learning and in all school sectors through school initiatives of social emotional wellness (Reis, S. & McCoach, D. 2000). In the last two decades, many programs were developed to promote social and emotional learning (SEL) among youth (Elias et al., 1997; Greenberg et al., 2003). Students come to school to seek validation and engage in a peaceful environment where they are safe. Educators must also realize students' levels of achievement are directly related to their environmental and home-school connection (Reis, S. & McCoach, D. 2000). Student engagement is crucial to any school community and the future success of that learner and social emotional circumstances play a big role in fostering that. Many SEL programs focus on creating social-emotional competence in the context of a safe, caring, and well-managed school and classroom environment. Academic attainment is directly linked to and evaluated with the changes in school attachment, and risky behavior and positive development (Panayiotou et al, 2019).

The process of research utilized very specific key terms to be sure to include all angles of research and to ensure that a thorough understanding of the topic was developed. The key terms used were social, emotional, student, engagement, school, SEL, mental health, administration, community, school environment. The research was lengthy and included the development of the theme over multiple and various brainstorming in order to narrow the focus to SEL and how it affects the entire school community and all the stakeholders involved. In order to find the many themes and research the main idea of SEL it is important to broaden the search and source the citations properly to effectively find a variety of sources that demonstrate how SEL is being used globally. The main sources used were Google Scholar and paid journal reviews.

**Keywords:** SEL, EFL, student engagement

**Cite as:** Feghaly, N. (2023). SEL and Student Engagement. *TESOL Kuwait Journal*, 1(2), 57-62. [https://tesolkuwait.net/resources/Documents/Volume\\_1\\_Issue\\_1.pdf](https://tesolkuwait.net/resources/Documents/Volume_1_Issue_1.pdf)

### Introduction

SEL is a learning pedagogy that educators and schools alike are taking seriously and working into their curriculum and school improvement plan every year to enhance the student experience and all staff experience while incorporating SEL. As part of school initiatives globally, SEL is a growing trend and need for the 21st century school environment and initiatives. The research is extremely relevant to school and educational institutions in 2023 as we are moving into a new

era of virtual schooling coupled with in-person and global citizenship. SEL programs focus on students' emotional habits and work habits alike to solve any academic and or social crisis the student may have problems about their emotions both socially and emotionally with an awareness of perspective. If students are supported they will be able to achieve a great deal more than if they feel dysregulated and left behind. When a school curriculum and school improvement plan are created to engage students in learning and empower them, they will feel compelled to re-engage and adapt to the new school community and buy into the values and beliefs. A caring and engaging school community with attainable and positive outcomes will engage students in active participation using the SEL program that the district has initiated for students, parents and stakeholders.

### **Definition of SEL in Schools**

Schools are places where people go to learn however this has shifted in the last century where schools have become a community environment where more than learning is taking place. District plans are fostering the whole learner including their social and emotional capacities. Most people come to learn and schools have become a place of community more than a place of education as we see a growing need for SEL in schools (Schonert-Reichl, K. A, 2017). Social emotional learning is a very important part of the school curriculum and could be incorporated in every subject and throughout the day. SEL programs create opportunities for schools to recognize and serve young people exposed to learning, family and other forms of trauma so that they can be ready for learning (Anthony-Stevens, Mahfouz, 2020).

### **SEL Programs for Engagement**

SEL programs engage students and educators alike to be fully aware and engaged in the learning through social-emotional learning. SEL is the capacity to recognize and manage emotions, solve problems effectively, and establish positive relationships with others (Anthony-Stevens, Mahfouz, 2020). Research on prevention and resilience shows that SEL has a positive impact on school programs. Since then, a growing number of educators, policymakers, and researchers are supporting the implementation of school based initiative SEL programs (Jones & Kahn, 2017) to help build good competencies and the essential academic skills for student success.

### **Student Achievement and SEL**

Student achievement can be directly related to their social emotional well being and the ability to learn in difficult or challenging environments as well as in healthy and supportive environments (Lawson et al, 2020). If students are supported and feel isolated then the chances of them dropping out are more intense than if they are seen and heard (Anthony-Stevens, Mahfouz, 2020). As schools and educators continue to implement SEL into their classrooms they will be able to battle against the barriers to success and assist students in their struggles of low academics and engagement (Anthony-Stevens, Mahfouz, 2020). Schools play an important role in the promotion of social and emotional competencies for all students. The implementation of SEL in schools will engage students and even make them feel secure in a school setting despite any barriers and many programs foster greater growth for learning and effective cognitive skills (Lawson et al, 2019). Schools are a crucial component of a students life and the amount of time

they spend in those environments (Anthony-Stevens, Mahfouz, 2020) affects the social emotional learning in many ways that are beyond even the students capacity to understand.

### **SEL Curriculum**

Many schools have begun adopting an SEL curriculum in their schools to foster well-being and achievement in the school and community at large (Anthony-Stevens, Mahfouz, 2020). In the field of psychology, researchers are now drawing attention to the importance of integrating SEL curriculums in schools and as early as the early years programs. The integration of an SEL program helps to foster learning and integrity for the students (Jagers et al, 2018). The SEL curriculum can be very broad and engages everyone in the school community to play a part in making it a great place to learn and develop.

### **District Initiative of SEL**

Schools are not only curriculum and instruction institutions but a hub for culture and an SEL curriculum plays an important role in creating this while acknowledging and diversifying for all stakeholders (Lawson et al, 2020). As the research shows, many schools are not yet ready to adopt the programs and need support both financially and in training of staff (Panayiotou, 2019)

### **SEL Focused Classrooms**

The classroom also plays a role in the students education in creating a positive and safe place to learn with the teacher and peers. Many school environments play a central role in cultivating and emotionally supporting the students emotional needs and learning. The students are usually the central focus of the classroom and the environment should be welcoming and supportive for them. In addition to knowledge and academic skills, it is encouraged to also provide support and encouragement for students (Farrington et al., 2012, McCombs, 2004). Many children need to be supported in their academic environment and they may need to be made to feel that they are heard and seen by the school community (Zins & Elias, 2007). The implementation of SEL can provide support for students who are disengaged and need socio-emotional skills and caring environments to foster engagement (Elias et al., 1997). The SEL classroom can be a place where learning and emotional intelligence are being taught hand in hand.

### **Underachievement of Students in SEL**

Student achievement can be directly related to their emotional needs. If the environment warrants learning and fosters development then they will be better able to use their skills to master skills and develop the necessary skills of student success (Zins & Elias, 2007). When learning and social emotional abilities are taught together; student success and self outcomes create positive outcomes (Panayiotou, Humphrey and Wigelsworth, 2019). A universal SEL program with interventions and support improves a broad array of outcomes including social skills and academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011; Sklad et al., 2012). Student achievement and mental health can be directly related and both need to be complimentary. Students tend to drop out of school because of life priorities and not because of the nature of the schooling systems as for many students; school is the safest place for them (Eide, 2019).

### **SEL and Low-Income Schools**

Most evidence shows that SEL programs help in low-income communities to create a more holistic environment to foster social stability (Mahfouz & Anthony-Stevens, 2020) For many students the school community is very important for SEL wellness amongst students in low-income schools and when the learning is affected due to the home environment of the student it will affect their academics which can lead to more instability (Mahfouz & Anthony-Stevens, 2020).

### **Educational System and Low-income Schools**

By transforming the educational system to incorporate SEL, it can help students in low income find success at school and in their academics (Mahfouz & Anthony-Stevens, 2020) As teachers and administrators adopt SEL, the whole school community can see changes and better academic and school intervention for students in low-income neighborhoods (Mahfouz & Anthony-Stevens, 2020). By engaging the family in the school community, the SEL program can foster a positive outcome for the families' emotional needs as well as the students. Each year, thousands of students leave school without completing their high school education because of the responsibilities that are outside of the daily school responsibilities (Eide, 2019). Considerable research has been conducted on students' dropout and disengagement behavior, however it is still unclear why and how to get those students back into the educational system for their success (Eide, 2019).

### **Student Success**

Student success and low-income neighborhoods can be correlated and when the support at home is not always present; students can struggle at school. According to Mahfouz & Anthony-Stevens (2020) at the end of middle childhood it becomes more and more obvious how the environment of a child will and can affect their academics and contribute to later academic insecurity and social emotional stability.

### **SEL and Engagement**

Engagement can be a positive part of student learning when all students feel they are a part of the lesson and can complete their academics comfortably without disengagement (Bailey et al, 2019). When students are learning and feel compelled to speak in the class and participate freely, they will be less likely to disengage. This can come when they are able to learn and process the information being given to them. Another part of student engagement is having positive relationships with friends and teachers and is a significant reason that young people enjoy the institution of school. As we move beyond socialization, social control, and various behavior modifications we begin to engage students and address their misbehavior to find the underlying basis for the behavior and disengagement (UCLA Center of Mental Health, 2018). Having a sense of belonging within a school context also means that students are more likely to be engaged and remain engaged for the long term (Bryce, 2014).

### **School Environment and Engagement**

Engagement can come on multiple levels and it can mean either in the classroom, in the school community or socially. School professionals can strive to intentionally engage students so they continue to enroll in the initiatives of SEL. School professionals could intentionally dialogue

with students to identify the specific strengths and resources that will enable engagement in educational systems despite any significant traumas that hinder them from the learning (Mahfouz & Anthony-Stevens, 2020).

### Conclusion

The research continues to find that a growing number of students need SEL in all aspects of their education to learn and are not intrinsically motivated but need and want external factors to lead them. All schools should implement universal SEL learning in school settings promising to truly foster effective, cognitive, and behavioral skills among all children (Lawson et al (2020). Many SEL approaches in education have proven to be the leading educational trend that has yielded positive results and getting students re-engaged and achieving success. As school communities implement programs to improve social skills to help with interpersonal problems; this creates promise for everyone involved in the school process of SEL and behavior correction (UCLA Center of Mental Health, 2018), SEL initiatives in schools can be a direct relation to student success and engaging the community in the same best practice to enhance the entire community in SEL

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## Effect of Audio-Video Recasts on EFL Learners' Output Modification and Perception of Recasts

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### Abstract

Learning Management System (LMS) is a software application for the delivery of educational content. LMS enables teachers to communicate with their pupils either via audio or video. Meanwhile, in language teaching classrooms, corrective feedback is an indispensable part of class interaction. Recast is common corrective feedback in which the teacher just repeats the learners' utterance minus the error without any explication. Given the increasing usage of LMS by language teachers and learners due to the recent covid-19 pandemic, this study aimed to investigate the effect of technology-based means of providing feedback (audio-video) on EFL learners' output modification- whether learners ignore, acknowledge, or try to repair the error- and their perception of recast. A 'fully perceived' corrective feedback is one in which the learner not only understands the teacher's intention but also the source of the error. A 'partially perceived corrective feedback is one in which the learner understands the teacher's intention without realizing the source of the error. Otherwise, the feedback is said not to have been perceived. This study employed the quasi-experimental approach. The participants were 60 male and female EFL learners at a private language learning institute in Shiraz, Iran. They were divided equally into two experimental groups and one control group. The first experimental group was provided with corrective recast via audio, and the second experimental group received corrective feedback via video, while the control group received recast in absence of any means of technology i.e., in a traditional face-to-face class. Retrospective recall interviews were used to measure students' perception of recasts. Recordings were watched to count and categorize students' uptake -response to recasts- as 'target-like modified output', 'non-target-like modified output', and 'uptake without modification'. The findings revealed that technology-based means of providing feedback were just as effective in triggering learners' modified output as conventional, face-to-face means (though audio-technology was slightly more efficient than video technology in this respect). Yet, technology-based means of providing feedback had a statistically significant effect on EFL learners' perception of recasts. In other words, both audio and video groups outperformed the control group, though the audio group slightly outperformed the video group.

**Keywords:** Corrective feedback, recast, uptake, learning management system, technology-mediated interaction

**Cite as:** Behesht Aeen, J. (2023). Effect of Audio and Video Means of Providing Recast on EFL Learners' Output Modification and Perception of Recasts. *TESOL Kuwait Journal* 1(2). 63-77.

[https://tesolkuwait.net/resources/Documents/Volume\\_1\\_Issue21.pdf](https://tesolkuwait.net/resources/Documents/Volume_1_Issue21.pdf)

## **Introduction**

Technological progress in all areas of life has helped the emergence of new means of education (Chapelle, 2007). Digital environments provide multiple means of providing corrective feedback. Providing audio and video feedback in the digital environment has a positive impact on learning (Eslami & Derakhshan, 2020). Many studies have dealt with the forms of feedback (Kukulka-Hulme, 2012); however, the means of providing feedback still needs further research because studies have shown inconsistent results so far (e.g. Chang & Hsu, 2011; Chinnery, 2006; Kukulka-Hulme & Shield, 2008; Lee & Lyster, 2016; Traxler, 2007; Viberg & Gronlund, 2013; Xu & Peng, 2017). This difference in the results of previous studies on the impact of the diversity of means of providing feedback in the digital environment prompted the researchers to investigate the effect of the means of corrective recast on EFL learners' output modification and output modification.

## **Literature Review**

### **Corrective Feedback**

It was in the 1970s that researchers first started studying how teachers provide corrective feedback in classes and learners' response to the different forms of feedback (e.g., Burt, 1975; Ervin-Tripp, 1970). According to Russel and Spada (2006), corrective feedback refers to any feedback provided to learners from any source that contains evidence of learner error of language form. It may be oral or written, implicit or explicit. Corrective feedback is either direct or indirect (Sermsook, Liamnimitr & Pochakorn, 2017). Direct feedback refers to any technique through which the correct form or structure is provided to learners, so they can immediately identify where the error lies. Direct feedback can also include a metalinguistic explanation, which is considered an explicit correction taking the situation into account. The learner, therefore, has access to the nature of the error, which removes ambiguity and makes corrective feedback easier and more explicit (Sermsook et al., 2017). However, to ensure smooth communication, many teachers prefer not to use explicit direct feedback. Instead, they rely on recasts, or direct yet implicit corrections involving just the repetition of the erroneous part of the learners' utterance by the teacher minus the error. The alternative to the direct feedback is the indirect feedback, where teachers try to elicit the correct form from learners through prompts e.g., the repetition of the erroneous part in a rising intonation (Kim, Choi, Kang, Kim & Yun, 2020).

Ellis (2009) holds that corrective feedback contributes to the acquisition of a second language. Hattie and Gan (2011) believe that when learners' reactions are correctly conveyed, their use can help reduce the gap between current performances and the desired performance. According to Narciss (2008), feedback is a vital element for adaptation to the new conditions. It has also shown to be a very powerful element for learning when elements such as attention, the purpose and the linguistic function are considered (Sheen, 2011). Sheen (2011) also notes that feedback motivates students by tracking learning progress in L2. Long (1996) postulates that corrective feedback provides understandable input and allows students to self-correct. Appelgren and



Lascarides (2020) argue that corrective feedback promotes second language acquisition when feedback is given immediately after the student has made the error. Only in this way does feedback activate cognitive mechanisms. Sheen (2011) reflects that the effectiveness of corrective feedback will vary depending on whether students pay attention to the feedback and are aware of the error. She also maintains that each feedback strategy produces different effects on the learning process. Yang and Lyster (2010) hold that the effectiveness of corrective feedback will vary depending on the language function. Both the study of the efficacy and types of corrective feedback are of a great prominence in studies of second and foreign language teaching. According to Gass (2003), a corrective feedback is any verbal reaction to a form that does not comply with the L1 aimed at bringing it into conformity. According to Lyster & Ranta (1997), there are two types of feedback strategies, namely Giving-Answer Strategies (GAS) and Prompting-Answer Strategies (PAS). In the former, the teacher directly gives the target form corresponding to the error in a student's answer, or shows the location of the student's error. These include (a) Repetition, (b) Recast, (c) Explicit correction, and (d) Giving answer. In the latter, the teacher pushes the students to notice a language error in their response and to target-like modified output. This group includes three types of strategies: (a) 'Meta-linguistic cues', (b) 'Clarification requests', and (c) 'Elicitation' (Karim, K. & Nassaji, 2020; Lyster & Sato, 2010; 2013). Long (1996) states that the second language is acquired mostly by interaction. This hypothesis, known as the interaction hypothesis, suggests that the comprehensible input of the teacher or of the peers is developed by negotiation tasks. Long's hypothesis considers corrective feedback (especially recasts) as the main element that contributes to the acquisition of L2. According to Long (1996), interaction is the process by which, within the impulse of communication, learners and competent speakers provide and interpret signals of their own understanding and that of their interlocutors; therefore, they trigger adjustments in linguistic form, conversational structure, semantic content, or all the three, until an acceptable level of understanding is reached.

### **Means of Providing Corrective Feedback**

Learning Management system (LMS) has changed learning landscape (Walker et al., 2016). LMS allows learners to participate in various forms of social interaction. However, there are still many areas that have not been sufficiently explored to be able to account for the way this medium affects the effective development of skills, including the nature of interaction. L2 interaction often involves corrective feedback not only on content but also on form. Assuming that language learners should receive corrective feedback, most teachers provide their pupils with various types of corrective feedback as a potentially effective teaching strategy. Feedback can be given via different means and / or supports: oral (in face-to-face or technology-mediated), written (by hand or on the computer) (Eslami & Derakhshan, 2020). There have been reports that some technology-based communication is more beneficial and provide a variety of opportunities for L2 learning. For instance, Culnan and Markus (1987) suggested that video-based interactions might be more meaningful than audio- or text-based ones since in the former there are more facial expressions and paralinguistic cues for interlocutors. According to hyper-personal theory, technology-mediated interaction in various forms has the potential to help learners direct their

attention to the task they are doing because in online classes other contextual and nonverbal distractions are absent (High & Caplan, 2009). Above all, audio-based feedback may be more advantageous than other means of providing feedback since it helps learners experience fewer distractions and social anxiety.

### **Perception of Corrective Feedback**

Whether learners have an accurate perception of the recasts provided by their teachers or they perceive it as a non-corrective move is of considerable significance (Gass & Lewis, 2007). According to Wallace and Gan (2020), complete acquisition of target forms requires the learners to notice the correct form in the input provided to them. Another particularly relevant issue is whether the learners are provided with positive or negative evidence. Positive evidence is specified as the correct form of a target structure that points out the correct grammatical form while negative evidence directs the learners' attention to what is ungrammatical and incorrect. According to Rassaei (2017), the perception of error is highly associated with the type of feedback. In other words, the perception of the error shows that the learner has realized the correction, which in turn facilitates the process of acquiring L2. Yet, not responding to the error does not necessarily imply that the corrective feedback is not effective, since the learners might have internally assimilated the feedback, although they have not expressed it explicitly (Rassaei, 2020).

### **Learner Response to Corrective Feedback**

When teachers provide feedback to the learners, they usually respond to the feedback by repeating the teacher's adjustments, called uptakes. Lyster and Ranta (1997) defined uptake as "learner's utterance that immediately follows teacher's correction and this response might take different forms" (p. 49). Learners' uptake can take three different forms. Learners may understand the corrective move and substitute their recent error with an accurate response (target-like modified output). They might produce an utterance that is still ill-formed and requires a correction (non-target-like modified output). Moreover, they may make no attempt in response to their teachers' CF, or they respond with words that are irrelevant to the CF (uptake without modified output). However, the occurrence of modified output might be constrained by certain impediments; for example, it might not occur just because there is no opportunity, or there might be some contextual barriers such as a shy learner in a crowded class being corrected (Sheen, 2008).

### **Research Aims and Questions**

A growing body of classroom research proves that corrective feedback is pragmatically feasible, potentially effective, and in certain circumstances necessary (e.g. Abalkheel & Brandenburg, 2020, Goo, 2012; Gass, & McDonough, 2000; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Loewen, 2004; Sheen, 2004; Ammar, 2008; Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006; Lyster & Izquierdo, 2009; Rassaei, 2013; 2014; Sheen, 2007, 2010). Many researchers have highlighted the need for interactions with certain characteristics, e.g., the means of providing feedback (Long, 1981; 1985). Yet, the question remains as to what extent recasts are perceived outside traditional face-to-face interactions. The aim of this study is to see if learners' modified output have any association with their accurate

perception of the intention of recasts in synchronous audio and video- based technology-mediated recasts. The followings are the research questions dealt with in this study.

1. Is there a significant difference in EFL learners' extent of output modification in response to the recasts provided through technology-mediated video and audio means?
2. Is there any significant difference in EFL learners' perception of recasts provided through technology-mediated video and audio means?

## **Method**

### **Participants**

The participants were 60 EFL male and female learners at a private language learning institute in Shiraz, Iran. They were divided equally into two experimental groups and one control group. The first experimental group was provided with corrective recast via audio means, and the second experimental group received corrective feedback via video means, while the control group received feedback in a traditional face-to-face class. The youngest participant was 18 years old and the oldest 30.

### **Materials and Instrumentation**

The learners read three fairy tales, namely *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Peter and the Wolf*, and *the Pied-piper of Hamelin* adopted from [www.shortstories.net](http://www.shortstories.net). The tales were carefully selected and modified in order to provide the learners with appealing, clear, yet rich texts to ease their subsequent task and make them feel comfortable during as they retold the tales. These passages contained about 170, 240, and 300 words respectively, and according to their publisher the difficulty of the texts were at intermediate level. According to Sheen (2008), the aspects of English grammar that might not be salient to the learners need to be taken into serious consideration. According to Primacy of Content Word Principle (VanPatten, 2004), input processing learners are willing to process content words before function words due to capacity restriction in their memory. Thus, it is crucial that those non-salient features i.e., function words be examined as well. As a result, the focus of the analytical framework in the current research was on the English definite article ‘the’ and the indefinite article ‘a’ as the two commonly problematic function words among Iranian EFL learners. Furthermore, in English, if one refers to someone or something for the first time the indefinite article ‘a’ is used, and when someone or something has been mentioned previously or if it is the second time someone or something is being mentioned the definite article ‘the’ is generally used. The higher frequency of these function words in a meaning-based conversation makes the application of these words more plausible for research purposes because the function words are easily elicited during the course of communication. In addition, the definite and indefinite articles are represented differently in Persian and English. That is, in Persian, morphemes with a similar function are attached to the end of words as suffixes. In line with previous research (Egi, 2010; Gass & Lewis, 2007, Koltovskaia, 2020, Kir, 2020, Rassaei, 2013, 2019b), to examine the participants’ perception of audio-based technology-mediated recasts, stimulated recall was employed. In stimulated recall sessions, the participants were to retrospectively consider what they recalled from their previous experience regarding audio-based recasts. Overall, 189 recast episodes were extracted from the

interviews. The learners were required to attend a dyadic stimulated recall interview with the researcher the day after CF sessions. Recast episodes were played one by one, and the participants were asked to describe what they heard in every recast episode. The stimulated recall sessions were tape recorded for subsequent analysis.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The participants had already been participating in online classes on a regular basis for six months because of the unavailability of face-to-face classes caused by COVID-19 pandemic. They were asked to stay online after their usual class time was finished. Then, the tales were sent to the participants, who were asked to read them in ten minutes. In the next step, the teacher contacted the learners via audio or video calls on LMS. Prior to making the audio calls, it was ensured that the Internet connection was good. While the learners were narrating the tales, the teacher employed recasts to correct their erroneous utterances, if any. The learners had been taught how to narrate stories, and they had also been provided with some sample storytelling tasks, so that they would become familiar with the nature of the task. It was decided to use only partial recasts for the sake of homogeneity of treatment for all the participants. Previous research suggested that partial recasts are more likely to be perceived by learners because they have a narrower focus than full recasts (Philp, 2003). Each learner in each interview received approximately eight recasts. The audio and video CF sessions were recorded by the researchers for further analysis. After a rigorous inspection of the recorded audio and video files, a total of 537 recast episodes were identified. The next day, the learners participated in a dyadic interaction conversing about what they had grasped from the recasts and what they had experienced during the storytelling task. It should be noted that some non-corrective feedback episodes were randomly dispersed among the episodes which were presented to the learners to function as distractors and determine whether the participants were able to distinguish between corrective and non-corrective episodes. The stimulated recall interviews were recorded for later analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

First the video recordings were watched. The recasts were categorized as ‘uptake without modified output’, ‘non-target-like modified output’, and ‘target-like modified output’. When the participants displayed a reaction to the recast without realizing their teacher’s corrective intention, the response was coded as ‘uptake without modified output’. Next, the simulated recall interviews were transcribed and the participants’ responses were categorized to three groups, namely 1) ‘fully-perceived’ 2) ‘partially-perceived’ 3) ‘not perceived’. The participants’ comments were coded as ‘fully-perceived’ whenever they could identify the source of their error and verbalize it. The second category was ‘partially-perceived’. In this category, the participants were able perceive the teachers’ corrective intention, but they failed to locate the source of error. The third category was ‘not-perceived’. Here, the participants could neither perceive the teacher’s corrective intention nor locate the source of the error. The results were subjected to Chi-square analysis for the test of statistical significance.

### **Findings**

The findings are reported in two sections, namely descriptive findings and inferential findings,

for each research question. In the descriptive findings section, the frequencies and percentages of the variables are presented. In the inferential findings section, Chi-square tests are reported. The first research question asked, “is there a significant difference in EFL learners' extent of output modification in response to the recasts provided through technology-mediated video and audio means?” To answer this question, descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Table 1 illustrates the descriptive statistics pertaining to the frequency of the learners’ modified output in the three CF sessions.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Learners’ Output**

Types of uptake				
Groups	Uptake without modified output	Non-target-like modified output	Target-like modified output	Total
Ep. Group 1 (audio)	13: 6.85%	21: 11.05%	156: 82.10%	190
Ex. Group 2 (video)	9: 6.83%	17: 12.87%	106: 80.30%	132
Control group (f2f)	18: 8.36%	25: 11.36%	172: 80.28%	215
Total	40: 7.22%	63: 11.66%	434: 81.12%	537

As table 1 shows, among the three means of providing feedback, the learners in the audio-based group produced target-like modified output after 82.10% of their erroneous utterances, whereas in the video-based group this figure was 80.30% and in the face-to-face group it was 80.28%. It is concluded that the learners in the audio-based group were slightly more capable of correcting their erroneous structures following a recast by their teacher. Moreover, regarding the responses in all of the three groups, the majority of the learners’ production tended to be target-like modified output since 81.12% of the entire responses were corrected by the learners, 11.66% of them were non-target-like modified output, and 7.22% were regarded as uptake without modified output. In other words, target-like modified output was the most frequent response in all the conditions, and uptake without modified output was the least frequent. Finally, the learners in the audio-based condition conveyed the highest rate of modified output (82.10%). Pearson’s Chi-square was used to examine whether there is a difference among the three conditions.

**Table 2. The Comparison of Learners’ Output**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.739	4	.946
Cramer’s V	.026		
N of Valid Cases	537		

As Table 2 indicates, the Chi-square analysis revealed that the differences among the three

groups regarding their modified output were not statistically significant  $\chi^2(4, 536) = .739, p = .946$ , Cramer's  $V = .026$ , providing evidence to an extremely weak association between learners' modified output and the means of providing feedback. In other words, these results indicated that the learners provided similar responses to recasts in the two experimental groups and the control group. The second research question asked, "is there any significant difference in EFL learners' perception of recasts provided through technology-mediated video and audio means?" To answer this question, descriptive and inferential statistics were used.

**Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Learners' Uptake**

Perception of recast				
Groups	Fully-perceived	Partially-perceived	Not perceived	Total
Ep. Group 1 (audio)	78: 41.48%	92: 47.89%	20: 10.63%	190
Ex. Group 2 (video)	40: 30.30%	72: 54.55%	20: 15.15%	132
Control group (f2f)	61: 28.38%	135: 62.79%	19: 8.83%	215
Total	179: 28.45%	299: 51.45%	59: 20.10%	537

Table 3 displays the frequency of the three categories in terms of recast perception, i.e., 1) 'fully-perceived' 2) 'partially-perceived' as CF 3) 'not perceived' among these three groups. As the table illustrates, the learners in the audio-based group fully-perceived 41.48% of the recasts they received and partially perceived 47.89%. They were not able to perceive 10.63% of the recasts as corrective feedback. Moreover, the participants in the video-based group set forth 30.30% of their perceptions as 'fully-perceived', 54.55% as 'partially perceived', and 15.15% as 'not perceived'. Ultimately, the last group, i.e., the conventional face-to-face group, signified 28.38% of the recasts as 'fully-perceived', 67.79% as 'partially-perceived' and 8.83% as 'not perceived'. Accordingly, with respect to perceiving the recasts, the learners in the audio group outperformed the other two groups since out of 190 episodes of recasts, 78 were fully-perceived by this group; meanwhile, the lowest extent of perception appertained to the video-based group. To investigate the statistical significance of the difference among the learners of audio-based, video-based and face-to-face groups in terms of their perception of recast, the simple frequencies were submitted to Pearson's chi-square analysis.

**Table 4. The Comparison of Learners' Uptake**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.727	4	.013
Cramer's V	0.11		
N of Valid Cases	537		

The Chi-square analysis indicated a statistically significant difference  $\chi^2(4, 536) = 12.7, p = .013$  regarding the learner's perceptions of recasts among the three groups. Cramer's  $V = .11$  revealed a small association between learners' perception and the three modalities.

## Discussion

The aim of the present study was to find out whether there is a significant difference in EFL learners' extent of output modification in response to the recasts provided through technology-mediated video and audio means. The findings showed there was not any statistically significant difference between the extent of output modification between the two experimental groups and the control group. Thus, it is concluded that technology-based means of providing corrective feedback are just as effective as the traditional face-to-face means of providing feedback. Yet, the learners in the audio-based condition had a slightly higher rate of 'modified output' in response to the recasts. Consequently, this finding illuminated that the learners in the audio-based group were likely to apply more accurate structures vis-a-vis the received recasts. Moreover, in all of the three groups, 'target-like modified output' was the most frequent. In contrast, 'uptake without modified output' was the least frequent. Furthermore, the Chi-square analysis of the learners' reformulations due to the recasts in the three groups indicated no statistically significant differences in terms of their modified output ( $p = .946$ ). Therefore, the answer to the first research question is negative; that is, technology-mediated recast via video and audio as well as face-to-face communications can be regarded as equally effective in triggering uptake. The current findings are congruent with prior investigations in the literature (e.g., Loewen, 2004; Loewen & Philp, 2006; Rassaei, 2017; Sheen, 2004). In addition, the merits of technology-mediated communication are extensively reported in the literature (Duman et al., 2015; Rassaei, 2019b; Xu & Peng, 2017).

In the second research question, the learners' perception of recasts in the three input conditions was investigated. The findings revealed that there was a significant difference among learners' perception in the three groups. This issue might be consistent with the findings of prior research, pointing to the positive contribution of recasts submitted through face-to-face instructional modes (e.g., Lyster & Izquierdo, 2009; Rassaei, 2017) as well as computer-mediated contexts (Rassaei, 2017; Sagarra, 2007; Yilmaz & Yuskel, 2011). Particularly, the current findings were rigorously in agreement with Rassaei's (2019b), confirming the higher noticeability of audio-based recasts to the learners in technology-mediated communication. A reasonable justification for this issue might be germane to the optimal recast uptake generated through the dyadic nature of audio-based interactions. This contention could be interpreted in the light of Schmidt's (1990) noticing hypothesis. Furthermore, the learners in the audio-based group tended to notice the teacher's recasts more rigorously since, in this condition, the teacher's image was not a part of the recast condition and the interactions were, in essence, less face-threatening than the video-based ones; consequently, the learners could apprehend and attend to the recast itself and its corrective nature as well as their own erroneous structures with more fastidious care. Some

researchers (e.g. Mackey, 2006; Rassaei, 2017) have maintained that there is a link between perceived CF and L2 enhancement. Gass and Lewis (2007) state that some learners who had an experience of learning a heritage language might be more prepared for the perception of CF they receive in learning a foreign language. Another factor that might be attributable to the perception of recasts is the linguistic context where the recast is provided. In other words, as a recast is detached from the original interaction, it might be less perceived than a recast generated within the meaningful interactional context (Carpenter *et al.*, 2006). In this vein, the present study also delineated that in addition to the aforementioned determinants, the means of providing feedback might be a decisive factor in facilitating the learners' perception of recasts and their corrective intent.

In sum, the two crucial findings of the present study were as follows: (1) in technology-mediated interaction, the audio-based and video-based recasts are at least as effective conventional face-to-face ones in triggering output modification. However, audio-based feedback is slightly more effective. One plausible justification for this finding could be the potential of audio-based communication to reduce the learners' stress levels and to provide them with additional processing time to contemplate about the correct reformulation. Moreover, the positive effect that LMS brings about due to its accessibility and prevalence. Consequently, such a type of communication could be taken into account as an efficacious tool for distant education in Iran; (2) The accuracy of learners' interpretations of recasts differed significantly in the three instructional settings. The audio-based group revealed an inclination towards gaining a more comprehensive perception of recasts as compared with the other two groups. Accordingly, the recasts provided through the audio-based modality during the technology-mediated communication appear to prompt higher perception potential and less stress due to the absence of the teacher's face-threatening issues; hence, this type of recast can be speculated to emanate more constructive impact on learners' L2 development.

### **Conclusion and Implications**

This quasi-experimental study incorporated LMS into CF research so as to investigate the Iranian EFL learners' uptakes and recasts provided by video- and audio-based technology-mediated means. The findings showed that video- and audio-based technology-mediated recast is just as effective in triggering 'output modification' as traditional 'face-to-face' means. Accordingly, one crucial implication can be the instructional emphasis on providing novel opportunities for the ubiquitous EFL development through technology-mediated communicative programs and taking advantage of the prevalent burgeoning learning accessibility and convenience. Finally, the findings of the current study could propound worthwhile implications for material developers and textbook designers to integrate such learning conditions into their curricula and materials.

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2013.07.014>

## An Examination of Writing Across the Curriculum in a GCC Liberal Arts Environment

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### Abstract

Writing skill deficiencies in English are encountered worldwide at all levels of higher education. These skill deficits are the product of global, systemic changes in education and technology as well as a growing reliance on certain forms of testing that minimize the applications of writing and critical thinking. Private liberal arts universities in *rentier* states in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries are no exception in experiencing these developments and the resultant skill deficits in writing and critical thinking. The challenge of writing skills development is further exacerbated when instruction is carried out in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) medium. Over the past 40 years, interest in using an approach known as Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) to address these deficits has evolved. The question posed in this pilot study is: To what extent can WAC approaches enhance and reinforce the writing skills of non-English major students? The study examines learning outcomes when WAC methods are applied to students' writing across various disciplines in one GCC private liberal arts university.

**Keywords:** Writing across the curriculum, WAC, composition

**Cite as:** Newman, A., & Olson, M. (2023). An examination of writing across the curriculum in a CGG liberal arts environment. *TESOL Kuwait Journal*, 1(2), 78-89.

[https://tesolkuwait.net/resources/Documents/Volume\\_1\\_Issue\\_2.pdf](https://tesolkuwait.net/resources/Documents/Volume_1_Issue_2.pdf)

### Introduction

With the opening of Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar (VCUQatar) in 1998, private Western-style liberal arts education became part of the educational landscape in the Gulf. Since VCUQatar's founding, the establishment of similar four-year colleges and universities has mushroomed. In Kuwait alone, six liberal arts institutions have opened over the course of seven years. The majority of these GCC schools follow the American liberal arts model.

In an attempt to replicate the American model, private liberal arts colleges in the GCC partner with U.S. institutions to develop their curricula. They also actively recruit Western or Western-trained faculty in the hope that American-style pedagogical approaches will be duplicated in GCC classrooms. However, the question must be asked: Do these American pedagogical approaches work in a different educational environment? In the case of writing across the disciplines, the answer, for the most part, is a resounding *no*.

This study grew out of the experiences of one author's largely unsuccessful attempts to replicate the American model in his GCC social science classroom. In an average U.S. college course, the instructor

delivers lectures while students take notes, read their course textbooks, and submit term papers. However, this was not happening in the GCC private liberal arts university. Here, he lectured while a few students took notes, but very few students read their textbooks. The average term paper was a compilation of either unintelligible sentences interspersed with blocks of plagiarized paragraphs “cut and pasted” from the Internet or poorly constructed sentences that rambled on about nothing. Students occasionally submitted well written – but wholly plagiarized – papers. In frustration, he asked for advice from the other authors, faculty members in the English Language Unit at the same institution.

WAC, with its focus on writing to learn, has a successful 40-year track record in the U.S. and the U.K. Its proponents assert that this mode of learning produces enhanced student achievements in writing and cognitive skills. However, the WAC approach, to date, has not been integrated into the curriculum in GCC private liberal arts colleges and universities. This study, therefore, seeks to address the following question: To what extent can WAC approaches promote and reinforce the writing skills of non-English major students in one GCC private liberal arts university?

## **Literature Review**

### *Writing to Learn*

WAC began as a grassroots movement in the 1970s in response to the isolation of literacy and rhetorical instruction from the rest of the curriculum. E.M. Forster, in an address at Trinity College, captured the spirit of the movement when he observed, “How can I know what I think until I see what I say?” (Zimmerman, H., 2005, p. 99). Namely, writing to learn – especially discipline-specific learning – characterized the early movement, as theorists began to view the writing process as a means to help students understand content better and to clarify their thoughts (Britton, 1970; Bullock, 1975; Emig, 1977).

Janet Emig, in her 1977 landmark article “Writing as a Mode of Learning,” discusses writing as a unique way of learning (pp. 122-128). She theorizes that writing does not simply improve writing but that it improves learning. In support of her theory, Emig argues that, although students learn when listening and talking, writing is the best mode of learning because, in dealing with actuality, it is enactive, iconic, and symbolic. The terms enactive, iconic, and symbolic are used to describe a process that enables one to learn through action, depiction in an image, and restatement in words. “. . . [I]n enactive learning, the hand predominates; in iconic, the eye; and in symbolic, the brain” (Emig, 1977, p. 124). She argues that writing is the best mode for learning because it requires the near-simultaneous use of the hand, the eye, and the brain as well as actively involving both spheres of the brain.

Emig’s contemporaries lend substantial credence to the idea that cross-curricular writing programs can enhance student learning. Britton et al. classified writing into three categories based on function: transactional, poetic, and expressive (1975, p. 11). They, as well as Vygotsky, speculate that the third type, expressive writing, plays a key role in the learning process because it (expressive writing) resembles what has been identified as “inner speech” (Britton et al., pp. 11-18; Vygotsky, 1962, p. 39).

Subsequent studies have substantiated the claim that writing plays a crucial role in the learning process regardless of the discipline (Humes, 1983; Applebee, 1984). Equally important, students, regardless of their majors, see writing as key factor in their learning process. In a study conducted in 2009, 87.9% of sampled students reported that writing helped them to learn (Newman et al.).

### *Functions of Writing Types*

In 1984, Newell examined the effects of notetaking, short-answer responses, and essay writing on three

measures of learning: recall, concept application, and gain in passage-specific knowledge. He found that essay writing enabled students to “produce a consistently more abstract set of associations for key concepts” than did notetaking or answering study questions (p. 275). His study also validated Emig’s notion of the connective nature of writing (Emig, 1977).

[A]nswering study questions required planning at a local level rather than at a global level. While answering study questions may require a great deal of planning, the writer can only consider information in isolated segments. Consequently, while a great deal of information is generated, it never gets integrated into a coherent text, and, in turn, into the students’ own thinking. Essay writing, on the other hand, requires that the writers, in the course of examining evidence and marshaling ideas, integrate elements of the prose passage into their knowledge of the topic rather than leaving the information in isolated bits. This integration may well explain why students’ understanding of concepts from the prose passage was significantly better after writing essays than after answering study questions (Newell, 1984, p. 282).

Five years later, Newell teamed up with Winograd to re-examine his data from 1984, with two new constructs: “level of importance” and “quality of gist.” Besides confirming the earlier findings, Newell and Winograd conclude that both short-answer responses and essay writing help students to “recall the overall organizing frames of the original passages more often than when they engaged in notetaking” and that the more holistic “recall of gist” was best facilitated by essay writing (Newell & Winograd, 1989; p. 210).

Langer and Applebee offer a substantial contribution to the research on writing to learn through their book *How Writing Shapes Thinking* (1987, pp. 135-136). Among their many conclusions are the following:

1. Writing activities promote learning better than activities involving only studying or reading.
2. Different types of writing help students to focus on different kinds of information.
3. Short-answer responses turn information into discrete small pieces. In contrast, analytic writing leads to more complex and thoughtful inquiry but on a smaller amount of information.

In other words, although writing promotes a more focused, complex consideration of the subject matter, the volume of information learned is narrowed. Whereas summary writing and notetaking lead to comprehensive but superficial understandings of the subject matter, analytic writing, by promoting depth rather than breadth, inevitably neglects whatever information was not included in the construction of the essay. Accordingly, teachers need to be aware of the various consequences of the forms and contexts of writing they introduce in the classroom.

### *Learning Strategies and Styles*

Researchers have documented that EFL students employ a greater variety and number of learning strategies as they become more proficient in the language (O’Malley & Chamot, 1994; Green & Oxford, 1995; Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999; Wharton, 2000). Not only do less proficient language learners have fewer strategies, but also they find it more difficult to assess how appropriate these strategies are for the task. “In these studies, students’ understanding of the task’s requirements and whether they could match a strategy to meet those requirements seemed to be a major determinant of effective use of language learning strategies” Chamot, 2004; p. 1).

Learning styles, as well as learning strategies, affect EFL students. Most students enrolled in GCC private



liberal arts colleges are products of an educational system that is largely based on rote learning, or as one writer referred to it, “the three R’s (read, remember, regurgitate)” (Al-Yousef, 2003). However, more than memorization and recitation are required for students to become proficient in another language. It is a commonly held belief among language teachers that students have a variety of learning preferences or styles (Harmer, 1996). Researchers also note that the more often the different neuro-systems are deployed in learning, the better something is learned and the more easily it is accessed again, later. Current practices in language teaching increasingly reflect a movement away from envisioning language learning as a subconscious and largely passive acquisition of language, primarily through exposure to the spoken word, and toward a more proactive, conscious, cognitive endeavor in which the learner is encouraged to access, evaluate, and deploy strategically his or her own learning methods in a deliberate manner (Chamot & O’Malley, 1994). Researchers have written extensively on the value of a cognitivist approach to learning language, claiming that the student can be taught to monitor, train, and enhance his or her own cognitive strategies at a variety of levels, such as memorization, planning, and self-evaluation. More generally, in the field of technology, enthusiasts have used the term constructivism to describe a pedagogical approach in which the student actively constructs meaning while drawing upon a variety of learning styles and input from a variety of sensory systems (Boyer & Semrau, 1995; Sunal & Hass, 2002). Students can, thus, adapt their learning strategies to fit their academic environment.

The ability to adapt to one’s environment is born out by two studies. Marris et al. find that the majority of the Kuwaiti students studied – despite succeeding in a primary and secondary education system that requires rote learning – are actually sequential learners with visual-verbal learning styles (2001). This finding replicates the results of a 1986 study (Soliman & Torrance, 1986).

Sequential, visual-verbal learners prefer to learn in an orderly, structured classroom environment, with information being presented sequentially and instructions being given clearly (Marris, Al-Nakib, & Kamal, 2001, p. 4). Having targets and deadlines helps show them they are making progress. Because interaction with others is important to them, they gain by discussion and sharing information as well as question and answer sessions. As visual-verbal learners, they remember best what they see through pictures, diagrams, demonstrations, etc., and they get more out of words and spoken explanations. In short, they learn more when information is presented visually and verbally (Felder & Henriques, 1995, p. 22). Kuwaiti students with sequential, visual-verbal learning styles learn best in a classroom where:

1. Students understand the expectations, goals, and standards of the course.
2. Students receive sufficient “hands on” training or examples so that they can put into practice what they are learning.
3. Students can link what they are learning to what they will be expected to do in the “real world.”
4. Students can work as part of a team and cooperate with others.
5. Students receive positive feedback from their instructors.
6. Students have opportunities for interaction, group discussion, and group problem solving.
7. Students are emotionally engaged in a subject or can relate it to their personal interests, values, and goals (Marris et al., 2001, p. 4).

## **Methods and Materials**

The setting is a small private liberal arts university in a GCC country in which students, with varying degrees of exposure to English, come from different educational backgrounds. Data for this pilot study were drawn from writing samples of 49 students with various majors enrolled in an introductory social science course for the Fall 2008 semester. Twelve of the students were English majors, and 37 were non-English majors. Students submitted two 250–500-word essays through Turnitin, an on-line plagiarism detection service. The writing samples were analyzed by both EFL instructors and the course instructor. EFL instructors used the rubric Write on Target to analyze samples according to development, organization, and proficiency in expression of ideas in English; the course instructor analyzed the samples' content (See Appendix 1 and 2). English and non-English majors were compared as groups to establish the method's validity and reliability.

## Results

Table 1: Students' Major	
<i>English</i>	<i>Non-English</i>
12	37

Table 2: Paper A Grades				
<i>English Majors</i>				
<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>F</i>
0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33% <sup>1</sup>	67% <sup>2</sup>
<i>Non-English Majors</i>				
<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>F</i>
5.4% <sup>3</sup>	5.4% <sup>4</sup>	24.3% <sup>5</sup>	13.5% <sup>6</sup>	51.4% <sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>n = 4   <sup>2</sup>n = 8   <sup>3</sup>n = 2   <sup>4</sup>n = 2   <sup>5</sup>n = 9   <sup>6</sup>n = 5   <sup>7</sup>n = 19

Table 3: Paper B				
<i>English Majors</i>				
<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>F</i>
0.0%	8.3% <sup>1</sup>	0.0%	0.0%	91.7% <sup>2</sup>
<i>Non-English Majors</i>				
<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>F</i>
8.1% <sup>3</sup>	13.5% <sup>4</sup>	24.3% <sup>5</sup>	10.8% <sup>6</sup>	43.2% <sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>n = 1   <sup>2</sup>n = 11   <sup>3</sup>n = 3   <sup>4</sup>n = 5   <sup>5</sup>n = 9   <sup>6</sup>n = 4   <sup>7</sup>n = 16

Table 4: Paper A Median by Grade Range				
<i>English Majors</i>				
<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>F</i>
0	0	0	66	40
<i>Non-English Majors</i>				
<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>F</i>
91	82	75	68	0

Table 5: Paper B Median by Grade Range				
<i>English Majors</i>				
<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>F</i>
0	80	0	0	51
<i>Non-English Majors</i>				
<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>F</i>
96	85	76	63	56

**Table 6: Analysis of Failing Papers**

<i>Paper A</i>			<i>Paper B</i>		
<i>English Majors</i>			<i>English Majors</i>		
Below 60%	Plagiarized	Not Submitted	Below 60%	Plagiarized	Not Submitted
1	5	2	2	2	7
<i>Non-English Majors</i>			<i>Non-English Majors</i>		
Below 60%	Plagiarized	Not Submitted	Below 60%	Plagiarized	Not Submitted
0	11	8	1	5	10

**Table 7: Midterm Examination**

<i>English Majors</i>				
<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>F</i>
14.3% <sup>1</sup>	14.3% <sup>2</sup>	42.8% <sup>3</sup>	14.3% <sup>4</sup>	14.3% <sup>5</sup>
<i>Non-English Majors</i>				
<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>F</i>
0	15.2% <sup>6</sup>	48.5% <sup>7</sup>	24.2% <sup>8</sup>	12.1% <sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup>n = 1   <sup>2</sup>n = 1   <sup>3</sup>n = 3   <sup>4</sup>n = 1   <sup>5</sup>n = 1   <sup>6</sup>n = 5   <sup>7</sup>n = 16   <sup>8</sup>n = 8   <sup>9</sup>n = 4

**Table 8: Analysis of Papers by Content and Writing**

<i>Paper A Median</i> <sup>1</sup>		<i>Paper B Median</i> <sup>2</sup>	
<i>English Majors</i>		<i>English Majors</i>	
Content Grade	Writing Grade	Content Grade	Writing Grade
26	38	24	37
<i>Non-English Majors</i>		<i>Non-English Majors</i>	
Content Grade	Writing Grade	Content Grade	Writing Grade
30	45	32	49

<sup>1</sup>English majors, 64 for the whole paper; non-English majors, 75 for the whole paper   <sup>2</sup>English majors, 61 for the whole paper; non-English majors, 81 for the whole paper

## Discussion

While the slight increase in scores from Paper A to Paper B is not remarkable in itself, the increase in grade distributions for the two papers – when contrasted to the grade distribution for the midterm examination (which required short-response answers) – is worth noting (Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5). One explanation for the higher midterm scores is that students improved their writing proficiency by writing. However, an equally compelling argument can be made that reading academic texts – when combined with intensive writing in a course – may be responsible for the increase since students had to read academic texts as source material for their papers. Such texts are replete with models for college-level writing, e.g. standard grammar, major rhetorical patterns of organization, vocabulary, and connectives.

While writing is an essential part of the learning process regardless of a student's first language, the majority of the sampled students were not proficient users of English, thus, making it difficult – if not impossible – for some of them to do college-level work. Newman et al. found that the majority of students entering this particular private liberal arts institution are not proficient in English, i.e. they do not have a TOEFL score of 500 or above (2009). Newman and colleagues determined that only 9% of recent

high school graduates registering for the Fall 2008 term scored 500 or above on the TOEFL and 42% scored in the 350-399 range. One would normally expect a failure rate of 7%-11%; however, the actual rates in this study for Papers A and B ranged from 67% to 91.7% for English majors and from 51.4% to 43.2% for non-English majors. An explanation for the high failure rate may lie in the prerequisite for this particular course: a TOEFL score of 450. In contrast, a minimum of 500 on the TOEFL is required to enroll in college-level courses in the U.S. However, these authors could document that only one of the sampled students had a TOEFL score of 500 or greater. It can be inferred that these EFL students' language proficiency in English led to the abnormal grade distributions shown in Tables 2 and 3, the significantly high rate of failing work shown in Tables 2 and 3, and the slight improvement in writing proficiency shown in Table 8. The Paper B median grade for students majoring in English is misleading because only two students submitted papers that were not plagiarized (Table 8).

While weak English language skills offer a partial answer for the students' performance, plagiarism played a major role in the results (Table 6). The most common reason for plagiarism cited by students in the West is poor time management skills (Gill, 2001). In contrast, Newman et al. report that 16.5% of 276 sampled students enrolled in an EFL course at a private liberal arts university in Kuwait ranked desire for a good grade as a reason for having plagiarized at least once, followed by weak writing skills (12.7%) and poor time management (11%) (2009). Thus, a combination of poor time management and weak writing skills – along with a desire for a good grade – may explain the high rate of plagiarism shown in Table 6. An equally important factor is many of the students may not have understood the concept of plagiarism, for Newman et al. found that 58.9% of students surveyed indicated they had not been taught what plagiarism means (2009). Turnitin may have led to the decrease of non-English majors' plagiarized papers from 51.4% to 43.2% (Table 6).

It can be further argued that students' learning styles and strategies were major factors affecting the results. Although students did have opportunities for group discussions, based on their sequential, visual-verbal learning styles, they may have needed more concrete directions than that provided them. To illustrate, directions for Paper B were as follows:

How does technology affect people's lives? Refer to society, not individuals. Also use the book and the instructor's lectures – not your opinion.

Students may have found the following instructions more helpful:

1. In 250-400 words, compare and contrast how technology has affected the four types of societies discussed in the book and in class.
2. Your conclusion must include what can be logically inferred about technology's impact on society.
3. Sources: Course textbook and lecture/discussion notes
4. The final draft will be marked according to the attached rubric.
5. Due dates for the rough draft and final draft are . . . .

The exercise also might have been more beneficial as a learning experience if students had been provided with a model (on another topic) to use as a paradigm and if the model had been analyzed in class. It can be argued that some students may have confused providing ample support for their theses through citing examples drawn from their own experience with including their own opinions. Analysis of a model may have aided them in differentiating between examples used to illustrate the grasp of a concept and the inclusion of personal opinion.

## Conclusion

The findings support earlier studies that draw on WAC learning approaches and on student-centered learning approaches in EFL. Namely, when students are encouraged to write, their writing proficiency improves (Table 8). The results further indicate that the writing process plays a role in helping students to understand the course content better and to clarify their thought process. The capacity for critical thinking also improves with the integration of course material into their learning repertoire.

While WAC approaches can enhance the writing skills of non-English majors, resistance to classroom application of WAC innovations may come less from students themselves than from instructors owing to the increased demands on instructors' time outside of the classroom for preparation and training required for the success of WAC approaches. In addition, WAC programs pre-suppose a greater level of coordination between departments, programs and instructors than is likely experienced among most private liberal arts colleges and universities in the GCC.

## Acknowledgement

The authors express their appreciation for the invaluable support provided by Dr. Ray Weisenborn, Khadeja Abdul Hadi, Mutasim Al Deaibes, Christine Evans, Heba El-Hadary, and Ibtisam Othman.

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Appendix 1

<p><b>CONTENT</b></p> <p>Minimal development  <b>6 8 10</b>                  Partial definitions of each term , no explanation                  Details lacking or irrelevant</p> <p>Some attention to detail  <b>11 13 15</b> Basic definition of each term                  Some understanding of significance</p> <p>Numerous details, related to topic  <b>16 18 20</b>                  Fully developed explanation of importance                  of concepts</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>ORGANIZATION</b></p> <p><b>4 3</b> Lack of any focus</p> <p><b>7 6 5</b> Implied main idea,                  some transitions</p> <p><b>10 9 8</b> Clear thesis                  sentence,                  Effective                  transitions, solid conclusion</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LANGUAGE</b></p> <p>Appropriate word choice, correct usage  <b>8 9 10</b></p> <p>Very basic vocabulary with usage errors  <b>5 6 7</b></p> <p>Many errors in word choice and usage  <b>3 4</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>MECHANICS</b></p> <p><b>10 9 8</b> Basic control of                  English sentence, 2-3 errors</p> <p><b>7 6 5</b> Numerous, varied                  errors in sentence                  completeness, etc.,                  4-5 errors</p> <p><b>4 3</b> All sentences                  contain errors</p>



## Appendix 2

## WRITE ON TARGET

To the Instructor: This is a modified holistic scoring system which is designed to streamline the writing assessment process, improve communication between teacher and student and assure adherence to consistent evaluative standards within a teaching unit. You will examine each piece of student writing in four areas: Content, Organization, Language and Mechanics. You will select the descriptor for each area which best corresponds to the student writing selection. You will circle the appropriate score (ranging from 10-25) for each area and then assign a total score ranging from 40-100 points. To confirm consistency each student paper can be scored independently by two instructors.

To the student: **Write on Target** is a writing assessment device which is designed for regular classroom use to help you **TARGET** strengths and weaknesses in your writing. Your goal to become your own best critic and editor as you develop your writing skills. For each of your writing assignments will receive a score which is the sum of sub-scores in four key areas: Content, Organization, Language and Mechanics. When you are able to **organize** the **content** of your essay using academic **language** correctly and respecting the rules for **mechanics** in English, you will show that you are **WRITE ON TARGET**.

Writing well in English is not a mystery, nor is it rocket science. It is a skill which can be mastered over time with plenty of practice, feedback and coaching. If you use your time and energy well, your increased writing skills will show that you have benefitted from **WRITE ON TARGET**.

Christine Sherley Evans©2003

## **Embracing Teaching Pop Culture in the Modern Classroom: A Middle Eastern Take on the Benefits and Challenges**

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### **Abstract**

This paper explores the use of pop culture in education, particularly in the Middle East, to increase student involvement and attentiveness in the classroom. Most educators have successfully incorporated pop culture into language lessons and other multi-disciplines, such as math and IT. Previous studies have explored various teaching models, but none have suggested ways to incorporate pop culture in the Middle East, especially at a higher education level. The paper aims to develop a foundation for integrating pop culture in teaching practices based on defining pop culture, its effectiveness in all disciplines, and the challenges expected in the context of the Middle East. The paper uses a literature review to suggest practices that can be successfully applied in the Middle Eastern TESOL classroom. The findings result in several teaching strategies that are based on the criteria of context, selection, implementation, and learning outcomes. Quantitative and qualitative research is necessary, specifically from a teacher's perspective, to find out more about the challenges and successful application of pop culture in the local Kuwaiti classroom.

**Keywords:** Pop culture, EFL, teaching

**Cite as:** Buhamdi, S., AlHajri, L., Divakaran, M., Alsaeed, F., & Alshalabi, R. (2023).

Embracing teaching pop culture in the modern classroom: A Middle Eastern take on the benefits and challenges. *TESOL Kuwait Journal*, 1(2), 90-99.

[https://tesolkuwait.net/resources/Documents/Volume\\_1\\_Issue\\_2.pdf](https://tesolkuwait.net/resources/Documents/Volume_1_Issue_2.pdf)

### **Introduction**

Recent media technological advances, such as the increasing popularity of the use of smartphones, social media platforms, and the expanding Internet, have resulted in a "constantly

connected" world for all individuals, especially today's young adults who have grown to utilize digital technology, they can remain connected and the rest of the globe anytime, anywhere, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Most of the country's young adults have quickly embraced the most recent technological breakthroughs, and it is vital to study how to meet them in the middle by incorporating pop culture into our classrooms to enhance the learning experience.

### **Pop Culture Definition**

Before exploring the impact of utilizing pop culture in education it is important to first define it and navigate the different interpretations of pop culture in literature. Delaney's definition took a broad approach as he stated, "Pop Culture is defined as the aspects of social life most actively involved in by the public" (Delaney, 2007). While his definition is unbounded by strict barriers, it does limit the interpretation of the realm of social life. In *Rhetorical Dimensions of Popular Culture*, (Brummett, 1991) explains popular culture is the "culture of the people" which is informed by mainstream society. The parameters he used to define popular culture range from the style of clothing to the frequently used colloquialisms. In a slightly more encompassing definition than Brummett's, popular culture is described in the "Popular Culture" article by (Dodds & Funnell 2020) and in the "International Encyclopedia of Human Geography" book by (Kobayashi, 2020) as "a gamut of objects, practices, meanings, and cultural contexts usually produced and consumed by mass audiences around the world." (Dodds & Funnell, 2020) and (Kobayashi, 2020). This definition does not limit the usage of pop culture to social life but allows it to seep into all areas of one's life.

Nevertheless, Dittmer's definition exposed several pathways to take into consideration when analyzing pop culture, the term was winnowed as Popular culture comes into existence as a contrast with the then-normatively superior high culture associated with the aristocracy and bourgeoisie. Conversely, various social actors have increasingly deployed the idea of popular culture as a means of affiliating themselves with the masses, illustrating their disdain for cultural elitism. In either case, popular culture comes to be defined by the taste of the masses, inflected with either positive or negative connotations. (Dittmer et al., 2010).

In this historical view, the notion of pop culture being extracted from the masses remains consistent, but it also theorizes a two-way approach. While pop culture is rooted in the ideas of the masses, it is also a tool to be utilized to reach the masses. This rationale can be utilized to reach the students and bridge the gap between their educational learning and their understanding of the world.

### **The Effectiveness of Using Pop Culture in Multiple Disciplines**

One of the most evident benefits of incorporating pop culture in the modern classroom is that it creates an engaging and dynamic learning environment, enhancing the instructor's connection with students and promoting critical thinking and creativity. Pop culture forms a common ground for students to engage in topics of their interest, make connections between their learning and real-world concepts, and ultimately learn actively and effectively. By integrating pop culture into our curricula, educators can create meaningful connections where they can relate academic

content with their personal experiences which results in increasing students' engagement, deeper understanding, critical thinking development, and even enthusiasm to learn more. Research done in music and art theater (Bella & Pullen, 2018) promotes this idea further as they presented case studies illustrating the benefits of incorporating pop culture. It highlighted that utilizing pop culture materials can enhance students' motivation, engagement, facilitate a better understanding of the course content and promote a clear understanding of the subject matter.

In the field of Psychology, (Fleming, 2017) explores the use of popular films to enhance teaching and learning. The study indicates that incorporating pop culture references in psychology courses increases students' interest, engagement, and understanding of psychological concepts. This demonstrates the potential of pop culture to make complex topics more accessible and relatable to students (Martin & Posner, 2013). Moreover, the benefits of incorporating pop culture extend beyond traditional higher education settings. (Coppola & Sartain, 2018) examine its impact in adult learning contexts and highlight its ability to promote engagement, retention, and application of knowledge.

Furthermore, pop culture can enhance interdisciplinary learning and promote critical thinking skills. (Hester, 2019) discussed how the integration of pop culture in higher education can blur disciplinary boundaries, encouraging students to explore diverse perspectives and make connections across different fields of study. By challenging conventional ideas and encouraging independent thought, pop culture can cultivate students' ability to think critically and approach complex issues from multiple angles. While it is important to note that the effectiveness of pop culture in higher education can vary depending on the specific context and implementation. Furthermore, (Hester, 2019) commitment to using popular culture to teach critical thinking suggests that pop culture can be a valuable resource for promoting critical thinking skills.

In the field of Chemistry, (Hannon & Bretz, 2012) conducted a study to investigate the impact of using popular media, including TV shows and movies, in a general chemistry course. The researchers found that by integrating specific episodes and scenes from popular media that were related to chemistry concepts, students were able to make connections between abstract concepts and their everyday experiences. This led to improved understanding and retention of the material. Additionally, the use of popular media promoted critical thinking skills as students analyzed and evaluated the scientific accuracy of the media content. By leveraging popular culture references, educators can create a bridge between formal learning environments and the real world, fostering a deeper understanding of complex concepts and enhancing students' ability to apply their knowledge in practical settings.

### **Effectiveness of Utilizing Pop Culture in The Middle Eastern Classroom**

The utilization of pop culture in Middle Eastern Higher Education holds the potential for several benefits. Firstly, incorporating pop culture elements that are popular and resonate with Middle Eastern students can enhance cultural relevance and student engagement within the learning process (Aldahmash & Al-Qahtani, 2018). By connecting course content to familiar and beloved media, educators can create a more relatable and immersive learning experience for students. Additionally, the use of pop culture in higher education can contribute to language

acquisition, particularly for English as a second language learners. Exposure to authentic language use in popular media can improve listening and comprehension skills, as well as enhance vocabulary acquisition (Aldahmash & Al-Qahtani, 2018). By integrating movies, TV shows, and music, students can engage with real-life language use in an engaging and meaningful way.

Moreover, incorporating international pop culture references in Middle Eastern higher education can promote global perspectives and intercultural communication. Analyzing and discussing media from different countries can help students develop a broader understanding of global cultures, values, and perspectives (Flew & Smith, 2015). Nevertheless, (Senzai & Gamage, 2018) provide insights into the relationship between pop culture and education in the Middle Eastern context. They examine how pop culture influences education and its impact on children and youth. They discuss the role of pop culture in shaping identity, socialization, and values among Middle Eastern youth. It can foster intercultural competence, preparing students for a globalized world where cultural sensitivity and understanding are increasingly important. Furthermore, the use of pop culture in higher education can foster critical thinking and media literacy skills. Middle Eastern students can engage in discussions and analysis of media representations, cultural values, and stereotypes presented in movies, TV shows, or other pop culture artifacts (Flew & Smith, 2015). This is particularly vital considering how Middle Eastern people are portrayed in Western media, so students are encouraged to critically understand the media they consume and develop their ability to question, evaluate, and interpret information from various sources.

### **Challenges To Incorporating Pop Culture in The Middle Eastern TESOL Classroom**

While popular culture is praised as a stimulating resource for language and content learning, there are several issues and difficulties regarding using popular culture. In most Asian countries (Thanh, 2018) and the Middle East in particular, the question of how to utilize popular culture in language teaching is split between two mindsets: schools that favor rigorous academic achievement as well as traditional values and the mass media which features diverse values that usually pursue pleasure. As a result, teachers do not usually possess the ability to use popular cultural trends as they are typically restricted by the institutional governed curriculum, testing, and externally specified teaching frameworks.

Moreover, (Thanh, 2018) reiterates this limitation, as teachers who may want to use rich and diverse pop culture references are also caught in the dilemma of meeting formal English teaching requirements and testing. In other words, teachers may not necessarily have the freedom nor time to prepare and deliver their lessons using popular culture material. As educators, we should address these institutional rigidities and try to influence pedagogical strategies which allow students and teachers to accomplish their institutional requirements while using popular culture fully understand and benefit from the language.

Even if the challenges of strict curriculums and cultural resistance are addressed, we cannot ignore challenges that arise at an individual level from the teachers and the students. Indeed, a lack of teachers as well as a lack of proficiently trained ones pose a serious challenge to teaching

competent English. Adding popular culture to their lessons would certainly add a level of complexity that not many teachers are prepared to handle (Li, 2011). Furthermore, teachers need to be wary when selecting popular culture materials, for the engagement of these sources depends on multiple student contextual factors. Factors such as English level, socioeconomic status, age, and gender play a role in how and if the learners absorb the pop culture references and consequently the language. Undeniably, advanced learners may have more contact with L2 pop culture materials, and they could benefit immensely from using them. However, less-competent learners may disengage because of their limited linguistic and cultural competence, hence causing them difficulty understanding high levels of language (Hua, 2015).

When probing the concept of pop culture, the topic of Americanization often arises. In a study that surveys the effect of Americanization on German pop culture, Agnes Mueller states that “America and its iconography have been instrumental in defining German political and aesthetic culture, especially since World War II.” (Mueller, 2004). It is not surprising to say that culture in general throughout the world is frequently influenced by America. In his investigation of the historical roots of anime and manga, (Levi, 2006) argues that Americanization was utilized to generate interest in Japan and its culture. Although there is a difference between Americanization and popular culture, the line is often blurred because they are so intertwined with one another. It is no doubt that often American culture influences popular culture in different regions, and non-more so that in the Middle East (Ment, 2011). The global power of English and its effect on the local culture can be a serious issue: many popular cultural resources, whether internet-based or more traditional media such as film and TV, are often American and other times European. A possible counteractive is to utilize local popular cultural resources in the learners’ mother tongue. Another solution is to incorporate material that is based on non-Western backgrounds, and this is recommended to discourage outside cultures from being prioritized while also fostering multilingualism and the desire to learn other languages and cultures.

### **Ways of Successfully Utilizing Pop Culture in The Modern Middle Eastern TESOL Classroom**

Arabic Language Studies, (Freitas, 2014) explored the use of popular culture as a teaching tool for Arabic language and culture among American students. The research focused on understanding the perceptions of American students regarding the effectiveness of using popular culture in Arabic language learning. The findings suggest that incorporating popular culture in Arabic language education can be an effective strategy to enhance students' language acquisition and cultural competence. What we can learn here is that this situation can work in the opposite way, namely teaching English to Arabic native speakers using local pop culture as an effective teaching tool to engage and motivate students, while still delivering meaningful lectures. Incorporating pop culture references in lesson plans has proven to be a promising method to achieve this objective. Also, (Liu & Angel, 2017) states that pop culture is an effective tool used to teach language skills. The use of pop culture increases students’ vocabulary and listening abilities through illustrations, documentaries, movies, songs, and advertisements (Shuqair et al., 2019).

Most Arabic countries are incorporating English as a foreign language at all University levels. Teachers who teach various subjects, therefore, can use Popular games, social media trends, songs, movies, and advertisements done in English to make it easier for students (Werner, 2020). Teachers can organize field trips for learners to participate in at nearby cultural attractions or occasions, including festivals or museums (Dietrich et al., 2021). By involving students in pop culture, teachers can help make the content they are teaching in the classroom more relatable and interesting. Pop culture provides a culturally relevant context for learning and enables students to connect with the subject matter in a way that is meaningful to them. For example, when a teacher uses popular trends to teach complex concepts or themes, this allows students to see real-world applications of what they are learning. Pop culture also provides a shared cultural experience with students, which can help build a sense of community in the classroom and make learning more engaging. Additionally, by incorporating pop culture into instruction, teachers can create a fun and interactive teaching environment that motivates students to learn and participate actively in the lesson. Overall, involving students in pop culture can enhance the relevance of classroom content, promote active engagement, and inspire learning.

A group of teachers in Turkey reported that they use popular culture in the form of starter warm-up activities to make learning exciting. For example, by starting the lesson with a trending social media video that is linked to the lesson and allowing students to give their views concerning the trend. This strategy helps the educator to create a welcoming classroom setting, get learners' attention, and encourage interaction as well. Correspondingly, another group of English tutors in Turkey confirmed using pop culture to improve the learning experience by showing images. They indicated that they use images, song lyrics, and scripts from local popular television shows to teach grammar and vocabulary (Rets, 2016). Likewise, teachers in Korea use realistic materials such as songs to make learning more interesting. For instance, in Korea, teachers are embracing the use of K-pop movies and songs in their teaching approaches (Jung et al., 2022). Incorporating appropriate and culturally relevant popular culture in Middle Eastern classrooms should increase students' language retention and knowledge about other countries and cultures.

Teachers can use popular culture to back up the textbook's examples. In most cases, textbooks contain a few examples of each topic (Bal, 2018). It is noteworthy that none of the textbooks have as many examples of modern technology as young learners are exposed to in real life (Rets, 2016). In the same way, teachers can utilize current events in the news, social media trends, TV shows, and movies to strengthen ideas taught in the textbook. For instance, when teaching about human rights, an educator can use examples from popular culture such as Equality. Additionally, teachers can use quotes and pictures of famous Middle Eastern philosophers, activists, artists, and athletes to help deliver the lesson. Moreover, using examples of real-world locations, businesses, and events to link textbook concepts with real-world Middle Eastern application examples helps students develop a better understanding and comprehension of the content being delivered (Jubas, 2023). Besides, teachers can use pop culture to compare with textbook content (Parry, 2014). For instance, an educator can ask students to compare events portrayed in the news with the textbook's description. To give students agency in their learning journey, teachers

can ask the students to relate the topic to their favorite pop culture theme or character. This helps learners comprehend the difference between pop culture's interpretation and the textbook's data.

### **Conclusion**

Popular culture in education has demonstrated its potential to bridge the gap between academic concepts and students' everyday experiences, interests, and hobbies, leading to increased student engagement and motivation. As highlighted by (Condis, 2016), incorporating elements of pop culture can create a more dynamic and relatable learning environment, allowing students to connect theoretical knowledge to real-world contexts. This connection, specifically when applied to TESOL, fosters a sense of relevance and personal investment in the subject matter, resulting in improved student participation and a deeper understanding of the material. By leveraging the familiarity and appeal of pop culture, educators can tap into students' existing knowledge and interests, creating an engaging and interactive English language learning experience. Our recommendations are to use pop culture in two principal ways: as an interesting warm-up activity that is related to the language lesson, and/or as a way of supplementing textbook material with relevant pop culture references that enable students to better grasp the learning concepts.

However, educators need to be conscious of the challenges discussed in the paper when selecting and applying pop culture to their lesson plans, specifically regarding relevance and appropriateness. Indeed, it can also be challenging to find appropriate and relevant examples of pop culture to integrate into the curriculum and ensure that these examples are not offensive or inappropriate for all groups of students. Despite these challenges, the utilization of pop culture in the modern classroom is a valuable and effective way to promote student engagement, creativity, and ultimately success. Specific research on the effectiveness and challenges of using pop culture in higher education in the Middle East is limited, and exploring these topics from a teacher's perspective using quantitative and qualitative data would provide valuable insights into related areas. Further research that specifically explores the perceptions of higher education instructors of the challenges and effective methodologies in the Middle East would be valuable to gain a deeper understanding of its impact in that explicit framework.

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## Emotional Intelligence in Education and the Workplace

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### Abstract

It is a scientific fact that emotions precede thought and when feelings are high, the cognitive abilities of people especially decision-making and interpersonal skills are reduced. Because of that, it is important not only to manage our emotions, but also the emotions of others so that to achieve success on personal and professional levels. This article endeavors to promote students, workers and leaders' emotional intelligence using first, Coleman (2006) specified five categories of emotional intelligence. Then, the seven benefits of emotional intelligence development on the personal, education and work levels so that not to hurt other feelings when feeling uncomfortable and to learn how to manage emotions to resolve conflicts in personal, academic and work levels; creating by that a culture of collaboration.

**Key words:** Emotional intelligence-cognitive abilities- personal and professional levels- conflicts- culture of collaboration

**Cite as:** Younes, D. (2023). Emotional intelligence in education and the workplace. *TESOL Kuwait Journal*, 1(2), 100-1099. [https://tesolkuwait.net/resources/Documents/Volume\\_1\\_Issue\\_2.pdf](https://tesolkuwait.net/resources/Documents/Volume_1_Issue_2.pdf)

### Introduction

According to Coleman (2006), "emotional intelligence is a person's capacity to manage their feelings in order to appropriately and accurately express them. In fact, emotional intelligence is 67% of the skills needed for high leaders' performance in education and workplace. Moreover, managing emotions is important in giving and receiving feedback, meeting tight deadlines, dealing with challenging relationships, not having enough resources, navigating changes and working through setbacks and failure.

### Literature Review

At a personal level, emotional intelligence helps first, in having uncomfortable conversations without hurting feelings. Second, managing our emotions when stressed or feeling overwhelmed. Finally, improving relationships with the people we care about (Benjamin, 2020).

In emotional intelligence Coleman (2006) named five categories that emotional intelligence consists of. First, self-awareness wherein the person knows his or her own strengths and weaknesses or understands how his or her words and behaviors affect people. The second category is self-regulation. It is when the person knows how to exercise, stop and control his or her emotions when they are angry.

The third category is self-motivation wherein the person is determined and driven to succeed from within, as opposed to economic drives, power, fame and extrinsic factors.

The fourth category is empathy when a person is compassionate and cares about connecting with others on a deeper level and is an active listener.

The last category is social skills wherein the person knows how to establish trusting relationships and gain respect from others. In the field of education, to build students' emotional intelligence, teachers need to incorporate collaborative and social learning activities in each lesson plan. The discussion-based activities are like Socratic seminars, philosophical chairs, Paidea seminars and fishbowl conversations.

To begin with, Socratic seminars are democratic and student-centered approach to class discussions. The four key components of Socratic Seminars are first, students ask and answer the questions while the teacher remains silent. Second, students sit in a circle or oval shape facing one another. Third, participants do not raise their hands or call on names to speak because there is no discussion leader. Each student can comment or ask follow-up questions to one another. Fourth, the best discussions are explanatory and open rather than cut-and-dry debates. While a question might lead to persuasive thought, the goal should be to examine points of view and construct deeper meaning rather than argue two different binary options (Spencer, 2022).

Following Socratic Seminars in the classroom makes students learn deeply human skills that they'll use during their entire lives. They engage in critical thinking and learn how to see truth as nuanced and complex. Moreover, students learn how to speak up boldly and to listen to others with empathy. According to Spencer (2022), this messy conversation gives students the opportunity to develop the needed skills in a democratic society. From an academic perspective, Socratic Seminars engage students in retrieval practice and help them make key connections between ideas. The knowledge learnt in these conversations move into long-term memory more than the ones that take place around one topic (Appendix A).

The second type of activity that fosters careful listening and encourages every student to contribute their thoughts is philosophical chairs. Fletcher (2019) defines philosophical chairs as a set up like a debate and one explicit objective is for students to be open to changing their minds. The second objective behind this activity is to practice respectful dialogue, provide evidence for claims using students' prior knowledge, organize their thinking and logical reasoning, and avoid disputable statements. It also provides a venue to challenge students' assumptions. The basic steps of implementing philosophical chairs are first, the teacher or a student presents a statement for the class to consider. Then, all students spend three minutes writing their ideas about the statement and decide which position they'll take on the statement as yes, no, undecided. Next, they discuss their ideas and positions for about 10 to 15 minutes.

Finally, they write a reflection that includes the comment that most challenged their thinking; whether they changed their mind or not; and how open-minded they were at the start of the conversation. The provided statement about a topic is presented to the class by the facilitator, it can be either teacher or student-generated. The statement doesn't have a right or wrong answer, but is relevant to the content. For example, the statement could be: "Tobacco products should be allowed for ages 12 and up if monitored by an adult" or "Using a car-sharing service makes more

financial sense than owning a car”.

As the discussion begins, the first person to speak gives a clear rationale for their belief. The next student must then summarize what that person said before they share their own thoughts. Students during the activity are allowed to change sides at any time. They don't give an explanation, they just move. They frequently speak up soon after moving to share what point changed their mind, and then add their thoughts. The teacher needs to praise students for being open minded, and not for their excellent points. They get a lot of positive feedback on zingers, but how often do we acknowledge openness to the skill we want to cultivate?

The third activity that develops students' emotional intelligence is the Paideia seminars. The purpose behind it is to develop students' ability to think conceptually and communicate collaboratively. It is a protocol for facilitating a discussion about complex texts while scaffolding important social skills that students need to be successful in college or their chosen careers (National Paideia Center, 2023).

Novak (2021) defined Paideia seminars as a collaborative and intellectual dialogue facilitated with open-ended questions about a text. The main benefits of this activity are first, it fosters and enhancing collaborative and intellectual dialogue.

The second benefit is that this activity gives students experience with facilitated discussions. The Paideia seminars encourage open-ended questions about a text. Students should read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. The texts include artwork, a word problem, a map, a chart, a scientific experiment or a traditional text. The Paideia seminar includes a pre-seminar, the seminar and a post-seminar.

Once you facilitate your first seminar, you will see its ability to engage all students in the exploration of rigorous text. In the pre-seminar, students are organized in a circle so they can all make eye contact. In this session, teachers will review with students' standards and objectives in the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Guideline, activate or supply important background knowledge for the text, clarify important vocabulary, and ask students to participate in a self-assessment.

During the self-assessment, students reflect on how they usually participate in group discussions and create an individual goal for the session with the teacher's support. For example, the goal might be, "I will look at every person while he or she is speaking", or "I will participate at least twice and use ideas from the text". Also, you should support students as they create group goals, such as "We will build on each other's ideas by linking to the ideas of others. "Having agreed upon rules for discussion minimizes threats and distractions, which would prevent students from participating.

During the seminar stage, the teacher facilitates the discussion by asking open-ended questions about the text. As students answer, require them to refer to the text by citing specific details and quoting actual passages to support their point of view.

During this session, the teacher asks students questions about the main idea of the text, focus and analyze textual details, and require students to personalize, or transfer and generalize acquired knowledge to their own lives. In the last stage, post-seminar, students are invited to think of their progress toward group and individual goals and the standards in UDL guidelines. This reflection is often done in writing or drawing, but you can use multiple tools for construction and composition. The teacher needs to give students choices as presenting their progress by reflecting in the form of a poem, a poster, a blog, a talk show script, a video or PowerPoint, or a journal entry (Appendix B).

The last activity is fishbowl. According to *tolerance.org*, it is a strategy for organizing medium to large group discussions. In the classroom, students are separated into an inner and outer circles. In the inner circle or fishbowl, 4-5 students have to discuss a topic whereas those in the outer circle, they listen to the discussion, take notes but they are not allowed to speak. The main steps for implementing fishbowl in the classroom are first, the teacher chooses a central topic or text and develops an open-ended question to start the discussion. If a text is used, students will either read the text ahead of time to be able to answer the questions on the central theme(s) of the given text or the teacher will introduce the text by asking students questions before reading it. Next, as a teacher, make sure to play during the fishbowl activity the role of the facilitator during the first few times up until the process of the activities becomes familiar to students. Then, when students become familiar with the process, the teacher chooses a student facilitator who will not participate in the discussion, but asks questions all the time to maintain deep discussions and make sure that all students inside the fishbowl speak and participate. Moreover, the teacher needs to maintain the progress of the conversation among students in the inside fishbowl and to rotate students in and out of the fishbowl. The fish bowl discussion lasts for at least 15-20 minutes based on students' age or level. To wrap up this activity, the teacher divides the class into small groups and ask students to brief up. The inside fish bowl students can use the outside fishbowl students' observations to strengthen their ideas and make suggestions for ways to engage each other more meaningfully. The examples of guiding questions are: what did you observe during the discussion of the text? What is one thing you heard that is similar to your point of view? What is one thing with which you disagree? How did you feel while on the outside of the fishbowl? How did you feel while on the inside of the fishbowl?

The fishbowl activity process ends by students answering the guiding questions above or the following fishbowl questions: how do you feel knowing that peers were listening to what you were saying? What do you wish you could have said more clearly or what point do you wish you could have made in your first language? So, this activity is a student-centered strategy that build comprehension of complex texts or ideas while developing group discussion skills (Appendix C).

Thus, these discussion-based activities are great contexts for students to practice the five core skills: self-Awareness by paying attention to their body language, showing up prepared cognizant of certain biases and preconceptions they may be bringing to the table. Moreover, students can practice self-regulation by refraining from dominating a conversation, being disrespectful if they are offended by someone's contribution, and listening actively to other

speakers. Finally, students practice social skills by involving others in discussion, agreeing or disagreeing in a thoughtful manner, and expressing interest in what others have to share (Teach thought staff, 2022).

According to Benjamin (2020), emotional intelligence in the workplace help in resolving conflicts, coaching and motivating others, creating a culture of collaboration and building psychological safety within teams.

Rosette & Ciarrochi (2005) linked emotional intelligence to effective leadership in a group of executive-level staff. Van Rooy & Viswesvaran (2004) proved the effectiveness of emotional intelligence on the performance outcomes in career and academic domains after examining 69 independent studies.

IHHP Research Report (2020) asserted first that building a great workplace culture of accountability and collaborative relationship among employees begins by training workers on the three types of conversations in the workplace and the communication tools and strategies to skillfully have difficult conversations. Second, leaders who follow exceptional leadership in a company or institution brings out the best in their employees and rank highly in the emotional intelligence test.

According to Workplace Culture (2023), knowledge sharing and collaboration are essential for any organization that wants to foster innovation, creativity, and productivity among its employees. The most effective methods to promote knowledge sharing and collaboration among employees are first, to define clear goals and expectations for the employees including vision, mission, and values of the organization as well as the specific objectives and outcomes of each project or task. The second method consists of creating a safe and trusting environment for employees that fosters a culture of openness, ask for help or feedback and mutual support, where employees feel comfortable to share ideas, opinions and experiences. Also, a safe and trusting environment boost employees' confidence, motivation, engagement, and reduce their fear of failure or criticism. Third, you need to provide the right tools and resources for the employees such as technology, infrastructure, and platforms that can facilitate communication, coordination, and cooperation among the employees inside and across teams.

The fourth is encouraging learning and feedback. Employees are encouraged and supported to learn from their own and others' experiences, successes, and failures.

The feedback needs to be regular and constructive to employees and focusing your feedback on your performance, processes, and policies. You can provide opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and feedback, such as workshops, forums, or communities of practice. Encouraging learning and feedback help employees develop, innovate, and foster a sense of curiosity, creativity, and ownership.

The fifth method to promote knowledge sharing and collaboration is to reward and show recognition for employees' effort and achievements in the firm or company. Employees can be also recognized and rewarded by providing incentives as bonuses, promotions, or recognition awards linked to performance and behaviors in knowledge sharing and collaboration. The



recognition and rewarding system reinforce the importance and value of knowledge sharing and collaboration, and increase their satisfaction, loyalty, and commitment.

The last effective method is to lead by example. Leaders or managers in the company need to be transparent, honest, and accountable, by sharing their own knowledge, experience and collaborating with others, seeking and giving feedback. Also, by learning from their and others' mistakes, and recognizing employees' efforts. Thus, leading a firm or a company by example, inspire, influence, and empower employees to follow, trust and respect their leader.

### **Conclusion**

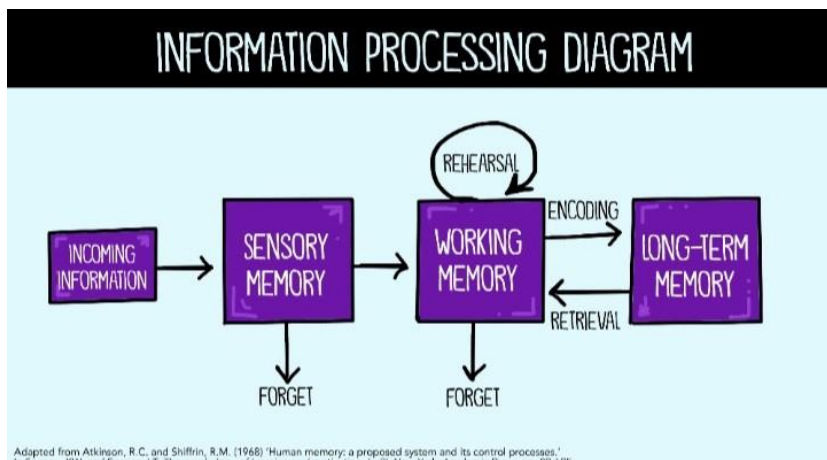
To conclude, emotional intelligence identifies emotions in ourselves as well as in others and integrates our emotions into thought processes of complex emotions. It is by understanding and managing our emotions and the other ones that help us become more successful in personal and professional lives. Following all these strategies in your daily life experience and in the workplace will limit conflicts and enhance communication and collaboration that are main keys to success all over the world.

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## Appendix A



## Appendix B

Dr. Katie Novak - Teaching Channel Lesson Plan  
Beowulf

### ***Beowulf Lesson Plan***

#### ***Description***

Students will practice writing narratives with descriptive details by participating in engaging activators and by examining text, images, and audio recordings through reading Beowulf.

#### ***Prerequisites***

Introduction to Book Builder and how to use built in scaffolds; introduction to how to work collaboratively in a group; knowledge of Common Core standards with an emphasis on how elements of a story interact.

#### ***Grade 7: English/language arts***

#### ***Common Core focus:***

- *RL3: Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).*
- *W3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.*

#### ***Instructional goals:***

Learners will identify the setting (time/place) in Beowulf and analyze how differences in setting impact the movement of a plot.

Learners will write short narratives, adding enough effective detail about a Grendel, so a listener could visualize him with accuracy.

#### ***Objectives:***

- Learners will be able to identify the setting in Beowulf whether they choose to focus on the text, images and/or Book Builder versions of the story.
- Learners will be able to identify two ways that setting creates conflict and therefore advances the plot.
- Learners will be able to revise passages of Beowulf to maintain the setting and plot, but will include more descriptive details about Grendel so a reader could visualize the monster.

#### ***Variability***

#### ***Engagement***

Students will be participating in a writing workshop, where they will demonstrate effective use of detail, or imagery. The do-now activator will be a "lame" menu projected on the screen. Students will have to justify (a previous vocab word) what they would order and why. This will be difficult as there is no imagery (alas, the point of the lesson). This will segue into a mini-lesson on imagery using multiple means of representation and manipulatives. This will allow visual,

## Appendix C

### SAMPLE FISHBOWL GUIDING QUESTIONS:

#### **Observers:**

- Was it difficult to not respond to the fishbowl students? Why or why not? If so, what kinds of comments did you want to respond to?
- Did you hear anything from the fishbowl that surprised you?
- What helped you understand the information that was being shared (context or non-verbal cues, use if L1, etc.)?

#### **Fishbowl students:**

- How did it feel to share your feeling/thinking about the text knowing that your peers were listening closely?
- Do you usually have opportunities to share your perspective on \_\_\_\_\_?
- What do you wish you could have said more clearly or what point do you wish you could have made in you first language?