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# TAYR Quarterly

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(TAYR)



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# **T A Y R Quarterly Journal**

## **Volume 6, Issue 2, June 2019**

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## **Willingness to Communicate and Communication Apprehension in the Tunisian EFL Context**

*By Adel Hannachi*  
*University of Jendouba, Tunisia*

### **Abstract**

This paper is situated within motivation studies in the EFL classroom with a focus on students' Willingness to Communicate (WTC). WTC has been claimed to be influenced by social and affective variables such as group cohesion, classroom physical environment, self-perceived communication competence, attitudes and motivation, and classroom anxiety. However, classroom anxiety attributes, namely negative feedback, communication apprehension, and test anxiety, seem to have different bearing on WTC. Thus, it is hypothesized that students' willing to communicate is negatively influenced by classroom anxiety and it is therefore negatively influenced by the attributes relevant to classroom anxiety. To verify the research hypothesis, the researcher used a questionnaire and an interview to collect data. The collected data were computer processed using SPSS for descriptive and correlation analyses and AMOS for modeling.

At the descriptive level, respondents manifested a high WTC and a low classroom anxiety. Moreover, the correlation coefficient was negatively significant. The analysis of the interview also corroborates the results of the quantitative data. Last, the generated model confirms the hypothesis with a high regression weight estimate. Nevertheless, WTC is influenced by classroom anxiety and by communication apprehension only. Moreover, communication apprehension is triggered by negative feedback.

On the whole, the proposed hypothesis is confirmed. Therefore, we recommend more attention be paid to students' classroom anxiety attributes especially communication apprehension and negative feedback. Moreover, the implications on the teaching/learning process suggest that teachers be more aware of students' emotional state. Teachers should develop their emotional intelligence to lower communication apprehension and avoid negative feedback and thus reduce classroom anxiety and enhance learners' in-class WTC.

**Key words:** WTC, EFL, learning situation, classroom anxiety, communication apprehension, negative feedback.

### **Introduction**

In the fields of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Foreign Language Learning (FLL), a great deal of research has been devoted to the study of the influence of motivation on language learning. This research has been dominated by the socio-educational modal (Gardner, 1985a, 1988,



2001). Subsequent research switched to the study of the construct of Willingness To Communicate (henceforth, WTC) and its impact on language learning and mainly on second/foreign language use.

WTC researchers strongly argue for the significant relationship between language learning and language use that is influenced by the intention or the behavioural intention to communicate the language; known as the willingness to communicate (Zakahi & McCroskey, 1989; McCroskey, 1992, 1997, 1998; McCroskey & Richmond, 1987, 1990a, 1990b). Put differently, learners have to practice a foreign language and engage in verbal communication to learn it (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). Accordingly, Yashima (2002) claims that WTC is highly influential on second language use; it even has a stronger impact on second language use than does motivation.

Following McCroskey's work, MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément and Noels (1998) proposed a WTC model built upon a six-layer pyramid relevant to language use (Fig. 1). A bottom-up reading of the pyramid gives the following: social and individual context, affective-cognitive context, motivational propensities, situated antecedents, behavioural intention, and communication behaviour. In such model, behavioural intention stands for WTC and communication behaviour for language use, which represents the top of the pyramid and the ultimate purpose of language learning (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

As maintained by the literature, the factors causal to WTC are related to anxiety among other variables. The focus of this study is to portray students' situational WTC and classroom anxiety levels. The second endeavour of this research tackles the relationship of classroom anxiety with WTC as well as the impact of the subscales pertaining to classroom anxiety i.e. Communication Apprehension, Test Anxiety, Fear of Negative Feedback, on the main variable. To do so, the present study tries to answer the following research questions:

1. How do students perceive their Classroom WTC and Anxiety?
2. What are the relationships between Classroom Anxiety and Classroom WTC?

Hypotheses:

1. Learners' classroom anxiety has a direct impact on Classroom WTC.
2. Classroom WTC is a direct forebear of students' speaking proficiency.

Based on the theoretical background underlined in the introduction and in the review of the literature sections and the research questions exposed above, it is hypothesized that: (1) students' classroom willingness to communicate is negatively influenced by foreign language classroom anxiety. Second, (2) classroom WTC is a predictor of students' speaking proficiency.

## **1. Review of the Literature**

This section attempts to give a chronological presentation of the construct at hand. The development of research in WTC dates back to the 1970s with a construct that essentially tackled the reticence of individuals to take part in public conversations. The concept was first coined unwillingness to communicate (Burgoon, 1976 cited in McCroskey & Richmond, 1987). During the 1980s researchers later translated the concept of unwillingness to communicate into willingness to communicate.

### **1.1. Willingness to Communicate**

Foreign language teaching and/or learning is actually aiming at generating the learners' output in the foreign/second language. Yet, through personal experience and informal interviews and discussions with practitioners, what has been observed and claimed by teachers at different levels of education is that learners tend to be evasive from engaging in verbal communication especially when a foreign language is concerned. In other word, learners are unwilling to communicate (Burgoon, 1976 in McCroskey & Richmond, 1987) even with a good communication competence. This reluctance towards communication entails the existence of another layer of intermediate factors between having a good communicative competence and using the language, i.e.

putting this competence into practice.

A recent extension of motivation research that has both theoretical and practical potential involves the study of the willingness to engage in the act of verbal communication in foreign language learners. WTC originated from previous studies in L1 communication McCroskey and associates (McCroskey, 1997; Richmond & McCroskey, 1989 and McCroskey & Richmond, 1987, 1996) and expanded in the works of MacIntyre and colleagues (MacIntyre, Babin, and Clément, 1999; MacIntyre et al., 1998; MacIntyre, 1994) who have conceptualized WTC in the second language with an endeavour to explain the individual's "readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2" (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547).

Since WTC is theorized as a direct forebear of the real engagement in foreign language verbal communication, it has to be viewed from different angles, i.e. linguistic, psycholinguistic, socio-linguistic, and environmental. The aim of this research being to examine the willingness to communicate among Tunisian students majoring in English gives room for many questions relevant to the variables thereupon.

The history of research in willingness to communicate reaches back to the 1970s with the seminal works of James McCroskey and associates. McCroskey and associates examined WTC with relation to a number of variables like communication apprehension (Richmond & McCroskey, 1989; McCroskey, 1997; McCroskey & Richmond, 1987, 1996). Through the use of the WTC scale developed by McCroskey & Richmond (1987), which pertains more to communicating in the first language, McCroskey and associates see WTC as a situational personal variable that varies most in relation to the individual. Therefore, it is advocated as a personality orientation which explains the difference in communication behaviour between individuals as one may engage in verbal communication while the other may not do so and this during similar or virtually similar situational or environmental constraints.

Further to McCroskey, MacIntyre and his associates investigated WTC with relation to first language (MacIntyre et al., 1999; MacIntyre, 1994) before they shed more light on WTC and its relation with second and foreign language (Clément, Baker, & MacIntyre, 2003; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2002, 2003; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Conrod, 2001; Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; MacIntyre et al., 1998; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). Following the works of MacIntyre and colleagues, Yashima (2002) and Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu (2004) investigated WTC in relation to L2 learning and L2 communication variables among Japanese learners of English. Also, in relation to foreign language learning, Dörnyei and associates (Kormos & Dörnyei, 2004; Dörnyei & Kormos, 2000) used WTC as an independent background variable.

McCroskey and associates (Richmond & McCroskey, 1989; Zakahi & McCroskey, 1989; McCroskey, 1997; McCroskey & Richmond, 1987, 1996) tackled WTC with relation to different personality variables; namely shyness, communication apprehension, anxiety, self-esteem and communication skill which may account for the variability in individual's predisposition to get involved in the actual communicating behaviour. They claim that, in accordance with the WTC scale, WTC is a valid construct as being a general predisposition toward willing or unwilling to communicate. The internal validity of the scale is calculated to .92 (McCroskey, 1992; McCroskey & Richmond, 1987) which means that the items of the scale represent the construct, and the scale is claimed to predict individual's actual communicative behaviour.

Since WTC is viewed as a behavioural predisposition to get involved in the actual communication act, the question is why some people are willing and others are unwilling to do so. Individuals' predisposition fluctuates as well as other intervening or influencing variables. The variables that influence the fluctuation of the individual's predisposition are called antecedents. These antecedents work in tandem with WTC, yet they are not viewed as the cause of the latter. The antecedents accounted for by McCroskey and associates are communication apprehension, introversion, anomie and alienation, self-esteem, cultural divergence, and communication skill level.

McCroskey & McCroskey (1986a in Zakahi & McCroskey, 1989) concluded that WTC had a negative relationship with communication apprehension, anomie, introversion and alienation.

According to McCroskey and colleagues introversion positively correlates with communication behaviour of people who presumably have a low WTC. Introverts are less productive in small group communication and tend to speak only when addressed (McCroskey & Richmond, 1987). They seem not to be willing to initiate conversations or take the lead during the communication act.

The general assumptions proposed by McCroskey and associates are more related to general WTC and to WTC in the first language. This leaves room for further research on the construct with relation to second and/ or foreign language. MacIntyre and colleagues (Clément, Baker, & MacIntyre, 2003; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2002, 2003; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Conrod, 2001; Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; MacIntyre et al., 1998; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996) investigated the construct in the second and foreign language along with Yashima and associates (Yashima et al., 2004; Yashima, 2002), and Dörnyei and colleagues (Kormos & Dörnyei, 2004; Dörnyei & Kormos, 2000)

MacIntyre and associates put forward a recent extension of motivation research that has considerable theoretical and practical potential involves the study of the L2 speakers' willingness to engage in L2 communication. As MacIntyre et al. (2002) explain that individuals display consistent tendencies in their predisposition toward communicating when given the choice. In the individual's first language, WTC is a fairly stable personality trait developed over the years, but the situation is much more complex with L2 use.

In L2 use, the level of the individual's proficiency and particularly that of L2 communicative competence is an additional powerful intervening variable. What is important to underline is that WTC and communicative competence are not the same. There are L2 learners who are good L2 speakers yet evade L2 communication situations whereas some other less proficient learners actively seek opportunities to speak the language. Thus MacIntyre et al. (1998) have maintained that there is a need to examine WTC in the L2 and defined the construct as the learner's "readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2" (p. 547).

MacIntyre et al. (1998) situate the construct of WTC at the intersection between motivation and communicative competence research. The construct is composed of several layers and comprises a number of linguistic and psychological variables (ref. Figure 1, above). Thus, the WTC model attempts to put together a set of learner variables that have been acknowledged as influences on second language acquisition and use resulting in a construct in which psychological and linguistic factors are tightly intertwined.

Baker and MacIntyre (2000) used WTC to investigate specific learning situations. They have applied it to compare the non-linguistic outcomes of an immersion and a non-immersion program in Canada. Yashima (2002) has made use of the WTC model to study the relations among L2 communication variables and L2 learning in Japanese learners of English. Others researched the construct of WTC in the Chinese (Liu, 2005; Peng, 2007; and Knell & Chi, 2012), the Korean (Kim, 2004) and the Iranian (Alemi, Tajeddin, & Mesbah, 2013 and Taheryan & Ghonsooly, 2014) EFL contexts, to state a few. WTC has also been integrated as a predicting variable of L2 learners' communication performance, accounting for a significant fluctuation and variance (Dörnyei & Kormos, 2000).

## 1.2. Foreign language classroom anxiety

Horwitz et al. (1986) describe the physiological and psychological manifestations of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety as "tenseness, trembling, perspiring, palpitations, and sleep disturbances" (p. 129). Horwitz et al. (1986) observed how anxious learners feel apprehension and

fear which in turn result in memory troubles, problems of concentration, accelerated heart pace, etc. Accordingly, Horwitz et al. (1986) put forward a definition to foreign language classroom anxiety as being "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128). Being so, Horwitz and associates concluded that language anxiety branches off in three anxieties: 1) communication apprehension; 2) test anxiety; and 3) fear of negative evaluation" (p. 127).

Communication apprehension relates to "shyness" experienced by the learner when asked to communicate in class, whether in listening ("receiver anxiety") or speaking ("oral communication anxiety") (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127). A learner could experience apprehension when feeling unable to participate in classroom activities and fearing from peers or teachers feedback. This apprehension may be due to the learner's self-perceived communication competence to some point and to the group interrelation.

Test anxiety originates from a "fear of failure" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127). The learners experiencing this type of anxiety frequently "put unrealistic demands on themselves and feel that anything less than a perfect test performance is a failure" (ibid. p. 128). Fear of negative evaluation is defined as the concern to be negatively evaluated by peers or by instructors. Fear of negative evaluation is similar to test anxiety to some extent, as it implies the learner's fear from both teacher and peers negative evaluation of and feedback to his or her performance. This idea is in tight relation with group cohesion and classroom atmosphere where complex relationships negatively or positively influence the learner's anxiety and therefore impact on their WTC and directly or indirectly on their perceived communication competence (MacIntyre et al., 2002; MacIntyre et al., 1998). Teachers as part of the EFL situation represent an ambivalent factor, i.e. both debilitating and facilitating, as stated by MacIntyre et al. (2011) "feedback from the teacher is critical to student success, motivation, and WTC" (p. 89).

Gardner & MacIntyre (1993) advocate that learners with a high level of anxiety produce less oral communication, find the basics of learning and production difficult, tend not to volunteer in class, and are unwilling to get involved in conversations in L2 when their personal life is concerned. This contention is more relevant to language use than to motivation, which may be related to the learners' willingness to communicate as defined above. Besides, Gardner (1985a) stated that not all forms of anxiety would have a bearing on second language learning. He maintains that only situation specific anxiety, i.e. the second language classroom, would impede foreign language success. Dörnyei (2005) sees that anxiety affects L2 performance. In anxiety-provoking situations foreign language learners often forget the most elementary aspects of the language and make unbelievably unexpected mistakes. Going back to former studies on anxiety and its effects in an SLA context (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1993; MacIntyre, Noels, Clément, 1997; MacIntyre, 1999; Horwitz, 2001) the construct is seen as a key component in foreign language learning. It is perceived to have a constantly negative impact on foreign language performance. In addition, Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) concluded that students with a high level of anxiety are conceptualized to verbally produce less in a foreign language and therefore are unwilling to openly express themselves when communication is performed in a foreign language. Additionally, MacIntyre and associates (MacIntyre, 1999, 2002; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, 1994) evidenced that language anxiety is different from other types of anxiety, i.e. general anxiety. Foreign Language performance is negatively affected by language anxiety and not by other types of anxiety.

MacIntyre et al. (1997) maintain that learners with a high level of anxiety mostly underrate their communicative and linguistic competence compared to learners with a lower anxiety level who overrate their communicative and linguistic competence. At the practical level, anxious language learners may concentrate more on their believed insufficiencies than on the task. They think more about failure than success and the wash backs of their failure rather than on the learning activity or on the task itself (MacIntyre et al., 1997). Previously, Bandura (1989) also claimed that

language learners in particular rely on their physical and emotional states (e.g., anxiety, stress, fatigue, arousal, and moods) when estimating their capabilities. Learners see negative reactions as an indication of being vulnerable to poor performance and in turn, see more pleasing reactions as an indication of good performance. Consecutively, such reactions may affect the emotional state in learners within the learning situation whether hindering or enhancing their performance. Consequently, they disturb their mental capacities and concentrate less on the task at hand which leads to poor performance.

In the same direction went MacIntyre & Gardner (1994) who concluded that anxiety-arousal may affect the ability to input, handle, and output an L2. Hence, both actual performance and perceived competence are expected to negatively correlate with language anxiety. In a recent research, Baran-Lucarz (2014) investigated WTC in the L2 classroom with relation to pronunciation anxiety. The study was conducted among 151 Polish learners of English studying at the University of Wroclaw, Poland, majoring in various disciplines. The students' age ranged from 18 to 40, with the age mean being 21.40. The study concluded to a significant negative impact of pronunciation anxiety on learners' WTC.

Language learning anxiety has been theorized and examined from different perspectives with answers and tendencies all over the realm of research. However, no final definition had been reached and no clear-cut relationship with other aspects of language learning, i.e. motivation, willingness to communicate, self-perceived communication competence, language use, etc, had been unanimously agreed upon. Many questions still need answers in that Scovel (1978) considers anxiety to be the most complicated affective variable of all.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Sampling**

The choice of the appropriate sampling technique and the adequate number of participants to the study are of paramount importance; yet, research biases are always there for one reason or another as Dörnyei (2007) states "no matter how well-funded our research is, we can never examine all the people whose answers would be relevant to our research question, and therefore we have to face the fact that the final picture unfolding in our research will always be a function of whom we have selected to obtain our data from" (p. 27). In the present study, the researcher accounted for stratified sampling for the questionnaire and convenience sampling for the interviews.

The sample is composed of second-year and third-year students majoring in English at the Institut Supérieur des Langues de Tunis (ISLT). The choice of second and third year students is meant to guarantee a minimum responsiveness to the questionnaire and to the interviews sketched in English, therefore avoid any translation that may alter the objectives of the present research no matter how good the translation may be.

### **2.2. Research instruments**

This study intends to investigate the willingness to communicate of Tunisian students majoring in English. As stated earlier in the literature review section, almost all researchers relied on questionnaires to study WTC. Therefore, for the present project, the researcher relies on students' questionnaires and interviews to collect data. The use of both quantitative and qualitative instruments will allow the researcher to cross-check obtained results (Brown, 1988; Creswell, 1994, Dörnyei, 2007). Therefore, it accounts for a hybrid design that combines qualitative and quantitative approaches to the data collection and analysis (Creswell, 1994; Dörnyei, 2007).

Nevertheless, the study is based more on quantitative than qualitative data. The quantitative part of the study involves the statistical analysis of the questionnaire results to describe students' perception of their situational willingness to communicate and foreign language classroom anxiety.



The quantitative data analysis also allows assessing a WTC model in the Tunisian EFL context. The qualitative part of the study deals with the analysis of student's interviews. This is achieved by cross-checking the results of both qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell, 1999).

The questionnaires were based on different scales. The situational Willingness to Communicate questionnaire was adapted from MacIntyre's et al. (2001) scale. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety questionnaire was based on (FLCAS) Horwitz et al. (1986). The WTC scale is composed of 10 statements and five sub-scales, i.e. Ask for clarification and explanation, Initiate the conversation, Use new words and different usage forms, Give more information and share ideas, and Point out the teacher's mistake. The FLCAS scale is composed of 33 items and three sub-scales, i.e. Communication Apprehension, Test Anxiety, Fear of Negative Feedback.

The first scale is made of semantic differentials. Students were asked about their perceived willingness frequency on a five-point Likert scale ranging from never to always through rarely, sometimes, and often. The FLCAS is composed of statements where students were asked to indicate the degree of their agreement or disagreement with each statement. The answers ranged from 'strongly disagree' through 'strongly agree' on a five-point Likert scale.

In the present study, standardized open-ended interviews will be used but with some flexibility concerning questions wording to avoid misunderstanding or bias from the respondents. In standardized open-ended interviews the wording and order of questions are set beforehand, the interviewees are asked the same questions and of course in the same sequencing, and more important the questions are fully open-ended. This leads the researcher to benefit from the following advantages: (1) the interviewees respond to the same question, which makes responses more comparable; (2) the interviewer influence and bias are largely reduced; (3) and last, the obtained data are organized and analyzed much easier. However, using such interviewing strategy may present some disadvantages for the researcher.

## **2.3. Implementation**

### **2.3.1. Pilot study**

The pilot study was carried out at the ISLT with 22 students. The respondents were 10 second-year students and 12 third-year students. The students who responded to the questionnaire were volunteers. It took students between 10 and 15 minutes to fill in the questionnaire. The questionnaire contained a section giving room to respondents to express their comments at the end of the questionnaire. This section is only used for the piloting of the questionnaire and is not used for the main study.

After having collected the questionnaires, the researcher asked the respondents whether they had any problem with the wording of the statement, the length of the questionnaire, and the layout of the pages. The students did not mention any inconvenience whatsoever.

The data obtained were coded and entered into the statistics software (SPSS 22). Reliability analysis was applied to all the items of the questionnaire and to all the variables separately. The overall alpha coefficient was acceptable. The reliability coefficient for all the items gave a significant score ( $\alpha = .849$ ), a score considered acceptable. Also, when applied to each variable separately the alpha coefficient gave ( $\alpha = .886$ ) for Classroom WTC and ( $\alpha = .853$ ) for Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety.

### **2.3.2. Main study**

The main study is twofold, (1) administration of the questionnaire and (2) interviewing a selected reduced sample. The researcher approached the teachers to administer the questionnaire during class time and got their consent. One hundred and seventy one students responded to the questionnaire. The collected data were codified and entered into the SPSS software. Data were processed using SPSS (22) and AMOS (21). Interviews were carried out to the end of the study. After

processing the obtained data, 15 students of the total respondents were randomly selected to take the interview. As Kvale (1996) states "in current interview studies, the number of interviews tends to be around  $15 \pm 10$ " (p. 102). In practice, many of the students who were randomly selected refused to take the interview; hence, only 11 conveniently selected students took the interview with a clear infringement of the principles of random sampling. The interviews took place at the ISLT in the TV room and recorded by means of a smart phone. Interviews took 15 minutes on average with each interviewee. The recorded files were copied on the lap top and on a DVD for security reasons along with the main SPSS file. Afterwards, the audio files were transcribed using Speech to text 2.0. The obtained text files were analyzed and common trends were identified.

## 2.4. Data analysis

The ultimate aim of this study is to model the willingness to communicate among Tunisian university EFL students in the formal classroom context. The different endeavours of the data analysis are five fold. First, assess the reliability of the questionnaires. Second, describe the distribution of the respondents in terms of gender, age, and level of study and see the levels of each variable among them. Third, portray the variance between the responses according to the respondents' gender, age, and level. Fourth, check the correlations between the dependent variable and the independent variables as well as among the independent variables themselves and last, generate a model relevant to WTC in the Tunisian EFL context.

Due to the hybrid design of the study, both qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data will be conducted. First, SPSS software was used to perform the descriptive analysis of the questionnaire. Then the qualitative data collected out of the interviews and analyzed following the general qualitative analysis techniques and specific interview analysis techniques. Finally, the Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) statistical program is applied to carry out quantitative Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis.

First, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to verify the reliability of the questionnaires. This technique allowed the researcher to see the internal validity of the variables, the sub-variables and the items that do not fit into the set of items composing the questionnaire. Second, descriptive statistics, i.e. frequencies, were used to sketch the respondents' WTC and Anxiety levels. Third, Spearman's Rho correlation was applied to check the existence of any significant associations among the variables and the sub-variables. Fourth, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) or Path analysis was relied on to generate the WTC model. The first three statistical techniques are allowed by SPSS software while the last one uses SPSS AMOS software. Amos allows assessing specific hypotheses about the factor structure for a set of variables in one or several samples. Herein, SEM or Path analysis is judged to be an effective tool to modelling data (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre et al., 1998; Yashima, 2002; Raykov & Marcoulides, 2006; Dörnyei, 2007). In addition, SEM allows the researcher to build longitudinal models (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2006).

### 2.4.1. Reliability analysis

Reliability analysis was applied to all the items of the questionnaire and to each variable separately. The reliability coefficient was acceptable as the alpha coefficient for all the items loaded ( $\alpha = .875$ ). Also, when applied to each variable separately the alpha coefficient gave ( $\alpha = .815$ ) for Situational WTC and ( $\alpha = .890$ ) for Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. General results

General findings are meant to portray the demographic features and the distribution of the questioned and interviewed sample. The majority of respondents for both levels are

females with 85.96% of the total population against 14.04% males. As far as second-year students are concerned, 78.75% were females and 21.25% males while third-year students are represented with 92.30% females and only 7.70% males. More than three quarters of second-year students are aged between 20 and 21 and almost three quarters of third-year students are aged between 21 and 22.

Table 1

*Distribution of respondents by level of study, gender, and age in percent*

		Second-year	Third-year	Overall
Gender	Male	21.25	7.70	14.04
	Female	78.75	92.30	85.96
Total number		80	91	171
Age	19	2.56	0	1.19
	20	46.15	6.74	25.14
	21	32.05	40.44	36.42
	22	11.53	33.70	23.35
	23	7.69	14.60	11.37
	24	0	3.37	1.79
	25	0	1.12	0.59
Total number		78	89	167

All interviewed students were Tunisian students and all of them received primary and secondary education in Tunisia, except one female third-year student who pursued her secondary schooling in the UAE. Students had an EFL learning experience of 11 to 13 years. Table 2 shows the distribution of interviewed students by gender. The majority of the interviewees for both levels are females with 72.72% of the total population for 27.28% males. As far as second-year students are concerned, 80% were females and 20% males while third-year students are represented with 66.66% females and 33.33% males. Table 4 also shows that the majority of interviewees are aged 21, 22, and 23 years old with 27.27%, 36.36%, and 27.27% respectively. Most second-year students are 21 years old with 60% of the interviewees. Third-year students are evenly split between 22 and 23 years old. Interviewed students chose a pseudonym to be used when quoting them as shown in Table 5, below.

Table 2

*Distribution of interviewed students by level of study, gender and age in percent*

		Second-year	Third-year	Overall
Gender	Male	20	33.33	27.28
	Female	80	66.66	72.72
Age	20	20	0	9.09
	21	60	0	27.27
	22	20	50	36.36
	23	0	50	27.27
Total number		5	6	11

Table 3 shows that students have a rather high speaking proficiency (M= 14.04). Male students have higher marks in speaking (M= 15.18) than females (M= 13.90), second-year students have higher marks (M= 14.56) than third-year students (M= 13.67), and the younger students are the higher is their speaking proficiency (19 & 20 years old, M= 15.17; 21 & 22, M= 13.80; and 23 and older, M= 12.88).



Table 3

*Descriptive statistics of students speaking proficiency by gender, level of study and age.*

		N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Gender	Male	14	15,18	1,660
	Female	111	13,90	2,091
	Total	125	14,04	2,082
Level of study	second year	52	14,56	1,833
	third year	73	13,67	2,180
	Total	125	14,04	2,082
Age	19 & 20	33	15,17	1,731
	21&22	74	13,80	1,996
	23 & older	17	12,88	2,261
	Total	124	14,04	2,090

### 3.2. Classroom WTC

As illustrated in Table 4 students were roughly willing to communicate in the EFL classroom (M=3.34). On the other hand, students were less willing to point out the teachers mistakes (M=3.00) and to initiate conversation (M=3.11). The mean values were significant as they are equal or superior to three ( $M \geq 3$ ) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). The mean values of the subscales 'asking for clarification' and 'using new words and forms' were higher than the other subscales. However, questioned students appeared to be less willing to point out teachers' mistakes and initiate conversation. On the whole, respondents were more willing to ask for clarification, using news words and forms, and give more information and share ideas.

Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics of Classroom WTC subscales and items*

	N	Sum	Mean	SD
Classroom WTC	171	574	3,34	,724
Asking for clarification	171	613	3,56	1,016
Initiating conversation	171	536	3,11	1,032
Using new words and forms	171	610	3,55	,949
Giving more information	171	598	3,47	1,015
Pointing out teachers mistakes	171	516	3,00	1,084

### 3.3. Classroom anxiety

Table 5 demonstrates that respondents were at large not anxious about their EFL classroom (M=2.91). Also, they showed a low test anxiety (M=2.60) but a high anxiety about negative feedback (M=3.01). Respondents reported to be more anxious when it comes to focusing during the course. Although students reported to have a high anxiety about negative feedback (M=3.01), they showed a low anxiety when it came to supporting being laughed at by classmates "I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English" (M=2.22). Even though students did not report a high communication apprehension (M=2.83), students were anxious about not understanding their teachers and about preparing for their class.

Table 5

*Descriptive Statistics of classroom anxiety and sub-scales*

	N	Sum	Mean	SD
Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety	171	501	2,91	,709

Communication apprehension	171	487	2,83	,899
Test anxiety	171	448	2,60	1,006
Fear of Negative feedback	171	518	3,01	,688

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### 3.4. Analysis of the qualitative data

Interviews revealed a substantial amount of data that could actually help answer Research Question One and cross-check the findings of the quantitative data. As for Classroom WTC, the interviewed students reported a high degree of willingness to take part in classroom activities. To recapitulate interviewees' willingness to communicate, most informers claimed to be willing or highly willing to communicate during in-class activities; however, third-year students seemed more willing to volunteer in class than second-year students. When it came to pointing out the teachers' mistakes, whether written or spoken, all informants gave an evasive answer and did not want to go there.

Concerning classroom anxiety, informants were on the whole not anxious during classroom activities, even though some students were inconsistent in their answers and reported a high communication apprehension. Another interesting idea stemmed from one interviewee who underlined that "a bad accent makes students less confident". This idea is akin to the conclusions of Malgorzata (2014) who investigated pronunciation anxiety with relation to WTC in the L2 classroom and stated that "the more anxious the participants were about their pronunciation, the less eagerly they took part in speaking activities in the FL classroom" (p. 43).

### 3.5. WTC and classroom anxiety

In order to answer the second research question, Spearman's Rho correlation was applied to the quantitative data. The outcome of the correlation analysis between Classroom WTC and Anxiety and its subscales resulted in significant correlations. The correlation coefficient related to Classroom WTC with Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety scored negative ( $r = -.454^{**}$ ). The highest negative correlation coefficient between Classroom WTC and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety subscales was observed with Communication Apprehension ( $r = -.523^{**}$ ). Also, the highest correlation coefficient between Communication Apprehension and Anxiety subscales was obtained with Communication Apprehension ( $r = -.787^{**}$ ). The inter-correlations among Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety and its subscales were found significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). The most significant inter-correlation was noticed between Anxiety and Fear of Negative Feedback ( $r = .928^{**}$ ).

Table 6

*Correlation matrix of Classroom WTC, PCC, and FLCA*

		Cl. WTC	FLCA	CA	TA	FNF
Cl. WTC	Correlation Coef.	1,000				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.				
FLCA	Correlation Coef.	<b>-,454<sup>**</sup></b>	1,000			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.			
CA	Correlation Coef.	<b>-,523<sup>**</sup></b>	,897 <sup>**</sup>	1,000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	.		
TA	Correlation Coef.	-,340 <sup>**</sup>	,700 <sup>**</sup>	,588 <sup>**</sup>	1,000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	.	
FNF	Correlation Coef.	-,328 <sup>**</sup>	<b>,928<sup>**</sup></b>	,699 <sup>**</sup>	,577 <sup>**</sup>	1,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	.

**Legend:** Cl. WTC= Classroom WTC, FLCA= foreign language classroom anxiety, CA= communication apprehension, TA= test anxiety, FNF= fear of negative feedback.

### 3.6. Model Testing

To test the proposed model for Classroom WTC in the Tunisian EFL context with relation to the research hypothesis and the literature, structural Equation Modelling (SEM) using Analysis of Moment Structures software (AMOS 21.0.0) was applied. The first hypothesis, i.e. “Learners’ classroom anxiety and perceived communication competence have a direct impact on Classroom WTC”, was maintained. Figure 1 shows that anxiety is directly impacting on Classroom WTC. The causal relationship between Classroom WTC and anxiety is tagged significant (Estimate= -.459) and regression weight is significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), and the critical ratio for regression weight was found to be greater than two, so the estimate is significantly different from zero at the .05 level (C.R = -6.581). The second hypothesis stating that “Classroom WTC has a direct effect on Speaking Proficiency” is maintained as the causal relationship is tagged significant (Estimate= .877), the regression weight is significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), and the critical ratio for regression weight was found to be greater than two, which means that the estimate is significantly different from zero at the .05 level (C.R = 3.582).

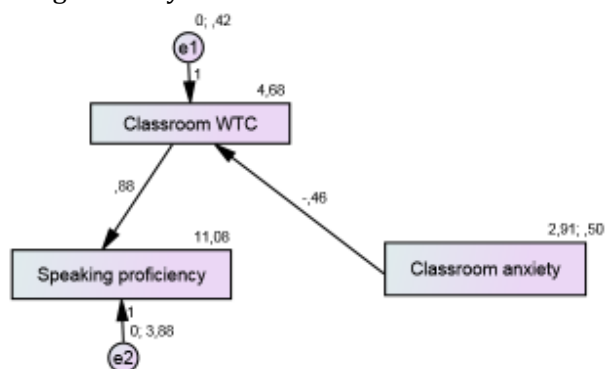


Figure 1. Path analysis of the proposed WTC model.

However, when extending the model to the subcomponents of Classroom Anxiety, the causal relations transpired in a causal relationship between Classroom WTC and Communication apprehension (Estimate= -.460) a very close estimate to that between WTC and Anxiety. The regression weight is significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), and the critical ratio for regression weight was found to be greater than two, which means that the estimate is significantly different from zero at the .05 level (C.R = -8.829). However, there were no significant causal relationships between Classroom WTC and test anxiety or negative feed-back (cf. Figure 2). The model was modified to fit to the data (cf. Figure 3) and gave significant causal relationships between Classroom WTC and test anxiety or negative feed-back via Communication apprehension, especially negative feedback (Estimate= .765). The regression weight is significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), and the critical ratio for regression weight was found to be greater than two, which means that the estimate is significantly different from zero at the .05 level (C.R=11.782).

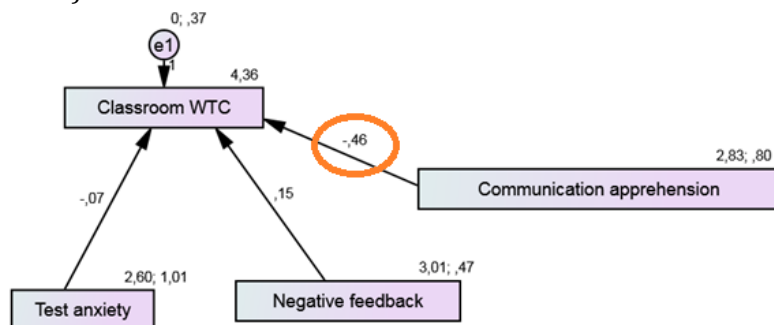


Figure 2. Path analysis of the extended model.

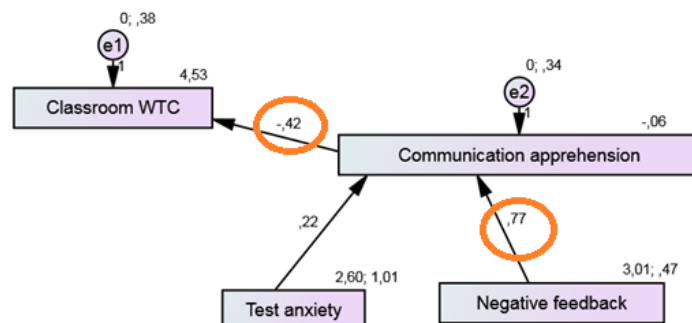


Figure 1. Path analysis of the modified model.

To conclude, communication apprehension has the strongest impact on learners' classroom WTC among the subcomponents of classroom anxiety. Also, communication apprehension seems to have a very influential role in shaping students' classroom anxiety as they have mostly the same estimate in relation with classroom WTC. It also plays an intermediate role between classroom anxiety and its other subcomponents, namely; test anxiety and fear of negative feedback. The modified extended model put forward the impact of communication apprehension in students' intentional and actual communication behaviour.

### 3.7. Discussion

In studying the first research question, only students' perception of their Classroom WTC will be discussed. The analysis of the obtained results suggests that the respondents to the questionnaire and the interviewed students exhibited a rather high willingness to communicate, i.e. Classroom WTC ( $M = 3.34$ ). These figures are inconsistent with the findings in Kim (2004) who gathered data about Korean university students. He concluded that WTC in Korean students is generally low and claimed that the low WTC level is somehow impacting on their language proficiency. In same direction went Weaver (2005) who investigated WTC in Japanese college students and found most of them rather unwilling or slightly willing to communicate. However, the results of this study were consistent with those found in Peng (2007).

Also, the relationship between L2 WTC and foreign language classroom anxiety is examined through correlation, the result is negatively significant ( $r = -0.454^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The correlation coefficient is "medium" close to "large". Anxiety is theorized to impede language learning and inhibit learners from performing tasks during classroom activities (Gardner, 1985a; Horwitz, et al., 1986; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1993; MacIntyre, Noels, & Clément, 1997; MacIntyre, 1999; Horwitz, 2001; Dörnyei, 2005). From this perspective, having a negative significant correlation with L2 WTC is rather logical and consolidates the findings and claims of previous research in the field (MacIntyre, 1994; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre, et al., 1998; MacIntyre et al., 2002; Hashimoto, 2002; Yashima, 2002; Clément et al., 2003; Liu, 2005; Peng, 2007; Taheryan & Ghonsooly, 2014). Additionally, Taheryan & Ghonsooly (2014) advocated that WTC is negatively influenced by negative feedback which is a construct of classroom anxiety. This claim is also corroborated by the correlation results of the present study as negative feedback held the highest correlation coefficient with foreign language anxiety.

The path analysis revealed a significant causal relationship between classroom anxiety and classroom WTC. Moreover, this result is consistent with former studies. Horwitz et al. (1986), MacIntyre et al. (1997), MacIntyre et al. (1998), and MacIntyre et al. (2002) claim that classroom WTC is negatively influenced by FLCA. Gardner & MacIntyre (1993) also advocate that learners with a high level of anxiety produce less oral communication and are unwilling to engage in conversations in L2. Yet, Gardner (1985a) assumes that only situation specific anxiety has an influence on L2 learning.

A view supported by Dörnyei (2005) who asserts that anxiety affects L2 performance especially in anxiety provoking situations, i.e. the foreign language classroom. However, other researchers assure that anxiety is perceived to have a constantly negative effect on foreign language performance and is not situation specific. In another prospect, MacIntyre (1992) found there is more significant correlation between language anxiety and self-reported proficiency than between language anxiety and actual proficiency. In conclusion, L2 anxiety proved to have a strong and direct negative impact on classroom WTC thus supporting MacIntyre (1994) hypothesis, confirmed later in MacIntyre & Charos (1996).

Research Hypothesis Two asserts that "Classroom WTC is a direct forebear of students' speaking proficiency." The data collected maintain this hypothesis at the level of correlation and path analysis methods. The path analysis of the suggested model confirmed the causal relationship between Classroom WTC and Speaking Proficiency. The estimate is .877, which means that the causal relationship is about 88% valid. The hypothesis is corroborated by earlier research. Dörnyei & Kormos (2000), Hashimoto (2002) found a positive relation between students' WTC and the amount of L2 production. Knell & Chi (2012) concluded that WTC is tightly related to oral and written proficiency in Chinese students. Gholami (2015) deduced that high level WTC may improve learners' tendency to initiate communication and therefore lead to develop better language proficiency. However, most reviewed literature related WTC more to language use than to language proficiency.

#### **4. Conclusion**

First, the data obtained through descriptive and correlation analyses answered the research questions. Second, the path analysis or SEM applied to generate the structural model partially confirmed the research hypotheses. After modification, the extended model confirmed the forebear of communication apprehension on anxiety. Second, the respondents to this study exhibited a statistically significant WTC index. The same tendency was reported in interviewed students who manifested a fairly high level of WTC. Also, students reported a low classroom anxiety.

##### **4.1. Recommendations**

The findings of the present study present a significant amount of data and information for teachers to think of classroom practice with regard to students' WTC. Since WTC is concluded to have a direct impact on learners' L2 use and speaking proficiency, understanding the interaction and interdependence among the different personal, environmental, and linguistic attributes and their impact on L2 WTC seems vital for language teachers. The findings of this study propose that teachers should understand the multifaceted attributes of students' L2 WTC and communication actual behavior. Teachers should take into consideration the learner's WTC behavior at different points of time and in different situations. Also, the recognition of WTC as a key factor in the learning process suggests that teachers be aware of their students' L2 class WTC based on the individual, contextual, and linguistic attributes. Being aware of learners' L2 WTC is likely to push teachers to develop the factors underlying the construct with a keen understanding of their interactions during the process of planning and implementing the teaching activities. Teachers need to water the roots of WTC and nurture its basic predicting factors. Additionally, lowering foreign language classroom

anxiety, including communication apprehension or language use anxiety, test anxiety might and avoid negative feedback also promote learners' perception of their communication competence and help them produce more oral communication.

In addition, as suggested by the findings in the qualitative data, teachers need to be more democratic, humane, and helpful. It transpired that students seem to be aware of the importance of the humane side of the teaching process together with the pedagogical and scientific aspects; however, are teachers aware of these complaints? The democratization of learning is needed to boost the self in students and empower them to engage more in classroom activities and thus enhance their willingness to communicate. For this purpose teachers need to be continually trained to keep up with the psycho-sociological developments among the new generations of learners. Teacher training and continuous or continuing professional development (CPD) seem to be the key to help teachers in terms of pedagogical training and academic updating.

#### **4.2. Suggestions for Future Research**

The present study has revealed that the contributing communication and affective variables to WTC are interlaced, complex, and context-related. Hence, treating each variable in isolation from the rest of the variables or as single factors impacting on WTC is rather inappropriate since all factors work together to shape learners WTC. The interlaced relationships between the learner and the affective, the communication, and the social facets of the learning environment need an in-depth scrutiny with a rather global analysis.

Further research should investigate the impact of learners' pronunciation anxiety on their classroom WTC, the influence of WTC on learners' academic achievement and professional success. Do students who report or exhibit a high level of WTC have higher achievement scores? Are students' who have high WTC better teachers than those who have low WTC? Are learners who are more willing to communicate in class more self-confident during job interviews? Do students' who are more willing to communicate have better professional careers?

Research should also address teachers' awareness about cultivating learner's WTC as well as about socio-psychological attributes of the classroom including the development of emotional intelligence be it at their personal level or at the learners' level with a focus on the socio-cultural context and its impact on learners WTC. Such research is deemed necessary to understand how students interact inside and outside the classroom with teachers, peers, friends, and family members with a close look to parental influence on learners' communication behaviour.



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## **Needs Analysis for Managers' and Coordinators' use of English at the Workplace: Case Study of the Tunisian Employers' Association for Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA)**

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### **Abstract:**

This study aimed at investigating a needs analysis of English language use among managers and coordinators in the Tunisian Employers' Association for Industry Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA). The data of this study were collected using two major instruments: an open-ended questionnaire administered to 102 participants (85 managers and 17 coordinators) and a semi-structured interview conducted with a sample of both participants (Three managers and three coordinators). The results revealed that the language contact in UTICA was multilingual and that there were significant discrepancies regarding participants' perceptions of the focal investigative areas of this study. Most of the managers (70%) considered English very important, but both participants indicated that Business English was the most needed. Further, statistical analysis showed that managers faced fewer difficulties in their use of English skills to perform their job-related tasks. Reading and writing skills were the most frequently used with a mean of 28.03 and 25.84 respectively. Listening ( $SD= 4.618$ ) and speaking ( $SD= 4.694$ ) were found to be the main skills needed to be improved for both participants, along with vocabulary and grammar. The difficulties faced in using the four skills by the coordinators were accounted for by the training level variable. Both managers and coordinators suggested that any English training course should focus on Business English and Technical English. The study concludes with implications for course designers and recommendations for both UTICA association and future studies.

**Keywords:** Needs Analysis (NA), English for Specific Purposes (ESP), UTICA, English skills, Training.

## 1. Introduction

### 1. 1. Background to the Study and rationale

Over the past decades, the advent of communications technology has renovated the field of English language teaching, resulting in a shift of focus from teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP) to teaching English for more Specific Purposes (ESP). First (L1) and second (L2) language acquisition research into language teaching has also led to a sustained interest in investigating the most effective methods of developing the ability of workers in using English for specific purposes in the workplace (Li So-mui & Mead, 2000; Louhiala-Salminen 1996). Several ESP studies (Huchinson & Waters, 1987; Edwards, 2000) have provided evidence for the importance of ESP teaching. For example, it has been observed that the type of language used by each worker is swayed by different yet interrelated factors, such as his working environment (Zak & Dudley-Evans, 1986; Pogner, 2003), his aims and professional constraints, as well as his specialization and the type of duties assigned to him, along with the texts the worker produces and deals with (Edwards, 2000; Macintosh, 1990). These educational studies have been developing in tandem with an emphasis on the fact that learning English for specific purposes plays a crucial role in employees' and managers' success in their fields of work and business environments.

Many studies on the use of ESP in business contexts have been carried out in European and Asian countries (Edwards, 2000; Li So-Mui & Mead, 2000; Perrin, 2003; Ponger, 2003). More specifically, they studied the language or communication needs of industry and business employees and aimed at offering new insights on how language teaching could best equip students with the skills required in professional life (Cf Pogner, 2003, p. 865, for writing and interaction in the discourse community of engineers; and Edwards, 2000, on the German business context).

However, it should be noted that the increasing use of English in the local business and communication sectors of the economy (Daoud, 1996; Daoud, 2000; Labbassi, 2010) is counterbalanced by the paucity of empirical studies regarding the needs of English language use and communication among stakeholders and workers (Daoud, 2000). For instance, Walters (1998) studied the use of English language among Tunisians to the neglect of its field-specific use in the business context. She identified four types of English users with varying degrees of mastery of English.

This study is motivated by a number of considerations. The first motive has to do with the growing rise of English in the Tunisian business sector and the communicative challenges it has imposed on both administrative and managerial staff. Many stakeholders often find themselves incapable of competing with their international counterparts in a predominantly English-based global market of economic and financial exchanges. Therefore, as Walters (1998, p. 43) recommends, "Tunisian business people must clearly believe they need English to survive in an increasingly global market." Indeed, managers are likely to have a wide range of needs in relation to the use of English in performing their job-related tasks.

The second motive is related to the questions of language use and communication in the workplace, UTICA being one of the most important fields in which English is used extensively. Investigating UTICA managers and coordinators' perspectives on communication experiences in the workplace can add to our understanding of these issues. The latter need to be unpacked so that language educators, settlement services, employers,

and policy makers can understand language needs in more depth than a numerical proficiency level can provide.

Moreover, this study seeks to suggest future directions for the teaching of ESP for Tunisian students. Teaching is certainly one field in education that is constantly changing; therefore, ESP teachers should understand the needs of the Tunisian business context so as to improve the quality of their teaching methods in the classroom. This is how the teaching discipline, ESP, becomes relevant. Indeed, this study on the real world needs for English language among UTICA workers and the identification of their job-related tasks is argued to help us see whether the type of material and skills being taught to students suit their future needs or not.

### 1.2. Research Questions

The following research questions were developed:

1. In their work setting, do UTICA federations' coordinators and managers need to use English? If so, what English varieties do they need to use?
2. What are the most frequent skills used by both managers and coordinators?
3. What difficulties do UTICA coordinators and managers face in performing their required tasks?
4. What potential ESP Training course do UTICA coordinators and managers need?

## 2. Literature Review

The introduction of ESP in non-educational contexts has received sustained interest among its practitioners and researchers over its relevant implications for course design and teaching practices. Indeed, to design an operational and propitious course for effective teaching, ESP practitioners have been involved in analyzing learners' needs and understanding the particular situations in which English can be used. ESP, as Mackay (1978) argued, is generally meant to be used to refer to the teaching/learning of a foreign language for a clearly practical purpose, be it vocational or academic. It should be noted that in using an ESP approach, any decision relevant to content and method should be grounded not only on the learner's needs for learning, but also on the type of language required and the learning context (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

### 2.1. Business English Branches

#### 2.1.1. Business English for academic purposes (BEAP)

Dudley-Evans and St John (1998, p. 55) claimed that Business English can be divided into two main areas: "English for General Business Purposes (EGBP) and English for Specific Business Purposes (ESBP)". ESBP has been divided into general and specific business purposes. Business needs' analysts have suggested ESBP to be run for academic students. Academic Business English (ABE), required to courses for business, finance, accounting and banking, has more in common with the study of other EAP disciplines (Dudley Evans & John, 1998). Some people believe that ABE is little more than General English (GE) in a business context including job-specific vocabulary. It is worthy of note that learners from both EABP and ESBP disciplines may share the same English courses and materials, because they can serve both occupational users of English such as company



managers, accountants, secretaries and students majoring in business, banking, economics or management (Johns, 1995).

### 2.1.2. The Business of English and English for Business in Tunisia

It is interesting to acknowledge that Tunisian business enterprises have to improve and modernize their services in order to resist international competition. Accordingly, Tunisian business professionals should take responsibility for complying with the global Business community. One way to reach this is to learn Business English as “a core cross-cultural competence in today's globalized world” (Farleigh, 2010, p. 11)

## 2.2. Needs Analysis

### 2.2.1. Defining needs analysis

It is difficult to find a consensus over the definition of needs analysis among ESP/EAP researchers. This can be explained by the seemingly problematic combination of two essentially subjective terms: “needs” and “analysis”. While Hutchinson and Waters (1987) defined needs as necessities, wants and lacks, Brindley (1989, p. 56) defined them as “the gap between what the learners’ actual needs are and what should be taught to them.” Therefore, it can be said that needs are what learners will be required to do with a foreign language in a target situation, and how learners might best master the target language during the period of training (West, 1994, p. 1). Analysis is essentially seen as the exploration process of communicative tasks, that is, what the learners need to do with the target language (Al-Otibi, 1994).

### 2.2.2. The Importance of Needs Analysis

Needs analysis can be a vital asset in enabling EAP or ESP teachers to identify their learners’ key requirements and determine the areas in which they are lacking skills. There have been major debates among scholars of needs analysis regarding its main focus. For example, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) explained learning needs as what the learner needs to do in order to learn, while Benesch (2001, p. 72) perceives them as being associated strictly with target situation demands. As claimed by some researchers (Taillefer, 2007; Cowling, 2007), empirical evidence shows that a successful teaching and learning process in ESP relies on needs analysis. Besides, Jordan (1997) and Al-Khatib (2005) asserted that needs analysis would help ESP teachers to find the best ways to motivate learners, to fine-tune the teaching techniques to the specific needs of the learners, to identify which activity they prefer, to find which skills are important and to accommodate them with the best course.

Furthermore, needs analysis is expected to help the learners adapt to the new learning system when their teachers recognize their needs of the learning process (Carkin, 2005; Chamot, 2007). One obvious advantage from needs analysis is that, by identifying the learners in general, needs analysis will identify the weaknesses and strengths of the skills that they may use in potential business or academic contexts. Needs analysis can be seen as

an entirely pragmatic and objective attempt to help teachers of ESP identify the best methods of teaching that are truly relevant to their learners. Thus, the present study is concerned with language, mainly English use among UTICA professionals. Consequently, needs analysis here would be the process of determining the needs for which UTICA managers and coordinators require the use of English, and identifying the difficulties encountered.

### 2.2.3. Approaches to Needs Analysis

Although there have been various approaches to needs analysis, the most common approaches include means analysis, deficiency analysis, language audits, target situation analysis (TSA), and present situation analysis (PSA). These approaches of needs analysis will be critically reviewed below.

#### 2.2.3.1. Means analysis

Means analysis (Allwright & Allwright, 1977) concerns what may happen in the classroom. Chamberlain and Flanagan (1978) asserted that the core aim of using this approach is to help course designers in their design of courses. Concurring with this, Blue (2000, p. 78) claims that means analysis targets the practicality and the constraints of implementing a needs-based language course. Generally, this type of needs is conducted with a certain group with a specific course aim. Although learning environments differ from one institution to another, means analysis can be used to ensure that the quality of the learning space is appropriate to the learners. This type of needs analysis is concerned with the teaching environment (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998).

A major drawback of this approach of means analysis is that it is designed to collect sensitive cultural data in order to highlight in-depth issues such as educational culture (Al-Hussein, 2004; Holliday, 1994, p. 411). Therefore, it would not be practical for this study to use this approach as it would unnecessarily raise sensitive issues with the target participants.

#### 2.2.3.2. Deficiency analysis

Deficiency analysis is defined by West (1994) as a type of needs analysis designed to take account of learners' present needs/wants as well as the requirements of the target situation. West (1994) claimed that deficiency analysis included two central components: an inventory of potential target needs expressed in terms of activities, and a scale that is used to set the priority that should be given to each activity. The major drawback of this type of needs analysis is that it can differ significantly from one student to another. However, one advantage of the approach of deficiency analysis is that it laid the basis for the use of the questionnaire method to determine learners' actual needs. Several researchers (Shaw, 1982; Bheiss, 1988) capitalized on the contribution of such an approach to needs analysis and conducted their studies by using different scales in their questionnaires to identify the most important activities for their participants. Most needs analysts (e.g. Robinson, 1980. Anderson, 1980) have agreed that this approach attempts to investigate learners' future and present needs, which could be done by target situation



analysis (TSA) and present situation analysis (PSA). Deficiency analysis will not be employed for this study as it has a major drawback, that is, it is a combination of the target needs analysis (TSA) and present situation analysis (PSA).

### **2.2.3.3. Language audits analysis**

Language audits emerged in 1979 and were defined as the analysis of needs based on the job-related tasks. Reeves and Wright (1996) describe them as a lengthy procedure that requires researchers to follow it rigorously, i.e., they should research the field where language should be used and then include everything that indicates the type of language which has been used in the target situation. Coleman (1988) suggested that a language audit precedes needs analysis in large organizations to examine the individual whose needs should be targeted for analysis (Vandermeern, 2005). This approach is used by large organizations in order to describe their clients' needs (West, 1994, p. 12), and, might, thus, take months or years to implement. This clarifies why using this approach is inadequate for the present study, as it is better suited to a large scale research project involving a number of researchers (Long, 2005, p. 41).

### **2.2.3.4. Present situation analysis (PSA)**

Present Situation Analysis (PSA) was first proposed by Richterich and Chancerel (1977). It may be seen as a complement to target situation analysis (Jordan, 1997). Moreover, needs analysis may be seen as a combination of TSA and PSA. Within the realm of ESP, one cannot rely either on TSA or PSA as a reliable indicator of what is needed to enhance learning and reaching the desired goal. Thus, ESP courses are determined in all essentials by the prior analysis of the communication needs of the learners (Songhori, 2008: 28). Dudley Evans & St John (1998) stated that PSA estimates strengths and weaknesses in language, skills, and learning experiences. They argued that, if the destination target which the students need to reach is to be established, first the starting point has to be determined, something which can be provided by means of PSA (Dudley Evans & St John, 1998). In this approach the sources of information are the students themselves, the teaching establishment, and the user-institution, e.g. place of work (Jordan, 1997).

#### **2.2.3.4.1. Lacks**

It is worth noting that, after identifying the targeted population's English uses and producing adequate descriptions of their necessities, the researcher may start identifying their "lacks", also known as "deficiencies". Hutchinson & Waters (1993) argued that, to identify necessities alone, however, is not enough since the focus in ESP is on the needs of particular learners. You also need to know what the learner knows already so that you can decide which of the necessities the learner lacks. According to Basturkmen (2007, p. 2), 'lacks' are "those needs that come to determine curriculum since what we are interested in is the gap between target proficiency and the present proficiency of learners."

#### 2.2.3.4.2. Wants

Bearing in mind the importance of the learner's motivation in the learning process, learners' perceived wants cannot be ignored. Hutchinson & Waters (1987) used the term of "learning needs" in order to define learners' wants either perceived or subjective. According to Richterich (1983, p. 29), "wants" are described as subjective and personal to the learner. It is people who build their own image of their needs on the basis of data relating to themselves and their environment. In short, we learn a language because we need to use it in a particular situation. Many Tunisian learners may feel they need more focus on spoken English. Accordingly, they will learn best if they want to learn. Managers' desire to improve their speaking English skill sounds strong. They want to learn English for future jobs rather than use it in everyday life.

#### 2.2.3.4.3. Necessities

According to Hutchinson & Waters (1987), "needs" can be called "necessities". They further argued that "the type of need is determined by the demands of the target situation, that is, what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 55). English nowadays can be seen as a "necessity" in the workplace.

#### 2.2.3.5. Target situation analysis (TSA)

TSA was first introduced in 1980 by Chambers (1980, p. 20) as an answer to the problem of defining needs analysis. Munby (1978, p. 3) defined target analysis as "a dynamic processing model that starts with the learner and ends with his target communicative competence." Through processing learners' communicative needs, Munby suggested communication needs processor (CNP) as an approach to needs analysis. This CNP model was considered by different researchers as operational and practical in analysing the relationship between communication needs and the English required for specific areas. To go deep in understanding the model proposed by Munby, which covers what the learners are supposed to do in the target language, we may adopt the Hawkey (1980) two-sector models as a summary of Munby's work.

#### 2.2.3.6. Objective versus Subjective Needs

Nuan (1988, p. 18) classified needs analysis into "objective" and "subjective." Objective needs analysis refers to needs which are derivable from different kinds of factual information about learners, their use of language in real-life communication situations as well as their current language proficiency and language difficulties. Subjective needs analysis, however, refers to the cognitive and affective needs of the learner in the learning situation, which are derivable from information about affective and cognitive factors such as attitudes, learners' wants and expectations with regard to the learning of English and their individual cognitive style and learning strategies (Brindley, 1989). Berwick (1989, p. 55) suggested "felt" and "perceived" needs which correspond to the "subjective" versus "objective needs." He further claimed that "needs" are perhaps more appropriately depicted

as “objectives” (Berwick, 1989, p. 57). Thus, the “perceived” needs are indeed delivered from people other than the learners themselves. In other words, this needs analysis aims to identify what the targeted participants know about the target language and what they feel to be crucial for them.

#### 2.2.3.7. Summary: Needs Analysis for the Present Study

The concept of needs analysis in the present study considers two approaches but will focus more on TSA than on PSA, because they are judged to be the most appropriate in the field of ESP (Blue, 1991; West, 1994, 1997; Jordan, 1997; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998) and have been endorsed by previous needs analysts. They have been chosen in view of all the drawbacks of each of the other approaches discussed above. Needs analysis refers here to the techniques for collecting and assessing information relevant to the potential training course design: it is the means of establishing the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of a course (Hyland, 2005, p. 73). PSA is about workers’ level of language and language use. What the workers want to develop forms TSA. Within this study, PSA is associated with TSA, and they will be carried out together. TSA is not adequate to determine the needs of UTICA professionals in English without considering their PSA. Therefore, taken together, TSA and PSA may explain which method(s) should be used in order to train UTICA managers and coordinators.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Context of the Study

Founded in 1946 and based throughout Tunisia, UTICA is a national employers’ organization that covers the whole range of economic sectors with its sectoral and regional professional structures (e.g., industry, Commerce, Services, Handicrafts and small crafts). A total sample of 17 National Professional Federations in UTICA was investigated in this study, including chemistry, electricity and building, among others. These seventeen federations represent bodies that group all the sectoral chambers of a given economic sector. Their mission is to develop cooperation with both national and international professional and economic organizations. Moreover, the targeted federations work on developing international partnership by conducting a network of privileged relations with foreign employers’ associations and with other international institutions and organizations. To achieve these goals, English as a *lingua franca* becomes a pre-requisite asset for UTICA.

#### 3.2. Participants

Participants in the present study were managers ( $N= 83$ ; *age mean*= 43) and coordinators ( $N= 17$ ; *age mean* = 37). These participants, who were randomly screened, are workers and members at UTICA. The selection of this sample participant was based on two key requirements needed for an initial study of the needs analysis of English language use: (1) compulsory use of English for business interactions and (2) communication with foreign partners and stakeholders.

### 3.3. Instrumentation

To achieve triangulation and thereby reach generalizable and valid results about the needs analysis of English language use and communication at UTICA, the current study used two different yet interrelated types of instrument: an open-ended questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. These instruments were developed for this study; each instrument underwent an extensive piloting, as described in the procedure section.

#### 3.3.1. Questionnaire Design

The first step undertaken in designing the questionnaire was the selection of purposive and precise prompts to elicit more clearly participants' responses about the needs for language use. Following the literature review, a semi-structured interview was conducted with a small sample of six participants in UTICA (3 managers and 3 coordinators, age range 45). The aim was (i) to have a better idea of the business context; (ii) to identify the English needs and the core business English tasks performed, and (iii) to develop a reliable questionnaire.

The researcher carefully read through the interview dialogues and examined the needs for English language use and the job-related tasks mentioned during the interviews. All the tasks that the interviewees mentioned to be performed in English at work were identified as target tasks. Since, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there was apparently no previous work done on business English target task types to refer to, the researcher developed the task types primarily based on the content analysis of the semi-structured interviews, but also took into account the English needs and tasks identified in the other studies on the use of English at the workplace (Bach Baouab, 2000; Hemissi, 1985).

Based on the interview results, an open-ended questionnaire was developed for further survey purposes. The questionnaire was composed of four major sections: (a) background information, (b) frequent skills used, (c) job-related tasks performed, and (d) difficulties encountered in performing the job-related tasks. Questions concerning federation name, department/team name, federation type, work experience, and language proficiency were included as background information questions. In Section B, the participants were asked to choose the best alternative to indicate the importance of the English used in their federations and the skills needed to perform the job-related tasks. Section C investigated how extensively the job-related tasks identified through the semi-structured interviews were performed by the respondents. In total, 28 job-related tasks classified into four groups according to the four skills used were included. The participants were asked to indicate the appropriate frequency for each task on a five-Likert scale: 'very extensive' (0), 'extensive' (1), 'moderate' (2), 'rarely' (3), and 'none' (4). Following questions on tasks, an open-ended question was included on the importance of English in

performing jobs. In Section D, questions were asked on the respondents' difficulties encountered in performing the job-related tasks.

### **3.3.2. Semi-structured interview**

The second instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview. The interview was used to support and/or explain the results obtained from the questionnaire. The interview open-ended questions covered the following points: (i) general background information regarding the interviewees' age, gender, and position; (ii) the importance of English and the most frequent skills needed to perform job tasks; (iii) problems or difficulties faced while performing business tasks in English; (iv) the appropriate ESP training managers and coordinators may need and the skills that they should improve.

### **3.4. Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches of Analysis**

Given the instruments used and the descriptive type of this study, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used in the data analysis. While quantitative analysis was concerned with providing descriptive statistics, a qualitative approach was used for the collection of more in-depth and emergent data to describe, explain and interpret the quantitative data.

### **3.5. Data Collection Procedures**

#### **3.5.1. Piloting**

The main study was preceded by a piloting phase in the first term of the academic year 2012-2013, both to uncover any problems and to address them before the main study was carried out. Within this piloting stage, all the instruments were tested in a randomly selected sample of five managers and five coordinators. These participants represented a population similar to that of the main study sample. They were invited to fill in the first version of the questionnaire, and based on the item analysis, the wording of some items was modified. After the data collection process had been completed, coefficient alpha was used for the items in the questionnaire to assess the internal consistency reliability. The coefficient alpha of 0.90 suggested that the open-ended questions of the questionnaire were internally consistent. The second instrument to be tested was the semi-structured interview which involved four open-ended questions. All the responses of the interviewed sample of participants were evaluated to check the reliability of the instrument to be used.

#### **3.5.2. Administration of the Questionnaire**

The administration of the questionnaire instrument took place by the end of 2013, precisely during the second week of December 2013 at UTICA, Tunis. Managers (N= 83) and coordinators (N= 17) were kindly asked to complete the questionnaire at the end of their daily work load for no more than 15 mn. The completed questionnaires were collected, and

then submitted for quantitative analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). It should be noted that the quantitative analysis was imparted with a qualitative analysis to give a meaningful interpretation of the data gathered.

### **3.5.3. Conducting the semi-structured interview**

For the purpose of conducting semi-structured interviews, six business professionals from three different federations (manufacturing, textile, trade and export) were selected as potential interviewees and were personally contacted by the researcher. Three of them were from the manufacturing federation while the others were from textile or export federations. Four of them were working in the Planning Departments of their companies, and the other two were working in the Sales Departments. On average, these interviewees had been working at/with their federations for about 7 years. Among them, one interviewee was employed by a foreign company, where he felt a great need to speak English as he had to team up with foreign colleagues.

All the semi-structured interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis for about half an hour with the six participants (three managers and three coordinators) in Le Palace Hotel on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of May, 2012, in Tunis City. The interviewees were given the freedom to use either English or French or their mother tongue to answer the interview questions. All the interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and translated, if need be, by the researcher. The transcription of the interview data was based on Gumperz and Berenz's (1993) convention system for transcribing conversational discourse. To verify the authenticity of the transcripts, the transcribed data were checked with two teachers familiar with the study. Then, the interview transcripts were thematically coded in a systematic way "to reduce a complex, messy, context-laden and quantification resistant reality to a matrix of numbers" (Orwin, 1994, p. 140). Inter-coder reliability accounted for 85%. The conflicts were solved through discussions between coders.

### **3.6. Data Treatment and Analysis Procedure**

The data collected were coded and turned into dichotomous and numerical data as appropriate. While background information was transformed into dichotomous data, the data of the other parts of the two instruments deployed were converted into numerical data. The data was then submitted to statistical analysis using SPSS version seventeen. The statistical techniques used included frequencies, reliability, T-tests and Pearson correlation. The qualitative analysis was used to inform the quantitative results obtained so as to provide meaningful interpretation in relation to the questions of the study.

Therefore, all the would-be results were presented in percentages. The latter option was adopted because the number of items on the areas investigated was not identical. Standardization of raw scores (i.e., converting raw scores into Z scores) was seen unnecessary because Z scores are designed for comparisons between different types of tests in the sense that each kind of test measures certain 'skills'. In our case, the data were comparable (without the need for Z scores). Statistical differences between the variance

were determined by the use of descriptive tests. Spearman's Correlation was used to find the strength of relationship between managers and coordinators' perception of the different job-related skills and difficulties. T-tests were deployed to measure the difference between the participants according to the independent factors, such as training level.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

##### 4.1. Profile of the Participants

The analysis of the questions on the first part of the questionnaire gave an informative profile of the participants. The valid number of participants was 102. The sample was randomly selected from different federations. Table 1 shows the number of participants per type of company and training.

**Table 1**  
***Profile of the participants of this study***



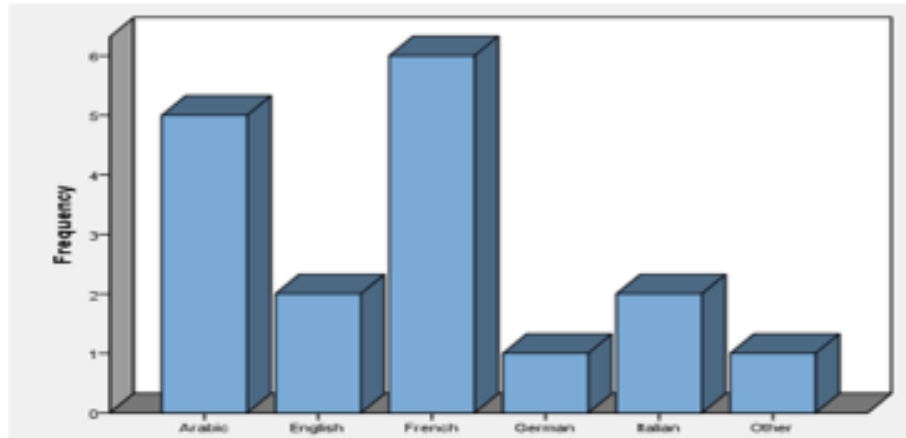
Position				Training		Total
				With training	No training	
Manager	Company	Manufacturing	Count	18	7	25
			% within Company	72,0%	28,0%	100,0%
			% within Training	29,5%	29,2%	29,4%
			% of Total	21,2%	8,2%	29,4%
		Finance	Count	7	3	10
			% within Company	70,0%	30,0%	100,0%
			% within Training	11,5%	12,5%	11,8%
			% of Total	8,2%	3,5%	11,8%
		Trading	Count	14	6	20
			% within Company	70,0%	30,0%	100,0%
			% within Training	23,0%	25,0%	23,5%
			% of Total	16,5%	7,1%	23,5%
		Service	Count	22	8	30
			% within Company	73,3%	26,7%	100,0%
			% within Training	36,1%	33,3%	35,3%
			% of Total	25,9%	9,4%	35,3%
		Total	Count	61	24	85
			% within Company	71,8%	28,2%	100,0%
			% within Training	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
			% of Total	71,8%	28,2%	100,0%
Coordinator	Company	Manufacturing	Count	3	3	6
			% within Company	50,0%	50,0%	100,0%
			% within Training	27,3%	50,0%	35,3%
			% of Total	17,6%	17,6%	35,3%
		Finance	Count	0	1	1
			% within Company	,0%	100,0%	100,0%
			% within Training	,0%	16,7%	5,9%
			% of Total	,0%	5,9%	5,9%
		Trading	Count	4	2	6
			% within Company	66,7%	33,3%	100,0%
			% within Training	36,4%	33,3%	35,3%
			% of Total	23,5%	11,8%	35,3%
		Service	Count	4	0	4
			% within Company	100,0%	,0%	100,0%
			% within Training	36,4%	,0%	23,5%
			% of Total	23,5%	,0%	23,5%
		Total	Count	11	6	17
			% within Company	64,7%	35,3%	100,0%
			% within Training	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
			% of Total	64,7%	35,3%	100,0%

All subjects learnt English in their educational career. Some of them who finished their higher studies had limited degrees of exposure to English in a host-language environment. The common independent variable here was that all the participants were graduates from Tunisian Universities. Eighty five work as managers with 35% of them in the service company, and 17 as coordinators of whom 23.5% were in the trade and service companies. Regarding the educational profile of the participants, managers were found to have received English training slightly more than the coordinators; 71.8% of the targeted managers were reported to have received an English training course, whereas 64.7% of the coordinators had taken a special course or training in English.



#### 4.2. Language Contact at UTICA

Analysis of the languages used at UTICA revealed that there is a variety of languages to be deployed by coordinators and managers, ranging from Arabic to Italian, among others. The following figure is an illustration of the rate of each language used at UTICA.

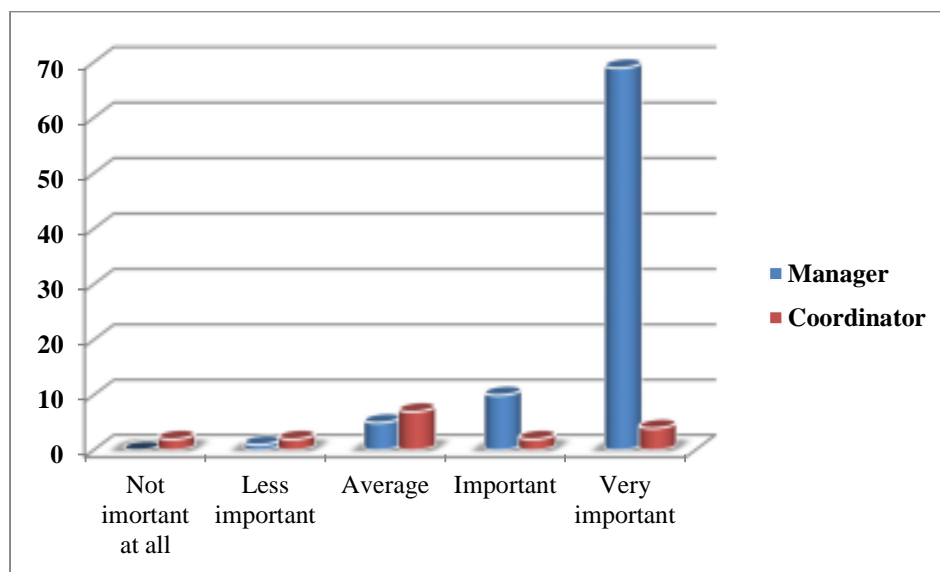


**Figure 1: Languages used by coordinators and managers at UTICA.**

As Figure 1 above shows, French was the most frequently used among both participants, accounting for more than 60%. Arabic ranked second with 50%, followed by English and Italian with 20%. German and other languages were the least used with 10%; the variety of languages deployed reflected the diversity in NNS or NS clients and partners UTICA had. This result shows that UTICA operates in a multilingual business context.

#### 4.3. The Participants' Perceptions Regarding the Need for English Language at their Workplace

Results of the analysis of the first question revealed that the importance of the English language at UTICA federations was perceived differently, as shown in Figure 2 below.



**Figure 2: Participants' perception of English language at their workplace.**

English was recognized by managers (70%) to be of great importance in their workplace, as opposed to coordinators who considered it more average. According to these results, assuming that both coordinators and managers need English in their work setting is not completely validated, in that only managers were found to need English more. To test whether the relevance of English branches in the UTICA federations was statistically different, a t-test was applied as illustrated in the following table.

**Table 2**  
***Distribution of the branches of English according to their relevance for UTICA federations***

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Position	31,461	101	,000	1,167	1,09	1,24
GeneralEng	31,550	101	,000	3,451	3,23	3,67
BusinessEng	50,600	101	,000	4,588	4,41	4,77
TechEng	39,904	101	,000	4,284	4,07	4,50
CommercialEng	24,934	101	,000	3,167	2,91	3,42
ESP	38,401	100	,000	4,327	4,10	4,55

As Table 2 shows, the t-test results were highly significant roughly in all the branches: (p =.00, t = 31.55) for General English, (t= 50, 60) for Business English, (t= 39, 90) for

Technical English, ( $t = 24, 93$ ) for commercial English, and ( $t = 38, 40$ ) for ESP. The results revealed that, roughly, all English branches were indeed needed in the UTICA workplace.

#### 4.4. The most frequent English skills that are most frequently used to perform the job-related tasks identified in the questionnaire

The respondents were asked to arrange four English skills used in performing their job-related tasks. The scale of the frequency of use was rated and interpreted according to the following criteria, as illustrated in Table 3 below.

**Table 3**  
***Distribution of the four English skills in performing job-related tasks by both participants***

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Position	31,461	101	,000	1,167	1,09	1,24
TOTListening	52,087	101	,000	19,206	18,47	19,94
TOTReading	62,553	101	,000	28,951	28,03	29,87
TOTWriting	53,371	101	,000	25,843	24,88	26,80
TOTSpeaking	46,149	101	,000	21,863	20,92	22,80

As can be seen, the four skills were used unequally by UTICA's managers and coordinators. The reading skill was most frequently used while working ( $t = 62.55$  and mean difference = 28.03). Also, the writing skill was used extensively to perform job-related tasks such as writing press releases, letters or notices ( $t = 53.37$  and mean difference = 25.84). Next, the listening skill was needed minimally while working ( $t = 52.08$ ). However, the speaking skill was found to be the least used by both participants ( $t = 46.14$ ). The results confirm the assumption the target population needs to use all the four skills in performing job-related tasks since all the respondents agreed that these skills were needed to complete their job tasks.

#### 4.5. The Sort of Difficulties UTICA Coordinators and Managers Face in Performing their Required Tasks

To answer the third research question of the present study, the respondents were asked to arrange the difficulties they most face while working. The scale of the frequency of the difficulties was rated and interpreted according to the following criteria.

**Table 4**  
***Descriptive statistics of the difficulties faced by both participants in using the four English skills to perform their required tasks***

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Position	102	1	2	119	1,17	,375
TOTSpeak	102	8	25	1784	17,49	4,694
TOTWrit	102	2	10	574	5,63	3,149
TOTList	102	3	15	1040	10,20	4,618
TOTRead	102	2	10	737	7,23	2,918
Valid N (listwise)	102					

Results from Table 4 above show that speaking was the most problematic English skill that the respondents experienced while working (mean = 17.3; SD = 4.694). They had problems while using the speaking skill with the following activities: greeting or speaking in conversation with guests in person, small talk or keeping the conversation on and appropriate use of language at conferences and seminars organized by UTICA. Also, the respondents had problems while using listening and writing skills at work (mean = 10.20; SD = 4.618 and mean = 5.367; SD = 3.149, respectively). The most frequent listening and writing tasks include understanding topics discussed in conferences and grasping rapid speech as well as the use of informal style and ungrammatical structures while writing. However, the reading skill was rated as the least problematic English skill (mean = 7.23; SD = 2.918) when performing the following tasks: reading reports and business correspondences, understanding technical vocabulary and reading contracts.

Comparing the two working groups across their proficiency in the four language skills (see Table 5 below), it becomes clear that the two groups of business professionals appear to be differentiated by their proficiencies in all language skills. Even though the type of tasks carried out has influenced the two groups of workers, coordinators, due to their limited use of the language and lack of much training, appeared to be lagging behind. They faced most difficulties in using the four English skills (SD= 16.811).

**Table 5**  
***Descriptive statistics of the difficulties faced according to the position variable***

	Position	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
TOTDifficulty	Manager	85	41,91	11,532	1,251
	Coordinator	17	33,71	16,811	4,077

From Table 5, it seems evident that the type of position plays a significant role in determining the degree of English use made by the workers. While managers showed a strong tendency toward using all the four skills more frequently, coordinators, on the other hand, appeared to be less efficient, tending to use these skills less frequently. This could be due to the fact that English serves a variety of functions in UTICA federations. For example, interpersonal communication skills including, among others, composing appropriate and accurate e-mail messages and faxes, as well as dealing with guests in various situations, all

are carried out in English. Therefore, their chances to use their language skills would be much bigger than those of coordinators, particularly the skills of reading, writing and speaking which are most frequently and widely used by them in the domain of work. However, in comparison to the managers, coordinators used English less frequently in their workplace and as such they had smaller chances to improve their language. The general impression of the use of English among managers and coordinators in UTICA federations is then that, for various reasons, limited proficiency of the coordinators and lack of training and difficulties in the use of English skills were the major differentiating characteristics between the participants. The variable Training level, once correlated with the position variable, accounted for the difficulties in the use of English skills for coordinators as illustrated below.

**Table 6**  
***Correlation between the Training level and position variables as to the difficulties faced in performing job-related tasks***

			TOTDifficulty	Level
Spearman's rho	TOTDifficulty	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,710**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,000
		N	102	102
	Level	Correlation Coefficient	,710**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.
		N	102	102

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As Table 6 shows, the results obtained from the correlation test between the Training level and position show a high loading between the two variables at .710\*\* (significance at the .01 level (2-tailed)). Accordingly, it can be argued that the Training level of the participants strongly relates to the difficulties faced in using the English language skills at work. It can account for the difficulties faced most by coordinators.

The semi-structured interview administered after the survey questionnaire included questions regarding their preferences for the type of English language training course. More specifically, their perceptions of the usefulness of the training course in meeting their needs, the language elements or aspects that should be covered and the time allocated to it. To elicit information regarding the managers and coordinators' perceptions of the potential English language training course, the researcher asked four questions the results of which are presented in the following sections.

#### 4.6. The Participants' Perceptions Regarding the Type of the English Language Training Course

The analysis of the interview results revealed two types of responses to the type and usefulness of the potential English language training course. Some interviewees, mainly coordinators, claimed that they need a training course in General English and Technical English to some extent. For instance, two coordinators from the machinery and chemistry federations explained that providing a training course in Technical English would help them understand machines names and instructions. Managers, however, argued that Business English is a top priority for them. The analysis of the interview corroborated the results

obtained from the open-ended questionnaire which revealed that Business English is of great importance for both participants.

#### 4.7. The Participants' Perceptions regarding the Usefulness of the English Language Training Course

As regards the usefulness of the English language training course in terms of meeting their English language needs, most of the interviewees (90%) stated that it can be of great help in two terms: (i) developing pragmatic competence (Yule, 1996), referred to as the ability to use language appropriately for the social situation and (ii) understanding cultural differences as well as building a personal relationship with business partners. The interviewed managers talked about the importance of appropriate communication style, often viewed as culturally-based, and its impact on relationships and overall functioning in the workplace. In contrast, coordinators, for the most part, seemed much less aware of such issues. These kinds of situations require sophisticated skills of explanation, justification of points and negotiation with others, all the time maintaining harmonious work relationships. Two other managers did recognize pragmatic challenges and spoke of them explicitly. Throughout the interviews, the importance of understanding cultural differences was emphasized.

#### 4.8. The Participants' Perceptions Regarding the Aspects and Skills of the English Language to Focus on in the Training Course

Analysis of the interview third open-ended question revealed that almost all the interviewees (96.2%) stated that the priority should be given to speaking and listening skills as well as vocabulary and grammar. 81.4% of the subjects held the view that communication skills should be an important element to be covered in the English training course. Listening comprehension skills come next, as perceived by 69% of the subjects. This ranking of priority can be accounted for by the difficulties participants face in performing their jobs in general.

Furthermore, some interviewees stated that they speak either a non coherent sentence or sentences with grammatical errors. This is what Attal (1993, p. 92) calls bad language which "comes in many forms- sloppy pronunciation, poor grammar, slang, meaningless little fillers like you know", hence the need to work on developing vocabulary and grammar.

Besides, social talk was regarded as important by the interviewed managers in building personal relationships with their business partners. Since business meetings always involve topics other than the business matters at hand, it seemed necessary to prepare various topics to talk about with business partners from diverse cultures in order to successfully lead and participate in the social talk. Good pronunciation was also mentioned to be important in business meetings by one interviewee.

#### 4.9. Discussion

It transpires from the results that most of the respondents seemed to acknowledge the importance of English in performing their work; more than 70% of the managers answered that English was either important or necessary to do their work. Moreover, even the coordinators who answered that English was not that important or necessary for their jobs expressed their awareness of the importance of English for their future career development

in the semi-structured interview. In addition, strong demands for Business English among the respondents were revealed through the open-ended questionnaire and interview.

The reading skill was the most frequently used skill in performing job-related tasks. It was consistent with the studies of Intratrat (1985) and Suwaroporn (1997) which investigated the use of English for occupational purposes of Dentistry graduates and nursing staff. Their findings revealed that the reading skill was the most important skill used. This may reflect the fact that people who work in health science, such as dentists and nurses, need to read medical text books and journals. Most text books and journals in health science are in English because these health care teams need to share updated information and knowledge with other countries.

The writing and listening skills were also used while working extensively. This finding was consistent with the study of Florence and Kate (1996) as well as that of Al-Khatib (2005). Both studies investigated the workplace English needs and showed that the use of written English is considerably higher, along with listening. It is possible that the working styles of merchandisers who work in the international marketplace and hotel officers were similar. They needed to contact international clients via e-mail messages and faxes or handle telephone inquiries and prepare some relevant business English documents. Therefore, workers' chances to improve these English language skills would be much bigger than reading skills that tended to be used less frequently in their workplace.

As shown in the previous sections of the data analysis, the respondents greatly emphasized the importance of improving their English speaking ability as well as listening skills such as conversation and negotiation, among others. Also they wanted to improve these same skills along with pragmatic competence in business English courses. The respondents, mainly coordinators, indicated that they had an extensive problem in speaking and listening to other people or partners. Generally, UTICA professionals need to speak to the guests politely but it was very important to use an appropriate level of language with the audiences having a different status. This implies that courses should be modified to make graduate students prepare themselves for several situations in the work milieu. Useful solutions can be worked out from using role play simulations techniques or authentic tasks. It could prepare them to be ready for the real world.

The finding also showed that problems in the reading skill were ranked low. Although some of the respondents indicated that sometimes they did not understand some technical vocabulary related to machine instructions, they could find the meaning in the dictionary or Google by themselves. However, they mentioned that they had problems when writing some correspondences or reading some articles using slang words or idioms for which they could not find the meaning in the dictionary. From the study findings, it could be inferred that the English courses offered at the university level should target the skills related to job needs and job functions to ensure that the learners will be well equipped with the required skills so as to perform well at their future workplaces.

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1. Summary of the main findings

The findings of this study revealed that managers tend to consider English to be more important in their work setting than coordinators. The branch of English that was much needed was Business English. Both respondents stated that reading and writing skills were



the most frequently used. As for the difficulties, results showed that they were mainly faced in the speaking and listening skills. It was mainly coordinators who were found to have faced most of the difficulties. This fact can be explained by their training level in English and to some extent the lack of utility of English for them. Moreover, the findings of the current case study have revealed that there is an essential and crucial need for an English training course, especially business and technical English to help UTICA professionals overcome their difficulties in their use of English and improve the quality of their interactions.

## 5.2. Implications for course design

The main concern of this study was an analysis of the needs of the subjects in the workplace only. It is, therefore, recommended that universities consider English courses for managers and business professionals, as well as other fields such as English for secretaries or English for engineers in their curriculum, in accordance with actual use of English for managers and coordinators' communication.

For undergraduate students, English courses should be General English, first, in order to build the students' confidence and improve their ability in using English skills, including listening, speaking, reading as well as writing skills. The course should focus on the grammar structure because it is the foundation of English. For the graduate and postgraduate students majoring in communication or professional English, any suggested specific English course should take place as an optional course. In this vein, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) recommend that students should practice their communicative skills in several ways including formal presentation, general conversation, business talk, writing specific papers, and corresponding via email. The role play simulations method will prepare the student to know how to deal with real problems in the future.

Further, the identification of the target business English tasks and their classifications into various target task types according to their corresponding skills could help course designers develop pedagogic tasks that can be used in a classroom. Each task should be observed by language experts and task experts to understand how the task is performed via language use in the real business world.

Then, discourse samples or writing samples of the target task should be obtained and analyzed in order to identify the prototypical discourse structures or genres of the task (for the use of discourse analysis in needs analyses, see Gilabert, 2005; Winn, 2005). It would also be advisable to refer to the well-documented discourse analysis studies on some popular business English tasks such as email communication (Gains, 1999; Gimenez, 2005), business letters (Akar, 2002), business negotiations (Charles, 1996; Planken, 2005), and business meetings (Bilbow, 2002; Porcini, 2002). Based on the discourse or genre analysis, pedagogic tasks that are appropriate for the learners should be derived and implemented in the classroom, as done in Winn's (2005) study for the US naturalization interview preparation courses. The pedagogic tasks derived through this process will help students become better prepared for the tasks and develop their skills that they will need to perform in the business world as the target course purports to do.

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## **Dialectal Differences Due to Social and Regional Affiliations: Attitudes to Language Use by Students at the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences of Sousse**

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### **Abstract**

This research is a synchronic study of linguistic variation in relation to language use and language attitude. It is an attempt to investigate the linguistic differences that might exist in the speeches of speakers belonging to the regions of Kasserine and Sousse in the Tunisian country. The selected speakers are a group of students pursuing their studies at the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences of Sousse. Their dialectal patterns are claimed to vary from each other phonologically, lexically and grammatically. In my paper I purport to reveal how divergent ways of speaking may reveal differences not only at the social and regional levels but also may lead to social prejudices, categorization, and classification of male and female speakers. Both quantitative and qualitative methods are used to provide answers for the research questions and objectives of this scientific inquiry. The latter offers a structured interview along with the matched-guise technique as well as an unstructured interview. One of the key findings of this study is that students are aware of the effects of their regional and social backgrounds on shaping and articulating their speech. Accordingly, there is a general agreement between the informants that the speech style of guise one of the first experiment is more developed and more influential than the manner of speaking of guise two.

*Keywords:* linguistic variability, regional affiliation, social belonging, prejudices, stereotypes, convergence, divergence, social imbalance.

### **Introduction**

The study of dialectology \_a growing sub-discipline of sociolinguistics that attempts to examine linguistic variation on the basis of geographical distribution and associated features \_is a fascinating field of investigation that has received much light over the last period of time, mainly because of the major issues it sheds light on. Although various studies in English and Arabic dialectal speeches have been conducted, there are fewer researches which have revealed that a spoken variety is shaped and affected by migration, social and regional belonging, ethnicity, to name a few. This research study is an exploration of the dialectal varieties of speakers who are members of the same speech community; the



Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences of Sousse. All of them are Tunisians speaking the same standard language of the country. However, the sole difference between them is their regional and social affiliations since some of them belong to the governorate of Sousse and some others belong to the region of Kasserine. It is an attempt to investigate the linguistic situation of these students by highlighting the various spoken forms of Modern Standard Arabic and trying to see how their regional and social belongings affect the way they use language.

### **Theoretical background**

This part is intended to provide some linguistic views related to the phenomena of linguistic variability, language attitudes in both English and Arabic languages.

### **Aspects of language variation**

Language variation, according to some researchers, refers mainly to the varieties that exist in any language in the world. These varieties are sometimes called dialects of languages and the distinction between them is almost difficult (Hudson, 1996; Wardhaugh, 2006). Dialects are considered to be different from each other at the levels of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Starting from Labov's 1966 work concerned with examining the speech of people in New York City, various linguists got inspired and started their investigations on dialects relying on different approaches and methods.

The existence of multiple dialectal speeches is the result of the existence of various purposes, under different circumstances and due to some factors (Crystal, 2004; Wolfram & Schilling, 2016). The way some words are pronounced, whether in English or Arabic dialectal speeches, is one aspect whereby language varies between speakers having different social and regional backgrounds (Trudgill, 1974; Haughen, 1976; Hudson, 1980; Labov, 2000; Sayahi, 2014). An example of phonological discrepancy might be observed in the alternative pronunciations the (r) variable when repeating the phrase *fourth Floor* by speakers in the three department stores (Labov, 2006: 45). The proportion of the use of the (ng) variable between the different social classes is not the same when working-class speakers use more the non-standard [in] variant whereas middle and upper classes use the standard variant [ing] in their speeches (Trudgill, 1974:90; Romaine, 1994; Meyerhoff, 2006; Rahman, 2014). More to the point, Kerswill (2007) notes that English speakers coming from Canada and Scotland do not have the same accent. Apart from their locations, their social statuses are considered to be major factors affecting the way they use language with others. For example, the initial /h/ is always pronounced by English speakers in words like *house*, *hospital*, and *hedge*, but this is not applicable to many working-class speakers. This feature is known as *h-dropping* and a word as *home* would be represented as /aʊm/ (Kerswill, 2007:02).

Dialectologists and researchers on the phenomenon of variability in the language (Trudgill, 1974; Milroy, 1976; Hudson, 1980; Fasold, 1990) argue that the lexical choices done by individual speakers might be considered as another aspect through which language is not the same even though people share the same speech community. Lexical terms selected by males and females in their speeches are considered to be markers of different regional and social backgrounds. For example, some of them choose to say *lift* instead of *elevator* or to say *gas* instead of *petrol* (Wardhaugh, 2006: 45). More to the point, in



Hemnesberget, a village located in Northern Norway, its inhabitants have two dialectal varieties; the Bokmal varieties known as the book language which is used in administration or teaching and the Ranamal variety used with family members and friends (Holmes, 2013: 5).

Speakers with diverse regional and social belongings are supposed to use language in different ways not only at the phonological and lexical levels but also at the syntactic level. For instance, British people coming mainly from Scotland and Ireland use various grammatical structures of language. Irish people prefer the use of *after* as an immediate perfect such as *he was only after getting the job* whereas Scottish speakers prefer to say *he had just get the job*. They deviate from the English grammatical rules by relying on inversion in direct questions as in *she asked my mother had she* as the alternative to the present participle as in the case of *this shirt needs washed* (Bauer, 2002: 27).

### **Background to attitude studies**

According to sociological attitude researchers, attitude study is one of the central areas of investigation in the sociolinguistic field. Various studies have dealt not only with people's evaluation processes of different dialectal speeches of the same language but also with speakers of these varieties (McGroarty, 1996; Preston, 1999). Attitudes are of paramount importance in forming, shaping and representing the social positions of individual speakers in any given society. Speakers do not hold the same feelings towards objects, manners of talking, speakers of certain vernacular speeches or any other social phenomenon. Thus, attitudes of individuals towards each other are determined with reference to multiple social contexts (Johnson & DeLamater, 2000).

The sociology of language is closely related to the field of sociolinguistics since both of them are concerned with observing the systematic relationship between language and society as well as this link between variability in language and other social behaviors. They attempt to examine not only the reactions and evaluations of speakers towards various dialectal patterns but also to relate these types of assessments with diverse social and regional backgrounds (Bainbridge & Chambers, 2009). Apart from language sociology discipline, social psychology discipline attempts to examine human behaviors, thoughts and feelings relying on various types of scientific methods. To put it another way, it is a scientific investigation of how we think about, how we feel and how to behave towards the people around us as well as how our behaviors, feelings, and thoughts are affected by those individuals (Stangor, 2015:15). Some psychological researchers (Ryan & Giles, 1982; Davies & Ostrom, 1994). From a mentalist perspective, the social psychology domain is concerned with people attitudes towards some speech styles and their speakers at the expense of other ones. These positive and negative feelings might be observed directly through reactions of individual speakers or indirectly via feelings (Mckenzie, 2006).

### **Methodology**

This section is intended for introducing and describing in details the methodological framework followed to conduct this research.

#### **Population**

The subjects involved in this study are 60 participants differentiated from each other by their regional and social belongings. I chose 30 participants from urban and rural areas in the region of Kasserine and other 30 participants belonging to the governorate of Sousse.

Each group is composed of 15 males and 15 females. All the participants of the study are students at the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences of Sousse during the Academic Year 2018-2019. They belong to different departments, some of them are in their first years of study at this institution, and some others are master and doctoral students.

### **Research design and instrumentation**

This scientific inquiry relies on a mixed method approach. There was a structured interview along with a matched-guise technique as well as an interview. As far as the first experiment is concerned, each participant received an evaluation booklet which contained instruction in the front page, two written copies of the two recorded short extracts with some questions in the Arabic version. It is a closed-ended questionnaire where informants are asked to select the appropriate answer to them. The two versions are linguistically different from each other at the levels of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. The meaning conveyed in the two short recorded extracts is about the description of the weather and it is far from the highly debatable and sensitive topics of religion and politics. This is purposefully done as an attempt not to direct the attention of the judges, but to let them answer the question in an objective way without understanding or paying attention to the aim behind the experiment. Actually, the main goals are to associate some linguistic differences with their speakers and to elicit the expressed feelings of the judges towards the physical and the personality characteristics of the two guises on the basis of their voices. The two versions of the recorded voices are produced by one single speaker as an imitation of two different regiolects where one speech style might be considered as less prestigious than the other (Giles & Coupland, 1991; Kircher, 2014:201).

As far as the second experiment is concerned, I selected 20 participants from the total number of the study to answer some questions in a direct interview. Each group is composed of 10 knowledgeable and older interviewees such as those who belong to higher degrees at the faculty. I attempted to investigate in depth the phenomenon of variability in language between those speakers who share in common the same identity, as Tunisian citizens, and who share also in common the same language as Modern Standard Arabic, but their local speeches are not the same. Some of the questions were about how and why the two dialectal patterns are not the same but they are mutually intelligible. Some other questions were about the convergences and divergences of the speech and the reasons behind that.

### **Major findings and discussion**

In this experiment, after listening to the two short texts, hearers were asked to judge the two varieties and to express their attitudes towards the speech style of each guise. They were not aware that they were listening to the same person who produced the two short extracts with two Tunisian varieties. There were some linguistic differences which make it easy for judges to distinguish between two individual speakers coming from different geographical areas. For instance, the first record was somewhat an imitation of a more prestigious form of speaking whereas the other was a representation of somewhat a less prestigious variety.

### **Attitudes of students towards the two guises**

In this experiment, students were seen as judges who were asked to evaluate and give the appropriate physical and personality characteristics to each guise on the basis of his voice. Figure 1 reveals hearers' guesses of the personality traits of both guises.

Figure 1 visualizes how hearers rate both guises in terms of personality traits. 16 supposed guise 1 to be self-confident. In contrast, only 4 who thought guise 2 to be self-confident. 8 imagined guise 1 to be eloquent. There were only 10 who said that he might be persuasive. There were only 2 who guessed him to be primitive and 3 who supposed him to be kind. According to his way of talking, there were 18 who imagined him to be arrogant. There were 3 hearers who did not give their predictions to guise 1 but they did with guise 2. The latter was considered by 4 to be a self-confident speaker. 4 thought him to be eloquent and 7 who said that he was somewhat persuasive. However, there were 29 who supposed him to be primitive. 13 considered him as kind and there were only 3 who imagined him as arrogant.

**Figure 1.** Hearers' speculative rating to the personality traits of both guises

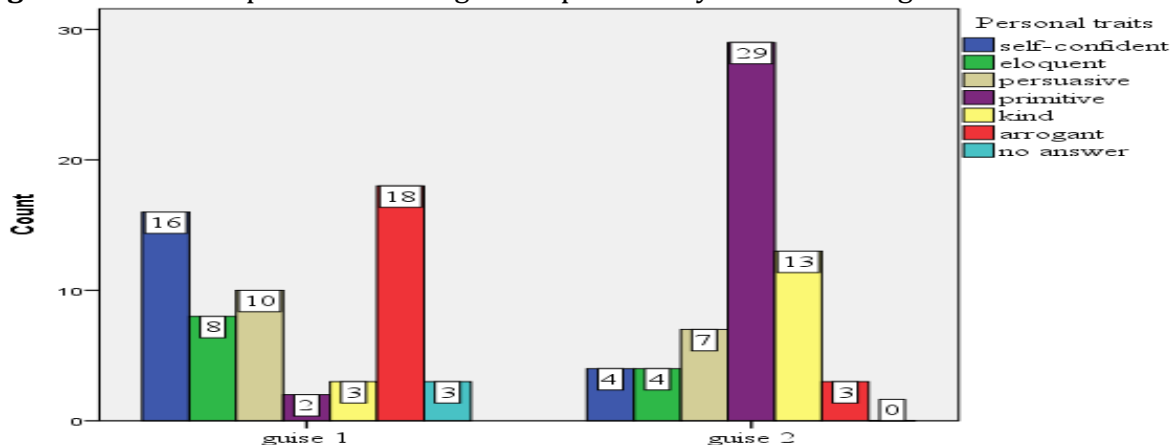


Figure 2 shows how hearers rated the physical appearances of both guises. On the basis of their divergent use of language, some of the physical characteristics of both guises were clearly rated contrastively, others were somehow rated with very approximate levels. In fact, 18 guessed guise 1 to be white but only 2 guessed him to be black. In contrast, only 6 thought guise 2 to be white and 13 imagined him as black. As far as the height of the two guises is concerned, there is a huge difference in the guesses. 14 said they thought guise 1 to be tall and only 4 supposed him to be probably short. However, there were 4 who imagined guise 2 to be tall and 16 considered him to be short. Concerning the beauty of the two guises, 19 insisted that guise 1 is beautiful and only 3 predicted him to be ugly. However, only 7 thought guise 2 to be beautiful and 13 said he might be ugly. There was one listener who ignored the prediction of the physical traits of guise 2.

**Figure 2.** Hearers' speculative rating to the physical traits of the two guises

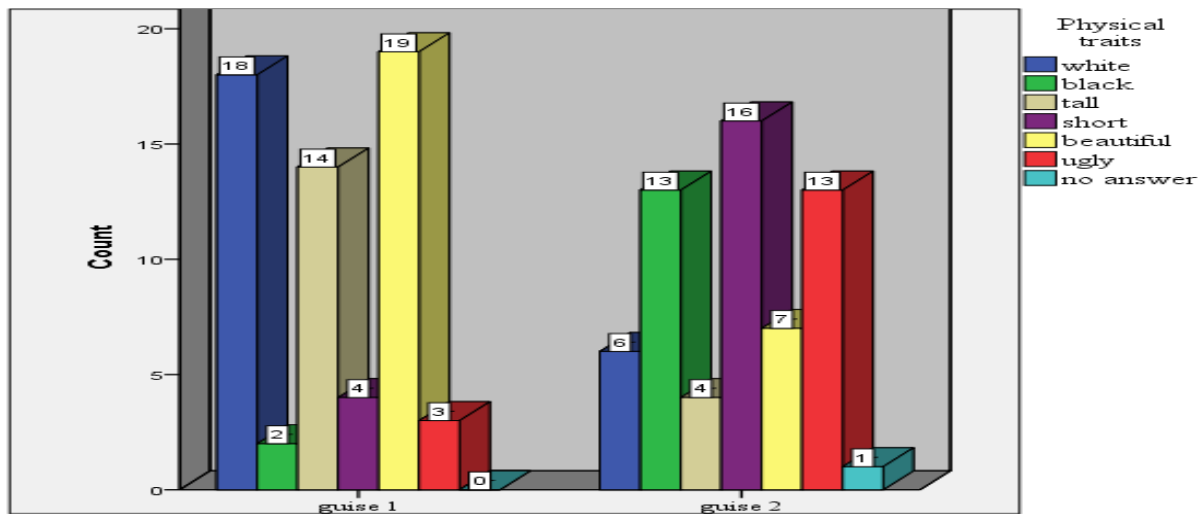


Figure 3 displays the results of inquiring about how hearers predicted the regional belonging of the two guises on the basis of their recorded voices. In fact, a majority of 49 hearers expected guise 1 to be someone coming from an urban area, 2 ignored their prediction to his regional affiliation and the other 9 remaining listeners thought guise 2 to be from a rural area.

**Figure 3.** Hearers' speculative rural/urban rating of the two guises

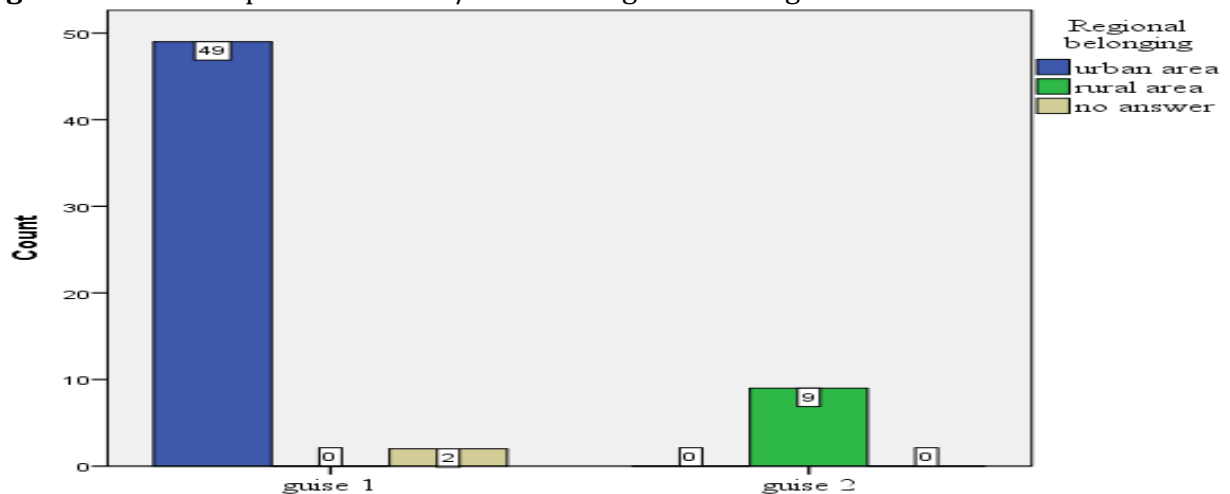


Figure 4 reveals the results of inquiring about the linguistic differences that were detected by the participants. According to their speech productions, 19 considered that the linguistic differences existed (existing) between the two ways of talking of both guises resided mainly at the phonological level. There were 17 who said that the two speech styles were not the same because some lexical terms were different from one another even though the meaning conveyed was almost the same. 7 detected some varieties at the grammatical level. There were 13 judges who supposed that the speed of the two dialectal speeches was not the same but they did not specify which one is slower or faster than the

other. There were 4 who ignored predicting the linguistic differences between the two recorded voices.

**Figure 4.** The linguistic differences in the speech of the two guises as detected by the

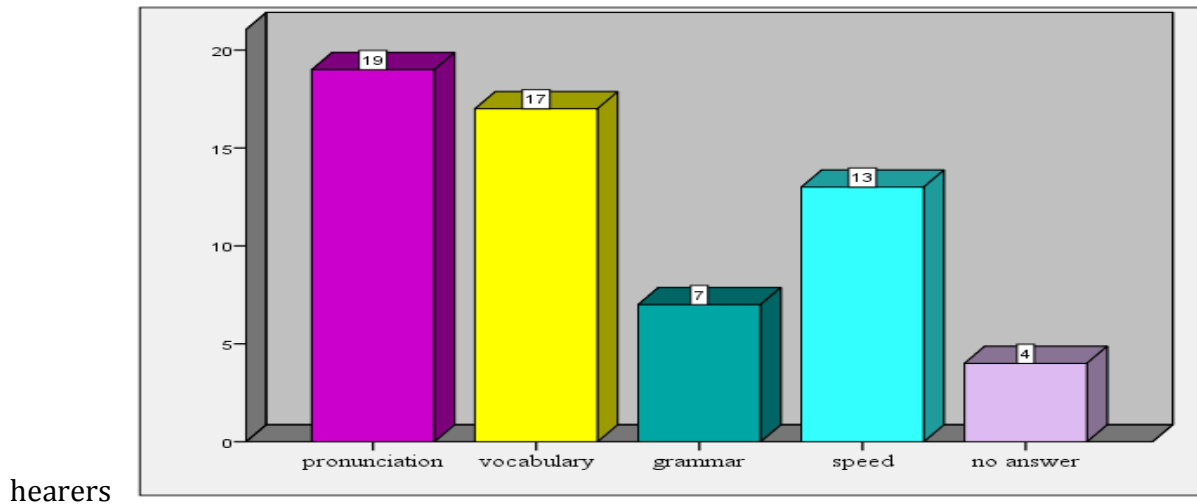


Figure 5 illustrates the level of education of both guises as guessed by the listeners. Concerning guise 1, 7 thought that he reached only the primary educational level. 13 predicted him as someone who reached only the secondary level. The majority of participants, 39 imagined him as someone who reached a higher educational level. There was just one participant who did respond to the question. For guise 2, 34 listeners guessed that he reached only the primary level. 13 said that think guise 1 as someone who reached only the secondary level. 9 guessed that he might be a student belonging to a higher level. Concerning the four remaining hearers ignored the prediction of his educational level.

**Figure 5.** Hearers' speculative rating to the educational level of the two guises

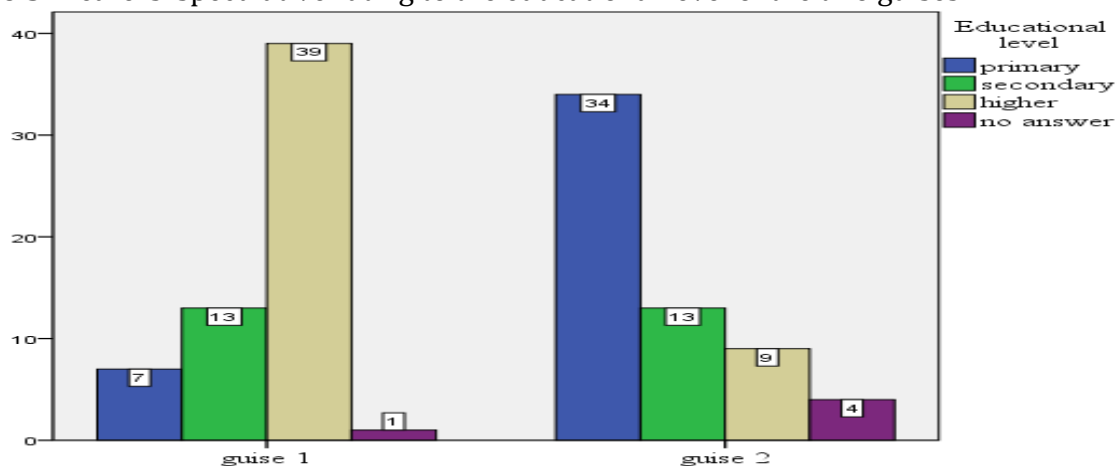


Figure 6 reveals how hearers have various predictions and attitudes about the possible profession of the two guises. Concerning guise 1, 41 said he might be an important worker

in comparison to guise 2 when only just 9 imagined him to be an important worker. Also, only 7 supposed guise 1 to be a simple worker whereas 37 considered guise 2 to be a simple worker. There were 2 who thought guise 1 having no job but 12 insisted that guise 2 had no job too. There were 2 who ignored predicting the profession of the two guises.

**Figure 6.** Hearers' speculative rating to the profession of the two guises

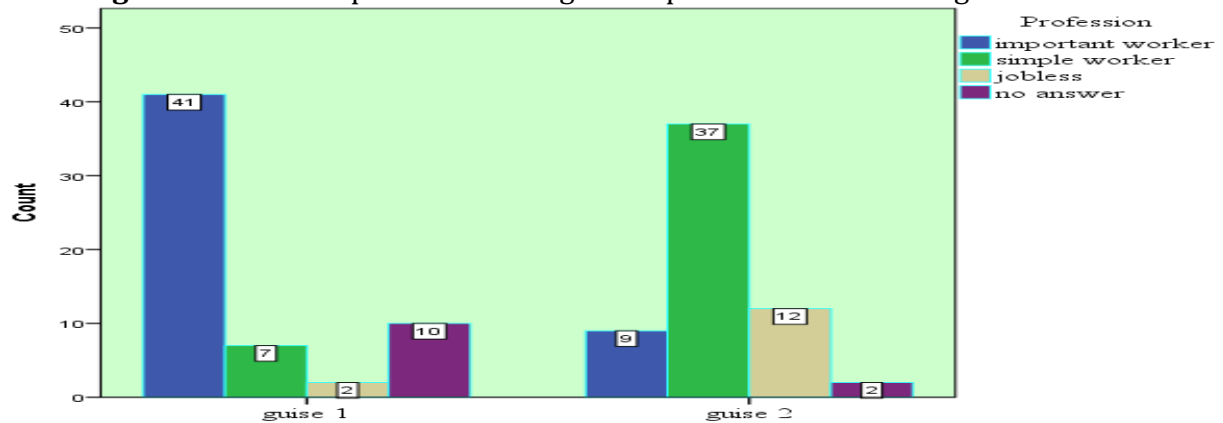


Figure 7 displays the classification and the image which hearers built in their minds about each guise on the basis of their forms of speaking. In fact, 15 said that guise 1 might be someone who could come from inland or region in the South of the country. Almost the majority of them, 39 insisted that guise 1 could only belong to a geographical area in the Sahel. There were only 6 who ignored the affiliation of the first guise. For the second guise, via his speech style, 35 supposed him to be from inland or southern regions. 19 imagined him to be a speaker from the Sahel or metropolis. There were 6 who chose not to answer this question.

**Figure 7.** Hearers' perception of a speaker from the Sahel and speaker from the inlands via the language used in their speech

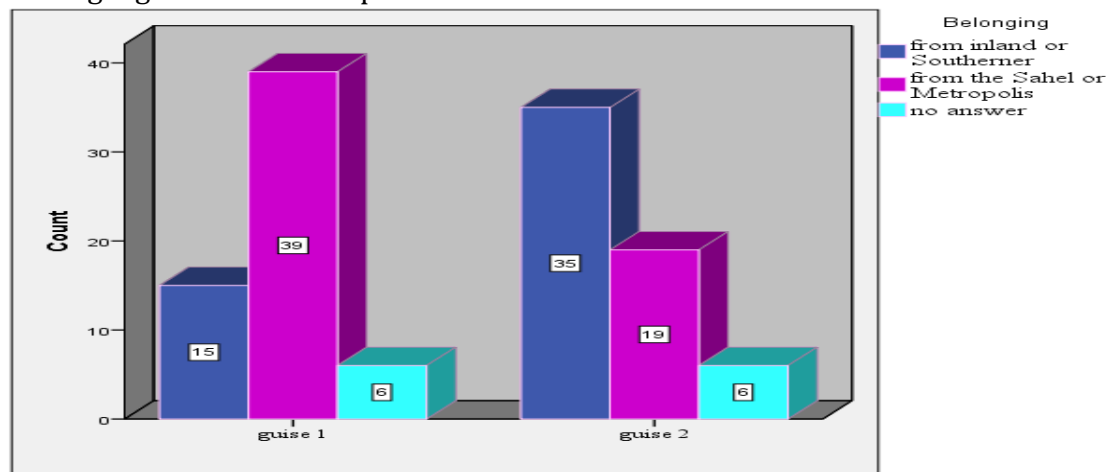


Figure 8 displays how hearers think of the two speech styles in terms of prestige. For guise 1, a majority of 51 said that his manner of talking is very distinguished. 9 did not admire his form of speaking. Concerning guise 2, only 17 viewed his manner of speaking as

prestigious but a majority of 41 considered it as not prestigious. The two remaining participants ignored the evaluation of the speech style of guise 2.

**Figure 8.** Hearers' evaluation of the speech styles of both guises

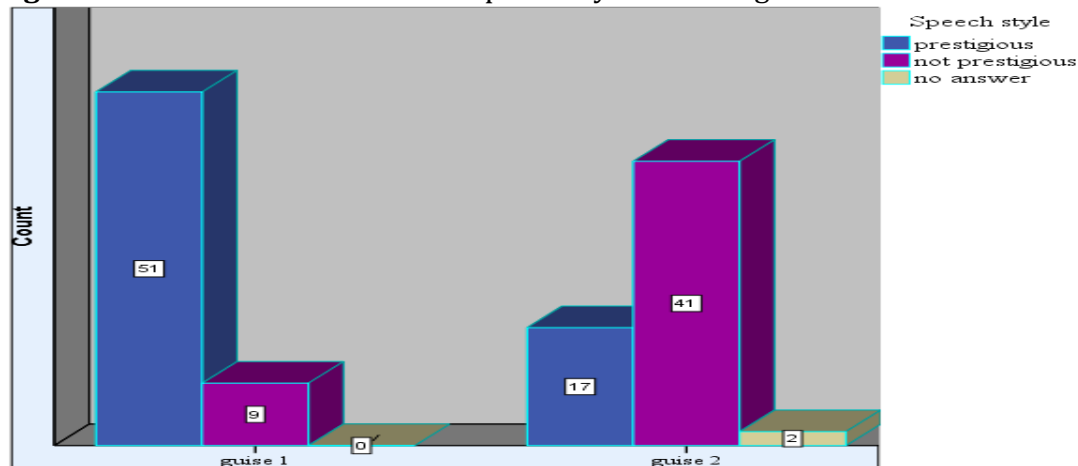


Figure 9 demonstrates how respondents answered question number 9. When inquiring about the social class of each guise, only 3 thought that guise 1 belonged to lower social class. 14 said that he might be someone from the middle-class society. A majority of 35 hearers imagined him to be a wealthy speaker. There were 8 who ignored the prediction of his social status. In contrast, 11 said that guise 2 might not be rich and 38 insisted that he might be someone belonging to middle social class. There were only 10 who expected him to belong to a higher social class. There was one hearer who ignored predicting which social class guise 2 may belong to.

**Figure 9.** Hearers' speculation about the social affiliation of the two guises

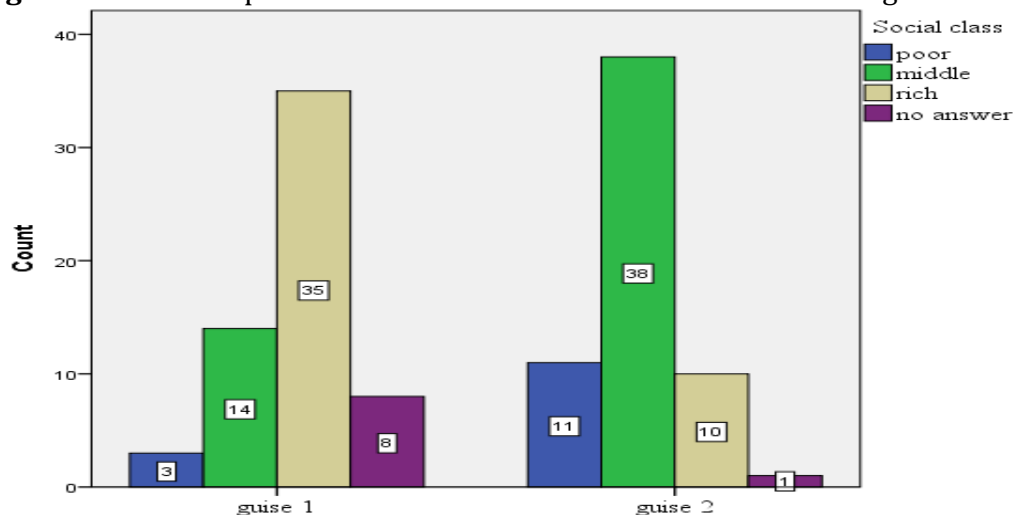
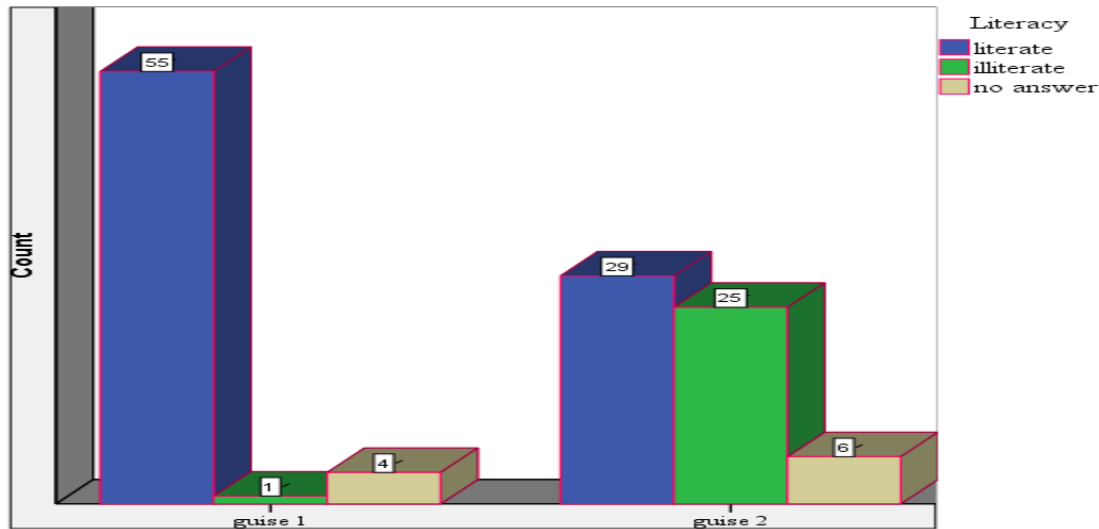


Figure 10 displays the guesses of hearers about the literacy of the two guises. For guise 1, a majority of 55 listeners considered him to be a literate speaker but there was just one hearer who thought him to be illiterate. There were 4 who ignored to give an answer to this



question. Contrastively, there 29 who said that guise 2 might be literate whereas 25 imagined him to be not educated. 6 ignored evaluating his degree of literacy.

**Figure 10.** Hearers' speculative rating to the degree of literacy of both guises



### Effects of speakers belongings on their language use

In responding to question number one in the unstructured interview addressed to them, the majority of the interviewees agree that the dialectal speeches of students belonging to the regions of Sousse and Kasserine are not the same. They claim that there exist some phonological, lexical as well as grammatical differences in both ways of talking. The interviewees coming from rural areas argue that linguistic differences exist even between those individual speakers who are from the same region, especially those who live in urban areas. They believe that the way of speaking of the city dwellers is near to the classical Arabic and contains borrowed lexical items mainly from other languages like French, English, and Italian. Those informants who belong to the region of Kasserine admit that their manner of speaking is mainly affected by some economic, political and geographical reasons.

Other interviewees who belong to the region of Sousse confirm the hypothesis concerning the existence of some linguistic differences between them and those living in Kasserine governorate. For instance, one interviewee said that variance in how words are being uttered in the speech of the two groups was not only socially inherited but also acquired in the environment where the speaker was born. In addition, when inquiring about the lexical choices that would exist in the speech of the two groups, they insist that there exist actually various examples of linguistic differences but their dialectal varieties are mutually intelligible. For example, they may pronounce words using either the phonemes /g/ or /k/ or they may say /na/, /ena/, or /eni/ as equivalents to the personal pronoun I, but all of them are almost the same. They may call each other by saying 'iijaa', 'taala', 'araah' as equivalents to 'come here' but their meanings are alike.

They understand each other even they use different linguistic items. This intelligibility between dialectal varieties can be measured and observed via the ways in which speaker of one dialect understands the spoken and written forms of another variety. This understanding might be full intelligibility where speakers understand almost everything but miss some of the details in one discussed topic or story in their speech community. Their understanding might be described as partial intelligibility where they comprehend some of the major points in the story and they miss many details but they do not stop conversation in most cases. Also, there is what is called sporadic recognition where speakers from different regions do not understand each other due to the existence of some isolated words and phrases. In this case, most of the time conversation ends between speakers or they choose to use a language or a variety that both of them can speak (Casad, 1974; Simons, 1977).

In responding to question number two when inquiring about the reasons behind converging their speeches in some situations, interviewees give various responses and attitudes towards this phenomenon. Some of the interviewees from the first group (speakers coming from the region of Kasserine) argue that varying the speech style depends on the speakers themselves before coming to the place in which they are involved. Some of them insist that those who vary their forms of speaking may lack self-confidence and they are not satisfied or proud of their dialect variety. There is one female interviewee who admits that if she varies her dialectal pattern once leaving home and coming to the faculty, she is in a way or another changing her identity. She insists that when speakers adhere to this manner, they face either acceptance or refusal from other students. Indeed, her friends from the same group share with her the same view except for one male interviewee who believes that it is sometimes possible to speak with two varieties, one at home and the other at another milieu. According to him, the convergence of speech due to the situation being involved in has an effect in decreasing the social, cultural and regional distances between him and other speakers. He insists that this way is demanded in the sense that others would not infer or elicit his social or regional affiliation.

Added to that, when asking the same question to interviewees of the other group, I notice somewhat differences in answers and attitudes towards the alternation between two forms of speech. In this context, members of this group agree on the fact that speakers are free to speak with the manner they wish. They claim that sometimes speakers need to modify their ways of speaking when leaving home because the milieu itself pushes them to use one variety. There is a male interviewee who claims that varying your manner of speaking is neither blame nor fault, it is just a personal choice. They argue that this manner becomes somewhat seen as a fashion and it is temporary. According to them, speakers should preserve their local varieties which are part of their identities and they can modify their speeches in some occasions. This modification refers either to convergence or divergence of the speech depending especially on the speaker addressed to and the situation involved in. Accordingly, in some situation, there are some attitudinal feelings as distinctiveness and feelings of solidarity that encourage speakers to converge their manners of talk vis a vis to a superior social reference group. In other situations, speakers would not use some standard or prestigious forms, but they may refer to some socially marked features to insist on a distinctive social identity which is referred to as divergent accommodation (McGroarty, 1996: 12). There is a close relationship between language

varieties and identity in the sense that speakers from different regional or social backgrounds may vary their speaking styles in different circumstances and for various purposes. The identity which the speaker desires to portray when using language and interacting with other speakers affects his or her linguistic choices. Thus, since one's dialect variety is previously identified as less prestigious, he or she decides to accommodate his or her speech. By doing so, some speakers keep on using the new speech form and forget about their original one. In this sense, when speaking almost the same manner as a specific social group, the speaker can be identified as belonging to that group. He or she can be considered as an insider not an outsider of that group (Tajfel,1979; Fishman,2001; Bassiouney,2009; Edwards,2011).

In question number three, when inquiring about the social categorization of individual speakers on the basis of the variety they use, members of the two interviewed groups have different views towards this phenomenon. There is an emphasis on the fact that there are actually some references or signs that would mark and distinguish individual speakers from each other. In other words, they believe that physical appearance, personality characteristics and the register employed are the major indicators which do not only enable the observer to predict speakers' origins but also to start classifying and categorizing them. For example, they provided some examples of the names given to students who come from different villages in the region of Kasserine to the faculty Sousse. In this speech community, those speakers are named or labeled as '*jmaat elgasrin or ligssarnia/ Kasserine group, Esbéibia, jmaat Firiana, Awléd l7odoud/Sons of the borders, Awled lardh el7archa/ Sons of the harsh land*' and various other examples. The dialectal patterns of those speakers can reveal how their manners of speaking reflect not only social and regional divisions but also lead to social categorization and personal evaluation of speakers towards each other. The use of certain linguistic expressions, specific way of articulation or the choice of particular words in the speech might be considered as signs that would give the hearer an idea about the identity of the speaker. To put it another way, some linguistic variables might be considered as social and regional markers that are somewhat part of the variety spoken in certain regions. It would be useless sometimes for some speakers in certain occasions to introduce themselves because their verbal communication would reflect on their belongings (Milroy, 1993; Chambers & Trudgill, 1998; Wardhaugh, 2006).

The members of the two groups start from their personal experiences when trying to answer question number four related to linguistic differences in the speeches of those living in the city and the countryside of the same region. The interviewees belonging to the first group approve that nature itself of the environment where speakers live shapes their spoken forms. In the same context, one female interviewee asserts that the family and its social status have some effects on the users of certain varieties either males or females. For instance, she gives two different examples representing two different dialect varieties. She believes that if a person is born in a family where his father is a musician, he is going normally to get up on the sound of music each day. In this case, he may have the sensation of an artist and he would use various terms related to the field of art. She contrasts this image with another related to someone who gets up usually on the sound of animals in a farm or near the mountains. Thus, according to the answers of interviewees, I see that the place of residence of the speaker, the social class of his or her family, the fact of being literate or illiterate language contact with other friends are seen as major factors behind

variability in speech. Speakers use specific dialectal patterns that are quite linked to their localities. In other words, Hudson (1980) and Milroys (1993) have related using regional varieties as if the individual is *wearing a badge* displaying where they come from and where they feel they would belong. Milroys (1993) notes that “*we speak, in other words, is very closely bound up with our social identity and our personal identity*’ (p.18). The emergence of certain varieties might mostly be affected by the regional belonging of the speaker. The answers of participants in this experiment insist on the impacts of some factors in affecting language to vary even between speakers belonging to the same town, sharing the same official language that is Modern Standard Arabic, and belonging to the same country, Tunisia. These factors are mainly related to the regions themselves where speakers come from, the social classes they belong to. Apart from their answers to the given questions, some instances of dialectal differences are somewhat observed via the recorded voices of the interviewees of the two groups when they are speaking. These linguistic differences in their speeches would strengthen and confirm the hypotheses related to the variance in the manner of speaking of those students coming from urban and rural areas in the regions of Sousse and Kasserine.

### **Conclusion**

This research examined the linguistic situation of speakers coming from urban and rural areas in the regions of Sousse and Kasserine. They use language differently in the same speech community, the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences of Sousse. The results of the two experiments have revealed that their dialectal differences are mostly affected by their regional and social affiliations. The divergent use of language pushes them to express both positive and negative feelings towards not only some dialectal varieties but also towards the speakers of these varieties. Findings have demonstrated that those who speak with more prestigious variety are predicted to belong to upper social classes, higher educational levels and better physical and personality characteristics. Equally discernible is the fact that participants expressed negative attitudes towards speakers whose ways of talking are described as less prestigious. Also, there is a general agreement between the interviewees that there exist various examples of linguistic disparities in the speeches of those students belonging to the regions of Sousse and Kasserine. According to them, these dialectal varieties are seen as linguistic markers that distinguish the social and regional affiliations of students even being in the same speech community. They have argued that these aspects at which language varies from one speaker to another are basic elements or components deemed important in determining or shaping speakers’ identities.

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## Appendix A: The Structured Interview along with a Matched-guise test *The Evaluation booklet*

### Instruction:

- 1/ Please listen carefully to the two recordings representing two speakers who are delivering the same message.
- 2/ After listening to the two voices, try to give the suitable description/ evaluation for each speaker.
- 3/ Please try to answer as quickly as possible to the given questions.

These are two copies of the two delivered short texts:

أهلاً ببيك هونا البارح علمونا في النشرة الجوية كونا الطقس سي بون ماشي و يتحسن و أوسي الدنيا ماشية وتسخن. من الاكيد أوسي الريح ماعاش باش تبقى و يركح الجو. هانو يا فرار اذا ناوي تعمل تبخيرة فزي روح بحر. اون فان. هاكي تبقا جيستت توقعات و العلم عند الله سبحانه و تعالى.

اهلاً ببيك وخي راهم قالوا البارح في النشرة الجوية كونا الطقس باش يتقد و ترجع بحال الدنيا تسخن و زيد هانو حتى الريح باش تتنحي و يتنحي العجاج. حافتها. راهوا قاليك البحر ماعادش باش يبقا داخل بعضو هانو لكان شاهي برا أعمل ليها تبخيرة. من اللخر وخي هاذي تبقا تكهنات فقط و العلم عند ربي سبحانه و تعالى.

Hello, they informed us in weather forecast that the weather is steadily improving and changing to be hot. Also, they said that the wind will stop and the weather will calm down. So, my brother, if you want to go to the sea, you can go to swim. Finally, all these information stay just as expectations because science stays only with God Almighty.

- 4/ Please turn the page and start your evaluation by marking the description that best describes your impression towards the speaker

### 1/What are the personal traits that you may give to each guise?

	Self confident	Eloquent	Persuasive	Primitive	Kind	Arrogant	No answer
Guise one							
Guise two							

### 2/ Guess the physical characteristics of each individual?

	White	Black	Tall	Short	Beautiful	Ugly	No answer
Guise one							
Guise two							

### 3/Guess where does each speaker come from?



	Urban area	Rural area	No answer
<b>Guise one</b>			
<b>Guise two</b>			

**4/ The two recorded voices are different from each other at the level(s) of:**

	Pronunciation	Vocabulary	Grammar	Speed	No answer
<b>Guise one</b>					
<b>Guise two</b>					

**5/ Try to guess the educational level of each one?**

	Primary	Secondary	Higher	No answer
<b>Guise one</b>				
<b>Guise two</b>				

**6/ What is your speculation of the profession of each guise?**

	Important worker	Simple worker	Jobless	No answer
<b>Guise one</b>				
<b>Guise two</b>				

**7/ What is your speculation of the regional belonging of each speaker?**

	From inland or Southerner	From the Sahel or Metropolis	No answer
<b>Guise one</b>			
<b>Guise two</b>			

**8/ Which variety do you see is more prestigious than the other?**

	Prestigious	Not prestigious	No answer
<b>Guise one</b>			
<b>Guise two</b>			

**9/ Try to predict the social class of each one?**

	Poor	Middle	Rich	No answer
<b>Guise one</b>				
<b>Guise two</b>				

**10/ Try to predict the degree of literacy of each guise?**

	Literate	Illiterate	No answer
<b>Guise one</b>			
<b>Guise two</b>			

## Appendix B: The Unstructured interview

These questions are asked to both groups. Each one is interviewed individually and sometimes the order of the questions is not the same.

1/ Are you with or against those who claim that the dialectal speeches students/speakers from the regions of Sousse and Kasserine are not the same?

2/ Why do some students choose to vary their ways of talking in different situations/contexts?

3/ How does the variety used by the speaker have an effect on him or her to be socially categorized by others?

4/ Does the fact of living either in the country side or in the city center of one region represent the only factor behind variance in speech between speakers?

الملحق أ: النسخة العربية من المقابلات الهيكلية جنباً إلى جنب مع تقنية المظهر المتطابق  
كتيب التقييم

التعليمات:

1 حاول تسمع بالباهي الزور أشخاص الي اصواتهم مسجلة في التليفون.

2/ بعد ما تسمعهم حاول تعطي الاوصاف المناسبة لكل شخص.

3 حاول من فضلك تجاوب بسرعة على كل سؤال.

أهلا بيك هونا البارح علمونا في النشرة الجوية كونو الطقس سي بون ماشي و يتحسن و أوسي الدنيا ماشية وتسخن. من الاكيد أوسي الريح ماعاش باش تبقى و يركح الجو. هانو يا فرار اذا ناوي تعمل تبخيرة فازي روح بحر. اون فان هاكي تبقا جيستت توقعات و العلم عند الله سبحانه و تعالى.

اهلا بيك وخي راهم قالوا البارح في النشرة الجوية كونو الطقس باش يتقد و ترجع بحال الدنيا تسخن و زيد هانو حتى الريح باش تنتحي و يتنحي العجاج. حاقتها راهوا قاليك البحر ماعادش باش يبقا داخل بعضو هانو لكان شاهي برا أعمل ليها تبخيرة. من اللخر وخي هاذي تبقا تكهنات فقط و العلم عند ربي سبحانه و تعالى.

4/يرجى قلب الصفحة وبدء تقييمك عن طريق تحديد الوصف الذي يصف أفضل انطباعك تجاه المتكلم.

1/ شئونة الاوصاف النفسية المناسبة لكل شخص ؟

واثق في روحو	تلقائي	مقنع	بداعي	طيب	متكبر	لا إجابة
المتحدث الاول						
المتحدث الثاني						
لا إجابة						

2/ حاول تقييم المظهر الخارجي متع كل شخص

ابيض	اسود	طويل	قصير	مزيان	خايب	لا إجابة
المتحدث الاول						
المتحدث الثاني						

3/ حاول اطلع منين جاي كل شخص

من الريف	من المدينة	لا إجابة
المتحدث الاول		
المتحدث الثاني		

4/ الأصوات المسجلة هي مختلفة عن بعضها البعض على مستوى

الصوتيات	المفردات	قواعد الصرف و النحو	السرعة	لا إجابة
المتحدث الاول				
المتحدث الثاني				

6 حاول اطلع المستوى التعليمي متاع كل واحد

ابتدائي	اعدادي	عالي	لا إجابة
المتحدث الاول			
المتحدث الثاني			

6/ ما هي توقعاتك لمهنة كل متحدث ؟

عامل مهم	عامل بسيط	عاطل عن العمل	لا إجابة
المتحدث الاول			
المتحدث الثاني			

7/ ما هي تكهناتك بالانتماء الإقليمي لكل متحدث؟

من الداخل أو الجنوبي	من الساحل أو المدينة	لا إجابة
المتحدث الاول		
المتحدث الثاني		

8/ ما هو التنوع الذي تراه أكثر شهرة من الآخر؟

لا إجابة	ليس ذو هيبة	ذو هيبة
المتحدث الأول		
المتحدث الثاني		

9/ حاول اطلع الطبقة الاجتماعية لينتميلها كل شخص

لا إجابة	غني	متوسط	فقير
المتحدث الأول			
المتحدث الثاني			

10/ حاول تتكهن درجة معرفة الكتابة و القراءة بالنسبة لكل واحد؟

لا إجابة	ماهوش مثقف	مثقف
المتحدث الأول		
المتحدث الثاني		

الملحق ب: المقابلة غير المهيكلية

- 1/ هل انت مع او ضد أولئك الذين يدعون أن اللهجات الكلامية للطلبة القادمين من سوسة و القصرين ليست نفسها؟
- 2/ لماذا يختار بعض الطلاب تغيير طرق تحدثهم في مواقف او سياقات مختلفة؟
- 3/ كيف يكون للتنوع اللغوي الذي يستخدمه المتحدث تأثير عليه هو أو عليها هي لتصنيفها اجتماعيًا من قبل الآخرين؟
- 4/ هل تمثل حقيقة العيش في الريف أو في وسط مدينة إحدى المناطق العامل الوحيد وراء التباين اللغوي بين المتحدثين؟

## **The Effect of Note-taking on Enhancing Jordanian EFL Learners' Listening Comprehension and Guessing Meaning through Context**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the effect of note-taking on Jordanian EFL eighth-grade students' listening comprehension and guessing meaning through context. The participants are 57 female students, divided into an experimental group (n= 28) and a control group (n= 29). The experimental group was instructed through note-taking while the control group was instructed per the guidelines of the Teacher's Book. The findings revealed statistically significant differences between the students of experimental and the control groups on the pre- and post- test, in favor of the former.

Key Words: EFL; Jordanian; Guessing Meaning; Listening Comprehension; Note-taking

### **Introduction**

Although listening is a basic constituent in the process of language learning and teaching (Brown, 2001) which plays a significant role in communication (Gilakjani & Ahamdi, 2011) and is necessary in English as a second/foreign (SL/FL) language learning (Bozorgian & Pillay, 2013), this skill used to be considered as passive activity and has been given inadequate consideration in English as a foreign language or as a second language classroom and has not always drawn the attention of educators. In the last few years, listening has been regarded as a major component in language learning and teaching as well, (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Omaggio (2001) states that although many of the studies concerning the development of listening and reading skills, there is a strong emphasis among the language community today to increase students' listening comprehension.

The significance of listening and the role it plays in language learning cannot be estimated. In this context, Nunan (1998) and Rost (1994,2002) maintain that listening is an active process that involves deciphering and constructing meaning

from verbal and non-verbal messages; therefore, effective communication confirms that learners' progress in the listening skills is considered crucial for understanding input for any learning to take place.

In the same vein, the significance of listening is gained from its integrity with the other language skills. That is, this skill cannot be separated from speaking, reading and writing. Listening is intertwined with speaking in the sense that interaction cannot take place without sending (speaking) and receiving (listening). Furthermore, speaking and listening are considered two sides of the same coin (Brown, 2001). In line with Brown, Nunan (2002) hails listening as the Cinderella skill in second language learning.

Moreover, listening is not only important in classroom settings, but also in natural settings. People, including EFL/ESL learners, need to listen in a range of contexts for different purposes. As for language learners, they need to listen in classroom settings for the purpose of interacting effectively with their teachers and classmates. Also, as learners are part of the community, they are in need to listen to different contexts and different functions for different purposes in order to be able to communicate effectively in real-life situations. In this context, Mendelson (1994) states that the total amount of time spent in our communication takes up 40-50 percent.

#### *Statement of the Problem*

Research (e.g., Bataineh, 2005; Bataineh & Bani Younis, 2016; Jdetawi, 2011) reveals that most Jordanian learners are rather weak in the four language skills, especially in listening (Al-Alwan, Assasfeh & Al-Shboul, 2013). Furthermore, as an experienced EFL supervisor, the researcher attributes learners' weakness in listening to the lack of due attention given to this skill by EFL teachers and the lack of opportunities given to learners to practice the listening strategies. For this reason, this study attempts to alleviate this problem through the note-taking listening strategy.

#### *Participants of the study*

Fifty-seven five Jordanian EFL eighth-grade female students from AL-Ashrafiyah Secondary Comprehensive School for Girls in AL-Kourah Directorate of Education were randomly selected and assigned to the experimental group (n= 28) and the control group (n= 29) during the first semester of the academic year 2018/2019.

#### *Purpose and questions of the Study*

This study aims at investigating the potential effect of note-taking on enhancing eighth- grade students' listening comprehension and guessing meaning through context.

This study attempts to answer to the following questions:

- 1- Are there any statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between the students' mean scores on the listening comprehension pre-and post-test, which can be attributed to note-taking?
- 2- Are there any statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between the students' mean scores on the guessing meaning pre-and post-test, which can be attributed to note-taking?

### *Significance and Limitations of the Study*

Even though ample research has been carried out on listening, little empirical research has been attempted to examine the potential effect of note-taking on improving listening comprehension and guessing meaning through context. Thus, this study may contribute to the literature by providing new insights on using note-taking to improve listening comprehension and guessing meaning through context.

However, the generalizability of the results may be limited by the fact that only 57 eighth-grade female students from Al-Ashrafiah Secondary Comprehensive School for Girls in Al-Kourah Directorate of Education/Jordan participated in this study during the first semester of the academic year 2018/2019. So, the generalizability of the findings drawn may be limited to similar students in similar contexts.

### *Previous Research*

As listening comprehension has recently gained more attention and prominence in EFL/ESL classes, scholars (e.g., Brown, 2001; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005; Ghassemi, 2013; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Omaggio, 2001; Vandergrift, 2004) have attempted to concentrate on the different ways of enhancing learners' listening comprehension, the problems that makes listening difficult and principles for designing listening techniques.

Thompson & Rubin (1996) investigated the effect of meta-cognitive and cognitive strategy instruction on the listening comprehension performance of university students learning Russian. The performance of an experimental group who received systematic instruction in listening strategies was compared to the performance of a similar group who received no instruction over a two-year period. Scores in the pre- and post-test after the two-year period demonstrated that the students who received strategy instruction in listening to video-recorded texts improved significantly over those who had received no instruction. With regard to instruction in listening to audio-recorded texts, the control group also showed improvement, although this result did not reach significance. Furthermore, anecdotal evidence indicated that the use of meta-cognitive strategies helped students to manage their approach to listening.

Using retrospective verbal data, Goh (2002) investigated the effect of listening strategies and tactics used by 2 Chinese male and female ESL learners on their listening comprehension. The findings revealed that both learners used a mixture of metacognitive and cognitive listening strategies and engaged in top-down and bottom-up processing when dealing with individual parts of a text. However, the findings showed some differences between the two learners. The more proficient learner used a wide range of strategies, whereas the less proficient learner used lower level of strategies.

Carrier (2003) tested the effect of listening strategy instruction on 7 (6 Spanish native speakers and 1 Albanian native speaker) high school ESL learners' listening comprehension by means of pre-/post-test. After receiving 15 listening



strategy training sessions, the findings revealed that the participants showed a statistically significant improvement in discrete, video, and note-taking ability.

Vandergrift (2003) investigated the relationship between listening proficiency and listening strategies employed by 36 French junior high school students in Canada. The study showed that the more proficient students employed metacognitive strategies more frequently than the less proficient students, and the variation in this type of strategy use had a statistically significant relation across the listening ability.

Graham & Macaro (2008) examined the effect of strategy instruction on 68 French lower-intermediate ESL learners' listening performance and self-efficacy. The findings showed statistically significant improvement in the learners' listening proficiency level and their self-esteem about listening.

Cross (2009) investigated the effect of listening strategy instruction on 15 advanced -level, adult, Japanese male and female EFL learners' listening comprehension of BBC news videotexts. A questionnaire designed to provide background information on participants' news- watching habits and perceived comprehension concerns was administered to both groups in the first week of the study. In addition, each participant was interviewed individually by the researcher following the first week pre-test regarding how they had tried to understand the news, the videotext, and responses were categorized as reflecting for using bottom-up or top-down processes. Participants were also asked about difficulties encountered. The experimental group received 12 hours of listening strategy instruction consisting of the presentation, practice, and review of listening strategies, while the control group did not receive any explicit strategy instruction. The findings showed a significant improvement for the experimental group, although a significant effect in favor of the experimental group with respect to the comparison group was not evident as the control group also made significant gains.

By means of the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire and a listening comprehension pre-/post-test, Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari (2010) investigated the effect of a metacognitive, process-based approach to teaching second language listening on 106 French EFL learners' listening comprehension. The findings showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group.

Using the Cornell note-taking method and note taking languages (English vs. Chinese), Tsai & Young (2010) investigated the effect of note-taking instruction on 108 Taiwanese EFL college learners' listening comprehension for two types of texts: short conversations and long lectures. Data obtained from a content-based, objective listening comprehension test showed that instruction had a significant impact on the listening comprehension of both types of texts, regardless of which language used for taking notes.

Bedabadi & Yamat (2011) studied the relationship between the listening strategies used by 92 Iranian EFL new university students and their listening proficiency levels by means of the Oxford Placement Test to determine the learners' proficiency levels and a listening strategy questionnaire to identify the

strategies used by the students while listening. The descriptive analysis obtained from the questionnaire revealed that the participants at advanced, intermediate, and lower intermediate levels used meta-cognitive, cognitive and socio-affective strategies more frequently and actively. Moreover, the findings revealed that there was a significant positive correlation between the listening strategies employed by the participants and their proficiency levels.

Heshemi & Khodabakhshzade (2012) investigated the effect of meta-discourse on listening comprehension of EFL Iranian intermediate and advanced students. To this end, a total of 120 students were assigned into four groups of 30, two experimental and two control groups and two intermediate and two advanced who were taking IELTS training courses at Kishair English Institute, Mashhad, Iran. The participants were randomly assigned into the four groups. The material used for this study consisted of 5 monologues based on section 4 of IELTS examinations. The other 5 monologues were based on the first group of monologues with the exclusion of meta-discourse. The results of this study showed that there was a statistically significant difference between groups in the advanced and intermediate levels. However, the results showed that there was no significant difference within the intermediate groups. Thus, after conducting a follow up unstructured interview to find the possible reasons, the results showed that intermediate students were not aware of the role of discourse markers in the monologues.

Similar to Thompson & Rubin (1996), Al-Alwan et. al. (2013) explored meta-cognitive listening strategies awareness and its relationship with listening comprehension. The sample of this study consisted of 386 (207 female and 179 male) tenth- grade students from public schools in Amman, the capital of Jordan. The researchers used two instruments in this study: (a) Vandergrift, et al.'s Meta-cognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire and (b) a listening comprehension test developed by the researchers, specifically for the purpose of this study. The analysis of the data obtained from the instruments, the questionnaire and the test revealed that students had a moderate level of meta – cognitive listening strategies awareness.

Bozorgian & Pillay (2013) investigated the effectiveness of teaching listening strategies delivered in Persian on 60 Iranian lower-intermediate level female students' listening comprehension in English. In order to investigate the influence of English language proficiency and to establish a baseline, a screening test was developed and administered. Participants who scored more than 65% overall in the baseline screening test were selected and randomly assigned to a control and experimental groups with 30 students in each group. Data analysis revealed that the experimental group who listened to their classroom activities outperformed the control group using a methodology that led learners through five listening strategies in Persian. The results obtained from post intervention listening test revealed that listening strategies delivered in Persian had a statistically significant improvement in their discrete listening scores compared with the control group.

Ghassemi (2013) examined the effect of cooperative listening material adaptation on 90 Iranian male and female senior EFL students' listening comprehension performance. More specifically, the study investigated whether or not peer-cooperative self-access materials adaptation has any effect on learners' involvement and participation in listening classes and tried to probe any possible changes in students' attitude toward listening as a result of the treatment. In order to accomplish the purpose of the study, participants (both females and males), who were studying at Islamic Azad University, were assigned to the experimental group (n=60), which included two subgroups with 30 students in each and the remaining 30 students were assigned to the control group. With a quasi- experimental pre-/ post-test design, the findings revealed that adapting listening materials improved listening comprehension performance as well as a positive change in students' overall attitude toward listening.

Ghoneim (2013) investigated the listening comprehension strategies used by college students to cope with the aural problems in EFL classes on 40 Egyptian intermediate and advanced EFL majors using the "Think Aloud" technique. The findings revealed that advanced and intermediate participants encountered the same problems with different percentages. The advanced group used top-down strategies more than the intermediate one.

It can be said, based on the findings of the previous studies, which were conducted in different countries, in different situations, by using different methods and, sometimes, different instruments, that employing listening strategies while listening plays a significant role in enhancing EFL learners' listening comprehension, regardless of the type of the strategies implemented. The two similar studies of Vandgrift (2003) and Bidabadi & Yamot (2011) showed that there was a significant positive relationship between listening proficiency level and the listening strategies employed by the EFL learners.

Also, Al-Alwan et al. (2013) and Thomson & Rubin's (1996) studies provided positive evidence concerning the use of meta- cognitive strategies and how they can facilitate the learners' listening comprehension and develop their listening abilities.

#### *Design and Variables of the Study*

The quasi-experimental design was used for the student sample, randomly divided into one experimental and one control groups. This study has three variables; one independent variable which is the note-taking and two dependent variables: listening comprehension and guessing meaning through context.

#### *Instruments of the Study*

To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher developed a pre-/post-test for the students to measure the effect of note-taking strategy on their listening comprehension and guessing meaning through context. The test consisted of two questions. The first question (10 multiple- choice items) for listening comprehension and the second question (5 sentence completion items) for guessing meaning through context, where students were asked to fill in the blank spaces with the appropriate word taken from the audio script. Additionally, the

researcher used an open interview to solicit the participants' opinions toward the note-taking strategy.

The validity of the test was established by a jury of EFL professors and supervisors, whose comments were taken into consideration in the final version of the test. The reliability of the test was established by administering it to 20 eighth-grade students who were excluded from the sample of the study with a two-week interval between the two administrations of the test. The reliability coefficient was found to be 0.96, which was appropriate for the purpose of the study.

#### *Instructing the Experimental and the Control Groups*

The control group was taught per the guidelines in the prescribed Eight-Grade Teacher's Book. The lessons were divided into three stages: pre-, while-, and post-listening. In the pre-listening stage, the topic and the key lexical items were introduced, and students listened, without pauses, for the gist. In the while-listening stage, students listened, with pauses, for comprehension and to do the relevant listening tasks. However, at this stage, students were not allowed to take notes. In the post listening stage, students listened, without pauses, to check their answers.

On the other hand, students of the experimental group were allowed to jot down notes in the while-listening stage using the Outline note-taking method. Meanwhile, the other instructional strategies in the pre-/post listening stages were almost the same for both groups.

#### *Findings and Discussion*

The findings are presented according to the two questions of the study. The first research question seeks potentially significant differences at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the listening comprehension mean pre- and post-test scores of the students in the control and experimental groups, which can be attributed to note-taking. To answer this question, means, standard deviations, adjusted means, and standard errors were calculated, as shown in Table 1.

**Table: 1. Means, standard deviations, adjusted means, and standard errors of students' performance on the listening comprehension**

**Pre-/ post-test**

Group	Number	Pre		Post		Adjusted Means	Standard Errors
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation		
Control	29	6.48	0.99	5.69	1.07	5.66	0.20
Experimental	28	5.93	1.15	7.18	0.98	7.21	0.19

Table 1 shows an observed difference between the scores of the students of the experimental group on the listening comprehension pre-/post-test. Compare 5.93 to 7.18, with standard deviations of 1.15 and 0.98, respectively, which signal gains in achievement

on the post-test. Table 1 further reveals an observed difference between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups on the post- test (viz., 5.69 vs. 7.21).

Table 1 also reveals an observed difference between the adjusted mean scores of the control and experimental groups on the post-test (viz., 5.66 with a standard error of 0.20 vs. 7.21 with a standard error of 0.19).

To determine the potential significance of these differences between the means and the adjusted means, after eliminating the differences in the students' performance on the pre-test, One Way Analysis of Variance (ANCOVA) was used, as shown in Table 2.

**Table: 2 ANCOVA of the mean scores of the students' performance on the listening comprehension post-test**

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Way	8.903	1	8.903	9.730	0.003	0.153
Error	49.411	54	0.915			
Corrected Total	89.895	56				

n=57

\*significant at ( $\alpha=0.05$ )

Table 2 shows a statistically significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) in the students of the experimental group's listening comprehension on the post-test due to note-taking. To determine the effect size of the effectiveness of note-taking on students' performance on the post-test, Partial Eta Squared was calculated and was found to be 0.153, which is considered very high.

To answer the second research question, which sought statistically significant differences which can be attributed to note-taking at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between the students' mean scores on the guessing meaning pre- and post-test, means, standard deviations, adjusted means, and standard errors were calculated, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Means, standard deviations, adjusted means, and standard errors of students' performance on the guessing meaning pre-/post test**

Group	Number	Pre		Post		Adjusted Means	Standard Errors
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation		
Control	29	2.21	1.95	2.90	1.97	2.89	0.37
Experimental	28	1.64	1.97	5.50	2.01	5.44	0.38

Table 3 shows observed differences between the mean scores of both the control and experimental groups on the pre- and post-tests. However, a much more pronounced gain in

achievement is evident for the experimental group. Compare 2.21 to 2.90, 1064 to 5.50 for the control group, the experimental group, and the two groups, respectively.

Furthermore, Table 3 reveals observed differences between the adjusted mean scores of the control and experimental groups on the guessing meaning post-test (vis., 2.89 with a standard error 0.37 vs. 5.44 with a standard error 0.38).

To determine the potential significance of the differences between the means and the adjusted means, after eliminating the differences in the students' performance on the pre-test, One Way Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used, as shown in Table 4.

**ANCOVA of the mean scores of the students' performance on the guessing meaning post-test**

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Way	38.032	1	38.032	11.431	0.001	0.386
Error	179.658	54	3.327			
Corrected Total	314.246	56				

N=57

\*significant at

( $\alpha=0.05$ )

Table 4 shows a statistically significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) in the students of the experimental group's guessing meaning through context on the post-test due to note-taking. To determine the effect size of the effectiveness of note-taking on students' performance on the post-test, Partial Eta Squared was calculated and was found to be 0.386, which is considered very high.

The findings presented in Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 revealed statistically significant effect at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for note-taking on both students' listening comprehension and guessing meaning through context. The careful and diligent execution of note-taking and the convenience of the Outline method may account for the participants' superior performance.

Actually, at the initial stages of the experiment, the researcher met with the teacher to explain the purpose of the study and how to implement a listening lesson using the outline note-taking method. Furthermore, a model lesson was executed by the researcher as an example to be followed by the teacher. Then, the researcher carried out several classroom visits to observe both the teacher and her students' performance. Through the classroom visits, it was found that the teacher was carefully and diligently implementing the listening lessons. Furthermore, the notes obtained through the classroom visits showed that the participants were highly impressed by the method.

After the administration of the post-test, the participants were interviewed by the researcher to find out whether their attitudes toward listening have changed or not and to find out how helpful the Outline note-taking method was for them. Data obtained from the interview revealed that almost all of the students were impressed by the method for several reasons, most salient amongst which are the following. The students reported that the method was very helpful as it contributed in lessening the major problems they usually



encounter while they listen, such as the speed of the speaker, difficult unknown words, background knowledge, etc. In this vein, scholars (e.g., Brown, 2001; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005; Galikjani & Ahmadi, 2011; Gog, 2002; Jdetawy, 2011) have put forth a special effort on discussing the potential listening comprehension problems and their potential effects in hindering listening comprehension. Some of these problems include: rate of delivery, colloquial language, clustering, performance variables, concentration, learning habits, anxiety and frustration, and background knowledge.

Furthermore, the participants assured that the Outline note-taking method was very beneficial as it was easy to use, it required highlight the main points in each listening lesson by structuring their notes in form of an outline by using bullet points to represent main ideas and supporting details, it helped them to keep concentrated during the listening lessons, it provided them the opportunity to organize their notes properly, and it helped them to save time.

#### *Recommendations*

Since the findings of this study revealed a significant effect for the Outline note-taking method on students' listening comprehension and guessing meaning through context, the researcher recommends the following:

1. The Outline note-taking method should be incorporated into EFL teachers' instructional practices in the classroom.
2. Further research may be needed on larger samples incorporating variables such as gender and other note-taking methods (e.g., the Cornell, the Boxing, the Charting, and the Mapping methods).

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## **The Persona in Henry Fielding's "Essay on Nothing": A Satirical Mask**

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### **Abstract**

The present paper studies Henry Fielding's major satirical essay "Essay on Nothing," with the aim to scrutinize the author's satirical techniques and assess his satirical use of the technique of the persona. Fielding's persona in "Essay on Nothing", as this paper aims to prove, questions, disrupts, and exposes, seeking to undermine all forms of authority. While Fielding demonstrates that he is mostly interested in undermining the intellectual authority of the "moderns", his contemporaries namely Locke and Hobbes, the satirical voice of his persona in this essay succeeds in undermining aesthetic authority as he, the author, is in undermining intellectual authority. The language and the tone of his persona in "Essay on Nothing" attests then to Fielding's own antipathy for the pompous expression of learning. With reference to Northrop Frye's and Michael Bakhtin's assumptions about the Menippean satire, I will attempt to evince that Fielding develops a classical Menippean satire, in which he satirizes modernity's pompous displays of arcane learning. The study of Fielding's satirical voice in this essay will attempt to uncover Fielding's own indebtedness to the Menippean tradition and how he uses Menippean poetics both as an informing aesthetic and as a means of reacting against these forms of authority.

During the first half of the eighteenth century and nearly for a decade, Henry Fielding was one the most distinguished and the most prominent dramatists in England. A vigorous young man in his twenties, Fielding was determined to become a playwright with the serious intent of gaining a livelihood at a time when the tradition of the supremacy of drama was still held and playwriting was still the interest of roughly all young and ambitious authors. Fielding almost unquestionably yearned to thrive as a traditional comic dramatist, moulding and modelling himself after his most and great predecessor William Congreve, whose influence on English dramatists was definitely undeniable. His attempt to excel as a traditional and conventional playwright resulted in about a third of his plays

written in the five act structure, which is a characteristic of the Restoration drama. However, as he became one of the most important figures in London theatrical life, and in the history of the eighteenth century English drama, he began to recognize that the five-act regulars of the Restoration and early eighteenth century drama required now a new appropriation of its dramatic conventions and stylistic techniques. The social, political and aesthetic realities of the 1730s necessitated, in fact, new visions and new forms. Fielding's shift away from traditional drama and towards ridiculous burlesque and satire was the result of a more thoughtful experimentation.

However, once Fielding's satiric writings became explicitly anti-ministerial, the Licensing Act of the 1737 was passed and ended his prolific theatrical career. His decision to quit the theatre was practically forced on him, but the world of journalism allowed him the possibility not only to experiment with prose fiction but also "to give news, as it were, of the moral world – to deal with the follies of society and with the virtues and vices inherent in the human nature" (Cross 276). Particularly, offering him "a wide arena for the exploration of satiric forms" (Paulson 96). Fielding's first influential venture into prose writing was the *Champion* or *British Mercury* (1739-41). This journal represented his earliest experiments in novel writing or "the launching pad for his fiction" (Underwood 46). Referring then to the *Champion and the Miscellanies* collection (1743) as the link between Fielding's early dramatic works and his later novels, the author's experience as a frequent contributor to the periodical is indeed demarcated as a definite turning point in his own literary career as a novelist but primarily as a satirist.

In fact, Fielding's direct hostility toward Walpole in his political satires, namely *Pasquin* and *Eurydice Hiss'd*, led to a series of successive attacks by the officially pro-Walpole newspaper the *Daily Gazetteer*, whose staff were later satirised in *Champion* as "slandorous and illiterate hacks" (Cleary 120). Lewis also asserts that "since taking over the New Haymarket, Fielding had become progressively more daring in his assaults on Walpole, and these culminated in Pillage's fall with its implied assumption that Walpole was about to follow suit" (200-201). Fielding's satirical burlesques seemed to be the most arrogant yet the most popular voice raised against Walpole. Two days after his final performance of the *Historical Register* and *Eurydice Hiss'd*, he announced the production of a new play, John Gay's revisited and highly developed version of *The Beggar's Opera*, *Macbeth Tunr'd Pyrate or Polly in India*, using the most daringly provocative advertisement on May 25, 1737 and claiming that no company "had ever risked performing the piece. But to advertise *Polly* was to issue a direct challenge to Walpole" (Hume, *Henry Fielding and the London Theatre* 243). Yet, Walpole's response had been planned months earlier. Pagliaro writes in this regard "we know that the government's plans for some kind of Licensing Act were well developed long before Fielding's became explicitly anti-ministerial, but his earlier spoofs of the royal family and his biting partisan plays of 1737 must have helped to keep the pot boiling" (112). Certainly one main reason for Fielding's turning to the journalism is the 1737 theatrical Licensing Act that offensively ended his theatrical career. The distinct political commitment that both incited and shaped his dramatic satires namely *Pasquin*, the *Historical Register* and *Tumble Town Dick* stirred up a disconcerting controversy; the law was then passed on 21 June 1737 and was designed primarily to silence Fielding himself. His decision to quit the theatre was practically forced on him. During the same year, he began to qualify as a barrister to support his family. He also took on translation work and then launched the

*Champion* (1739-1740), for which he wrote a number of essays that satirised politics, law, literature, religion and government.

Between the early 1730s and 1752, Fielding wrote several leading essays and was involved in the writing of a number of periodicals. Among the major essays and periodicals he wrote are *Common Sense* (1738), the *Champion* (1739-40), the *True Patriot* (1745-46), the *Jacobite's Journal* (1747-48) and the *Covent-Garden Journal* (1752) as well as a magazine entitled the *History of Our Own Times* (1741). Martin Battestin in his book, *A Henry Fielding Companion*, suggested that Fielding contributed to many other periodicals such as: Letter on the benefit of laughing, in *Mist's Weekly Journal* No. 172 (3 August 1728), Letter from "Tho. Squint," in *Fog's Weekly Journal*, No. 96 (25 July 1730), Letter from "Harry Hunter," in *The Craftsman*, No. 223 (10 October 1730), "Observations on Government, the Liberty of the Press, Newspapers, Partys, and Party-Writer [*sic*]," in Thomas Cooke's *Comedian*, No. 5 (August 1732) and especially Letter from "Septennius," in *The Craftsman*, No. 402 (16 March 1734). Fielding, however, wrote for the *Champion* during a very pivotal period in his literary career, some years after the 1737 Licensing Act put an end to his theatrical experience and only few months before he began writing *Joseph Andrews*. The *Champion* is to be conceived as Fielding's first and most comprehensive introduction to prose writing, the *Champion* essays allow for a fuller and clearer understanding of Fielding, the man and the satirist while shaping a more lucid image of the different ethical ideals and tenets; the very basis of his later fiction. The *Champion* essays offer then an exceptional opportunity for the reader to discover a fuller picture of the former playwright, the aspiring essay writer as he skillfully builds for his prose writings through satiric and ironic essays.

Fielding's contribution to the *Champion* and *The Miscellanies* provided him with a special vantage point from which to observe and comment upon different political and social matters. This first significant venture into prose provided the author with the accurately proper means for exposing and criticising the virtues and vices inherent in human nature. It was his special talent as a satirist that allowed him to express oblique oppositional ideas in a more popular vehicle; a special asset which forms a basic part of his more satirical fiction. Charity, poverty, goodness as opposed to greatness, became some of the major subjects for moral essays that began to appear with his *Champion* and became more evidently obvious in his *Miscellanies* pamphlets on political subjects. In fact, *The Miscellanies*, published in three volumes in 1743, can be regarded as an influential landmark in Fielding's career; it combines a selection of poems, essays and longer narratives which offer ample evidence of Fielding the satirist. The periodical offered him then "a wide arena for the explosion of [new] satiric forms" (Paulson 96). Fielding's own contributions to the *Miscellanies* are not only among his most energetic and intriguing works in the genre, but they have also a solid political background, of remarkable interest to historians studying the interface between journalism and politicians of the time, as well as the role of newspapers publishers and more influential literary figures.

"An Essay on Nothing" was published in *The Miscellanies* collection in 1743. It is a delightfully short essay caught in the form of a mock encomium upon the subject of "Nothing". The encomium was originally an oration which eulogised a person, a place or a thing according to a consistent form and following a set of relevant arguments. It is defined as:

Formal eulogy in prose or verse glorifying people, objects, ideas or events. Originally it was a Greek choral song in celebration of a hero, sung at the komos or triumphal procession at the end of the Olympic games. Pinder wrote some encomiastic odes praising the winners. Many English Poets have produced encomiastic verse: Milton's Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity (1629), Dryden's Song for St Cecilia (1687) Gray's Hymn to Adversity (1742); Wordsworth's Ode to Duty (1805). Encomium can also be the vehicle of irony as Erasmus demonstrated in *Moriae Encomium* 'The Praise of Folly' (1509), a satire directed against the follies of theologians and churchmen. (258)

"An Essay on Nothing" is divided into four sections: "The Introduction," "Of the Antiquity of Nothing," "Of the Nature of Nothing," "Of the Dignity of Nothing; and An Endeavour to Prove, That It Is The End As Well As Beginning of All Things". Adopting the persona of a pretentious logician, Fielding attempts to prove that "Nothing" does not only exist but it can be seen, tasted, smelled, felt and hated, loved or even feared. In "An Essay on Nothing", Fielding sets out to simply eulogise "Nothing" using logical and well-structured arguments. The remarkable achievement of Fielding in this essay rests primarily in the ostentatiously formal treatment of the subject; he perfectly adheres to the demands of encomiums form meanwhile ridiculing the arrogant and shallow attitude of contemporary authors and authorities, arguing that they were essentially writing about nothing.

"An Essay on Nothing" does indeed satirise specific contemporaries of Fielding as Locke and Hobbes, yet it strikes more broadly at learned modern discourses. An examination of the essay in this paper illustrates Fielding's skilful use of the Menippean poetics in this section of *The Miscellanies*, I focus on "An Essay on Nothing," stressing particularly its satirical breadth with the aim to scrutinize the mechanics of the author's satiric techniques. While Northrop Frye was the first to comment upon Fielding's Menippean tropes, his discussion is brief and only focusing on *Tom Jones*. In terms of Menippean poetics, many of Fielding's earlier works closely resemble Menippean satires, particularly those written between 1730- 1744, namely *The Author's Farce* (1730) and the farcical novel, *An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews* (1741). As an essayist, most particularly in his *Champion* and "Essay on Nothing," Fielding sets out to appropriate Menippean poetics as an informing aesthetic and as a means of satirising and reacting against all forms of corrupted authority.

In fact, Menippean satire is an ancient Greek genre, the forms of which were revived during the Renaissance. In the twentieth century, Northrop Frye's and Mikhail Bakhtin's important scholarly work on the genre engendered a renewed interest in Menippean poetics, poetics that have informed a significant number of literary works from Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* to Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* and works subsequent to *Tristram Shandy* and Henry Fielding. Defining Menippean satire remains a challenging process because of the genre's fluctuating nature which so energetically defies all generic labeling. However, defining eighteenth century Menippean satire presents, perhaps, a more complex endeavor because of the permutations the genre experiences between the classical and so-called neoclassical ages. Nevertheless, Mikhail Bakhtin, Northrop Frye, Joel Relihan, and W. Scott Blanchard have adequately defined Menippean satire and argued convincingly for its case as a genre. The Menippean satire is also called



"Varronian satire", from, respectively, the Greek philosopher and satirist Menippus and his Roman follower Varro. Frye characterizes this form as a prose work marked by "greater variety of subject matter and a strong interest in ideas". Dealing equally with style and with meaning, Menippean satire, according to Frye, ultimately presents the world in a "single intellectual pattern" with "violent dislocations in the customary logic of narrative, though the appearance of carelessness that results reflects only the carelessness of the reader" (310). In fact, what Frye sees as central to the genre, the exuberance of wit and the dense analyses of human nature—convinces him that the genre should be called "anatomy," not Menippean satire.

In "An Essay on Nothing", Fielding develops a classical Menippean satire in which he, too, satirizes modernity's pompous displays of modern learning. In his introduction to the paper, the ironic persona-author in "An Essay on Nothing" comments on the writers' endeavour to elaborate on this particular subject of "Nothing". He writes:

But whatever the reason, certain it is, that except a hardy wit in the reign of Charles II none ever hath dared to write on this subject: I mean openly and avowedly, for it must be confessed, that most of our modern authors, however foreign the matter which they endeavour to treat may seem at their first setting out, they generally bring the work to this in the end. (309)

The formal and polite introduction of the treatise strengthens the erudite tone adopted by the persona. The persona-author states his surprise that so few writers have managed to elaborate on this subject, only to dwell on himself, condescending with his "none hath ever dared to write on this subject" (309). To be convincing and in order to display his knowledge, the persona directly addresses his readers claiming to remain objectively detached. He then observes:

I hope, however, this attempt will not be imputed to me as an act of immodesty; since I am convinced here are many persons in this kingdom who are persuaded of my fitness for what I have undertaken. But as talking of man's self is generally suspected to arise from vanity, I shall, without any more excuse or preface, proceed to my essay. (309-310)

The first section of the essay, a proper in such a logical presentation, introduces also the persona as the ostentatious arrogant pedant pretending to possess greater knowledge and wisdom. In fact, the use of the term "persona" for the speaker in Fielding's "Essay on Nothing" is a common but still a very controversial practice.

A discussion of the term persona<sup>1</sup> itself precedes my analysis of the numerous possibilities offered by this new satiric technique. The term derives from drama, originally

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<sup>1</sup> In recent literary discussion "persona" is often applied to the first-person speaker who tells the story in a narrative poem or novel, or whose voice we hear in a lyric poem. Examples of personae, in this broad application, are the visionary first-person narrator of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (who in the opening passages of various books of that epic discourses at some length about himself); the Gulliver who tells us about his misadventures in *Gulliver's Travels*; the "T" who carries on most of the conversation in Alexander Pope's satiric dialogue *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*; the genial narrator of Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*, who pauses frequently for leisurely discourse with his reader; the speaker who talks first to himself,



it was the Latin word for an actor's mask. Later, it broadly developed and acquired a sense of "dramatis personae". It is actually defined in *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary theory* as: "a mask or a false face of clay or bark worn by actors. From it derives the term *dramatis personae*. In literary and critical jargon persona has come to denote the 'person' (the 'I' of an 'alter ego') who speaks in a poem or novel or other form of literature" (Cuddon 680). The etymological derivation of "Persona" from mask, "a device [used] to screen the author from his meaning" (Ehrenpreis 29), conveys then an element of disguise, a sense of "sounding through", involving rather a general sense of performance designed for specific effects, which makes of the term persona itself conveniently applied to characters in satire.

Because satire implies a certain attitude on the part of its authors towards folly, the speakers in satires are typically controlled to sustain a satiric effect. Although it is not to be confined to distinguishing a first person speaker from the true author of the literary work, the term persona is accurately useful in this respect. Discussing the role of the speaker in Roman Satire, the classicist J. P. Sullivan asserts that the concept of the persona "was a matter of projecting a literary personality" (140). He goes on further noting that "in ancient literary theory, the most important thing was the relationship between the speaker (writer) and his audience, not the relation between the speaker's words and the facts" (140). The tradition of satire as implied in Sullivan's statements encompasses hence the element of fiction. The speaker in satire is part of the fictional world. This technique was, indeed, one of the most distinctive methods in Augustan satire whether in poetry or prose. Its use involves, either directly or indirectly a given imaginative/fictional framework, which is at one once dramatic in action and narrative in movement. The world of the persona in the Augustan satire, what Fielding had particularly admired and had in mind when he devised the imaginary framework of the "Essay on Nothing" is by no means static. It rather gives rise to a sort of ironic tension between, the persona, Fielding the author, the intended speculation and the real subject matter, which further serves his satiric intent.

In the first section, the writer of the essay proceeds to lay out his treatise in a convincing manner. He in fact, begins by refuting the proverb "Ex nihilo nihil fit" while demonstrating his knowledge of the long standing debate over "Nothing comes from nothing" as he directly quotes by Shakespeare in his *King Lear*. Henry Knight Miller in his introduction to Fielding's *Miscellanies* Volume I, explains that Fielding would have been acquainted with other encomiums on nothing, including Renaissance scholar Joannes Passerati's Latin poem "Nihil" and the Earl of Rochester's poem "Upon Nothing" (xxxix). Miller points also to different other writers who used the mock encomium, namely, Aristophanes in his plays; Lucian's *Praise of the Fly* in *Laus Muscae*; Erasmus's praise of folly

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then to his sister, in William Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey"; the Duke who tells the emissary about his former wife in Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess"; and the fantastic "biographer" who narrates Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*. Calling all such diverse speakers "personae" serves to indicate that they are all, to some degree, adapted to the generic and formal requirements and the artistic aims of a particular literary work. We need, however, to go on to make distinctions between such speakers as Jonathan Swift's Gulliver and Browning's Duke, who are entirely fictional characters very different from their authors; the narrators in Pope's *Epistle* and Fielding's *Tom Jones*, who are presented as closer to their authors, although clearly shaped to fit the roles they are designed to play in those works. M. H. Abrams (217).

in Moriae Encomium; Rablais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, and mainly Swift's encomium on madness and vanity in his *Tale of a Tub*. According to Miller, Fielding utilises the mock encomium to satirise and criticise the authority of modernity, arguing that Fielding's contemporaries fundamentally wrote about nothing. Miller notes in this regard that Fielding "turned its [mock encomium's] traditional inversions to the service of valid and pungent satire upon the insubstantial good that men pursued for- nothing" (xxxix).

Fielding's convoluted discussion of the issue alludes to the debate among his contemporaries, namely Locke and Hobbes<sup>2</sup>, whose elevated style, Fielding's persona comically emulates: "whereas in Fact, from Nothing proceeds every Thing. And this is a truth confessed by the Philosophers of all Sects: the only Point in Controversy between them, being whether Something made the World out Nothing, or Nothing out of Something" (180). Discussing the "Antiquity of Nothing", the author of the essay notes:

This is very plainly to be discovered in the first pages, and sometimes books, of all general historians; and indeed, the study of this important subject fills up the whole life of an antiquary, it being always at the bottom of his inquiry, and is commonly at last discovered by him with infinite labour and pains. (310-311)

Fielding's persona writes with a mocking tone, meanwhile thoroughly grounding itself in the works of contemporary writers, historians and antiquaries displaying then a greater awareness of the intellectual abuses it intends to satirise. As most Menippean satirists do, Fielding anatomises the issue of debate in its contemporary and historical context, rendering his argument and satirical method more topical and more intellectually satirical. Unlike the novelist who shows intellectual exuberance through exhaustive examinations of human relationships, the Menippean satirist, as Frye suggests, shows his own exuberance-ultimately satirised itself- in "intellectual ways by piling up an enormous mass of erudition about his theme or in overwhelming his target of satire with their own jargon" (*Anatomy of Criticism* 311). For instance, having established that "Nothing" resides in the modern brain "the greatest and noblest place on this Earth" (182), he attempts to align himself with Locke: "as Nothing is not Something, so every thing which is not Something, is Nothing; and wherever Something is not, Nothing is" (182). Fielding next parodies Locke's language in Book 4, Chapter 12 Of "Essay Concerning Human Understanding", the section in which Locke discusses senses, particularly whether the sensory experience puts us in a position to know that there exist objects external to it; objects that continue to exist even when we are not perceiving them. Locke writes:

It is [...] the actual receiving of ideas from without that gives us notice of the existence of other things, and makes us know, that something doth exist at that time without us, which causes that idea in Us [...] can no more doubt, whilst I write this, that I see white and black, and that something really exists that causes that sensation in me, than that I write or move my hand; which is a certainty as great as hum an nature is capable of, concerning the existence of anything, but a man's self alone, and of God. (630)

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<sup>2</sup> I am indebted to Miller for some of the following observations. Miller argues that Fielding is alluding to the debate started by Hobbes and continued among Locke, Stillingfleet, and afterwards.

Fielding turns the seriousness of Locke into levity by parodying the Lockean language used to illustrate the assumption that the ideas received from without give us notice of the existence of other things; to receive notice of something is not directly to perceive it. Fielding's persona, implying the same urbane language, writes clearly, proposing to dissect Nothing's properties in order to accurately understand its reality: "But if we cannot reach an adequate Knowledge of the true Essence of Nothing, no more than we can of Matter, let us, in Imitation of the Experimental Philosophers, examine some of its properties of Accidents" (182). Specifically parodying Locke's association of ideas, Fielding's word play here becomes highly ironical as his persona argues "'Nothing" may be seen, heard, and felt "That Nothing may be tasted and smelt, is not only known to Persons of delicate Palates and Nostrils. How commonly do we hear, that such a Thing smells or tastes of Nothing" (183).

Fielding demonstrates his disregard for this kind of discourse claiming that "Nothing is as well an Object of our passions as our senses (183). The illustration of his "theory" about nothing, though, involves an elaborate and bawdy conceit about an elderly gentlewoman "who had a great antipathy to the smell of apples; who, upon discovering that an idle boy had fastened some mellow apple to her tail, contracted a habit of smelling them whenever that boy came within her sight" (183). Fielding's persona incites the reader to imagine what the elderly gentlewoman was in search of when smelling the apples. Using images and words that Fielding wants his readers to associate with sexual matters is an attempt to titillate their association of ideas with suggestive language, but tricks them when he says: "though there were then none within a mile of her" (183). He attempts to further illustrate his theory referring to what he actually heard from a surgeon claiming that: "while he was cutting off a Patient's leg, [...] *he was sure he felt nothing*" (183). Despite the actual precision of the persona's explanation and his own belief of the precision and clarity of his language, the theory itself is rendered comically absurd.

The operations of irony here are indeed part of the process of the persona recognition. D.C. Muecke, in two important articles, "The Communication of Verbal Irony" (1973) and "Irony Markers" (1978) discussed the way we recognise irony. His discussion embraces a wide arena including authorial factors of creation, but mainly the question "on what basis do we infer that what we are reading or hearing is ironical?" In answering this question Muecke uncovers the very intricacies inherent in the treatment of irony in literature. He claims:

We may often be uncertain whether an author is, in his own persona, ironically praising something that should be blamed, or whether he is being ironical by creating a persona or character whose foolish but confidently expressed praise [or criticism] constitutes (on a separate level) an unconscious and hence ironic self-betrayal of his folly. (36)

D.C. Muecke points to the very discursive nature of the persona and the difficulties of assessing its stance if one relies on its verification with reference to the author's view. Muecke sees certain contextual factors as prerequisite to the recognition of irony itself. The addressee's expectations of the statement, he asserts, are crucial as context is provided by the addressee and it may be "single fact or a whole socio-cultural environment" ("Irony Markers" 367).

These markers, to follow Muecke's ambit of concern, combine to suspend the persona between the author (Fielding) and the narrator (the fictional editor) in a series of ironic contradictions which result in a sense of intended confusion which rather amounts to another type of author's presence; a presence which is rather characterised as invisibility and indeterminacy. By assuming a false identity, Fielding protects his true self. Any fault committed by a pseudonym leaves the true author blameless.

The language reflects then Fielding's parodic mastery as well his persona's admittedly impressive understanding of Locke. The elderly woman's conceit introduces one of the most important theories of Locke that Fielding parodies and re-describes: "the association of ideas" from book 2. In fact Locke observes that:

Tis evident to any one who will but observe what passes in his own Mind, that there is a train of *Ideas*, which constantly succeed one another in his Understanding, as long as he is awake. *Reflection* on these appearances of several *Ideas* one after another in our Minds, is that which furnishes us with the *Idea* of *Succession*: And the distance between any parts of that Succession, or between the appearance of any two *Ideas* in our Minds, is that we call *Duration*. For whilst we are thinking, or whilst we receive successively several *Ideas* in our Minds, we know that we do exist. (182)

The ironic voice of the persona is "Essay on Nothing" is no longer merely a mask in the sense of a mode of concealment for Fielding. It provides the form and the content of the essay, Fielding's satiric purpose and mechanism as well, the very *raison d'être* of the work itself. Commenting on the nature of the satirist, Ruben Quintero states:

Such confusions between literal fact and the truth of art remind us that satirists must ultimately rely on audiences to share a common ground of reason, and as far as literary satire is concerned, of belief. Readers of satire are expected to suspend disbelief, to play along with the game, but not ever to surrender sanity or sound judgement. And satirists may employ fiction for seeking truth but not establishing falsehood. And satirists, in seeking a reformation of thought, expects readers to engage the satire by applying their reasoning, moral values, and taste to the subject. Through an aggressive strategy of distortion and defamation that demands our critical judgement, the satirist seeks to affect our attitude or perspective, and often through the indirection of a narrator purposely designed to befuddle and obscure whatever exact direction the satirist would probably have us go. (5)

Fielding continues his Menippean treatment of Locke's "association of ideas" by combining his satire on the association of ideas with the comically construed parodic language in the following passage in which he, states his theme most clearly in a classically Menippean assertion about knowledge:

Indeed, some have imagined, that Knowledge, with the Adjective human placed before it, is another Word of Nothing. And one of the wisest Men in the World declared, he knew nothing. But, without carrying it so far, this I believe may be allowed, that it is at least possible for a man to know nothing. And whoever hath read over many works of our ingenious moderns, with proper attention and emolument, will, I believe, confess, that if he understands them right, he understands nothing. (183)

The prose is urbane and intellectual, particularly in the author's allusion to Socrates' famous statement, but it is also affected and parodic. The passage is satiric in its claim that moderns essentially know nothing and Menippean in Fielding's exuberant and playful caricature of the modern intellectual as a know-nothing medium.

Fielding's persona proves to be familiar with scholarly discourse on nothing. Yet, he misguidedly believes that the "nothing" of which Socrates wrote is reproduced in the "nothing" that constitutes and shapes the works of the moderns. To assert this claim, he refers to the Modern readers. He suggests that when modern readers read a book which seems "to the Reader to contain Nothing," the reader convinces himself that he has missed the meaning. However, the persona explains that, "in Reality the Fact was, that the Author, in the said Book, &c. did truly, and *bona Fide*, mean Nothing" (184). In order to further pursue his claim that learned moderns aspire to meaning (or Nothing) in their writing, he resorts to their categorization or classification. First, there are three kinds of humans, he writes: those "who sit down to write what they think," those "who think what they shall write," and the much more "numerous Sort who never think either before they sit down, or afterwards; and who when they produce on Paper what was before in their Heads, are sure to produce Nothing" (185). He then simply refutes the notion that they produce only one kind of "Nothing," but rather several types: "These are, *Nothing per se* Nothing; Nothing at all; Nothing in the least; Nothing in Nature; Nothing in the World; Nothing in the whole World; Nothing in the whole universal World" (185). In fact, the Menippean trait that Bakhtin considers the most important to the tradition is one that informs much of "Essay on Nothing", I quote at length because Bakhtin's explanation is complex, and familiarity with the complete passage will advance the understanding of my discussion:

The most important characteristic of the Menippean satire as a genre is the fact that its bold and unrestrained use of the fantastic [...] is devoted to a [...] philosophical end: the creation of *extraordinary situations* for the provoking and testing of a philosophical idea, a discourse, a *truth*, embodied in the image of a wise man, the seeker of this truth. We emphasize that the fantastic here serves not for the positive embodiment of truth, but as a mode for searching after truth, provoking it, and, most important, testing it. To this end the heroes of Menippean satire [...] wander through unknown and fantastic lands, are placed in extraordinary life situations. The most unrestrained and fantastic adventures are present here in organic and indissoluble artistic unity with the philosophical idea. And it is essential to emphasize once again that the issue is precisely the testing of an *idea*, of a



*truth*, and not the testing of a particular human character, whether an individual or a social type. The testing of a wise man is a test of his philosophical position in the world. In this sense one can say that the content of the menippea is the adventures of an *idea* or a *truth* in the world. (114-115)

In “Essay on Nothing”, the readers do not wander through fantastic setting such as Lucian’s underworlds; Rather, they wander through the “fantastic” and outrageous regions of the persona’s mind, whose opinions are similar to the fantastic places of Erasmus’ *Folly* and Swift’s *Tale of a Tub*. As Bakhtin suggests, Fielding’s intentions are indeed clear: to provide a constructive and original work. To apply Bakhtin’s prior claim that the Menippean satire is “a mode for searching after the truth, provoking it, and, most important, testing it” (114) would evince that “Essay on Nothing” seeks to “test” the philosophical positions of its persona, its author and his contemporaries as well. Fielding skillfully extends his elaborate encomium as his persona infuses his language with contemporary jargon and comical images. Fielding’s persona uses the image of a bladder to imply that the contemporary intellect consists of little more than a bag of air:

When a Bladder is full of Wind, it is full of Something; but when that is let out, we aptly say, there is Nothing in it. The same may be as just asserted as a Man as of Bladder. However well he may be bedawbed with Lace, or with Title, yet if have not something in him, we may predicate the same of him as of an empty Bladder. (182)

The persona, so confident, provides the reader with elaborate comparisons that emphasise the points he is discussing. Expressions such as “we aptly say” add the properly formal aspect of scholarly or learned documents, while ideas are being explained in the simplest and commonest terms. Fielding manages to fuse the lofty purpose with the completely inappropriate imagery, emphasising the persona’s ridiculous tone and satirising the latter’s shift in tone and voice as he renounces his contemporaries. Indeed, the most startling aspect of the essay’s parody is the parody of its language, the undermining of its own “value” as a stable text. It is a parody that leaves the reader questioning when is Fielding earnest and when he is mocking. This tradition, in which the speaker/persona/narrator is a parody and is himself mocked, is designed Menippean or Varronian. As Anne Cotterill suggests, In “Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire”, incorporated into the translation of Juvenal’s satires, Dryden traces Menippean dialogues and epistles as the acknowledged source of a tradition in satire. According to Dryden, Menippus was much

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<sup>3</sup> Although Fielding early adopted Lucian’s manner, as in the scenes in the underworld in *The Author’s Farce* (1730) and *A Journey from This World to the Next* (1743), Fielding’s explicit praise of the Greek satirist is first found in his formal satire of Jonathan Swift, in *The True Patriot* (5 November 1745), where he credits the author of *Gulliver’s Travels* with possessing “the Talents of a Lucian, a Rabelais, and a Cervantes”—the four appearing again together in the tribute of comic authors celebrated in *Tom Jones* (1749, XIII. i). In *The Covent-Garden Journal*, 30 June 1752, Lucian, he declared, “may be almost called the Father of true Humour”—a writer, indeed, very nearly inimitable. (On HF and Lucian, see Lind 1936, Miller 1961: 365–419, and Paulson 1967: 133–41. On Lucian’s influence in general, see Robinson 1979).

given to parodies, “that is, he often quoted the verse of Homer and the Tragick Poets, and turn’d their serious meaning into something that was ridiculous” (qtd in “The Politics and Aesthetics of Digressions: Dryden’s Dicourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire.”). Dryden establishes a line from Menippus, Varro and Lucian which includes *The Encomium Moriae* of Erasmus, *Mother Hubbard’s Tale* in Spencer, and his own satires *Absalom and Achitophel* and *Mac Fleckone* (67). Related to the parody of Menippus and Dryden is indeed, Fielding’s use of the mock-encomium in “Essay on Nothing”, as a classical Menippean technique that contributes to the oblique attack on contemporary vanity and vocabularies. As Joel.C. Relihan explains, Menippeans often parody encomiastic language (27). Some classical Menippean satires that exploit this technique, Relihan asserts, include Varro’s *Menippeans* and Apuleius’ *Golden Ass*. Parody of literature and other modes of discourse is then central to Menippean satires. Relihan explains stating that:

Menippean satire is a parody of literature in general because it plays with the traditional assumption of the author’s control of a coherent work [...] Literature and its authors are a vehicle of authority; a Menippean satirist makes fun of the idea of deriving auctoritas from an author. (26)

The Menippean persona or narrator usually observes things from unusual perspective, often speaks from a lofty intellectual position, sometimes ridiculously misguided perceptions of reality. Bakhtin explains that the classical Menippean satires were the first to explore fully the possibilities of “moral and psychological experimentation of the unusual, abnormal moral and psychic states of men” (116). This is made particularly evident when Fielding’s persona confesses to have written this essay with nothing in the head, claiming to write about nothing (184), similarly to the moderns he is satirising. The wise persona, whose estimation of his intellect is then inflated, undermines “auctoritas” mainly because of his ludicrous and inconsistently pompous claims. These states as Relihan suggests, result in works with no “consistent authorial point of view” (23). Typical of most Menippean narrators, Fielding’s persona engages in fact in self-parody, contributing to his own unreliability. The third and final section of the essay “Of the Dignity of Nothing” provides further evidence that Fielding’s persona presents to the reader a series of interpretations, theorizing or instances of criticism that are perpetually undermined, if not contradicted by his own person. Discarding all forms of subservience to merely empty titles, Fielding’s persona attempts to prove the dignity of nothing arguing for the qualities that are generally associated with the ideal of respect. He then uses the following syllogism:

The respect paid to men on account of their titles is paid at least to the supposal of their superior virtues and abilities, or it is paid to nothing. But when a man is a notorious knave or fool, it is impossible there should be any such supposal. The conclusion is apparent. (186)

The persona sets forth his logically compelling argument in persuasive tones. Because of the importance of Nothing, the persona assures such titled individuals that they need not be ashamed. He then extends the scope of his encomium upon nothing and comments broadly on the nothingness associated with those who pursue the pleasures of court and political life. He explains that any individual who spends his time in the courts or “populous cities” and knows anything about the corruption and “vulgar Worship and Adulation” “will know



to what it paid, namely to Nothing" (187). Yet, he then notes that the highest degree of Nothing, the "Nothingest of Nothings" belongs to those who are "Something less than Nothing", those who receive favour: "when a Person who receives it is not only void of the Quality for which he is respected, but is in reality notoriously guilty of vices directly opposite to the Virtues, whose Applause he receives" (187).

Ironically, for the persona to satirise Modern learning, he must resort to such elaborate rhetorical argumentation as the syllogistic demonstration. However, as Fielding proceeds to prove the dignity of nothing, not only the persona but every hypocrite, is brought under attack. The persona continues: Now that no man is ashamed of either paying or either receiving this respect I wonder not, since the great importance of Nothing seems, I think, to be pretty apparent: but that they should deny the Deity worshipped, and endeavour to represent Nothing as Something, is more worthy reprehension. (187) Fielding's persona almost abandons his treatise on "Nothing" and expresses his own feelings concerning corruption and deceit. He even reveals his concern, evidently Fielding's own concern, with the "great man" of society:

The most astonishing instance of this respect, so frequently paid to Nothing, is when it is paid (If I may so express myself) to Something less than nothing, when the person who receives it is not only void of the quality for which he is respected, but is in reality notoriously guilty of the Vices directly opposite to the Virtues whose applause he receives. This is, indeed, the highest degree of Nothing, or (if I may be allowed the word), the Nothingest of all Nothings. (187)

This is in fact, Fielding himself protesting against society in which "gravity, "ostentation" and "pomp" are continually mistaken for true virtues such as "wisdom", "piety", "charity" and "true greatness. Section II contains also the clearest expression of the theme of "Essay on Nothing": that the contemporary intellectual discourse consists of nothing. In order to be convincing but mainly to demonstrate his knowledge and wisdom, the persona "wisely" but pompously alludes to other learned individuals who have discussed the concept of nothing: "a Poet famous for being so sublime that he is often out of the sight of his reader" (184), alluding probably to the Roman poet Horace<sup>4</sup>. At specific points, it become so complex to discern the shift in tone and it is this ambiguity that reflects an aspect of Fielding's own non-literary personality projected into a literary one. Fielding's persona is a conscious and humorous version of himself.

The second section, "Of the Nature of Nothing", further displays the scholarly aspects of the treatise. Fielding's persona elevates the philosophic and intellectual aspects of such

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<sup>4</sup> See Ribble, F. G. (1981), "Aristotle and the 'Prudence' Theme of *Tom Jones*," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 15:26–47. Horace was perhaps Fielding's most favorite classical author. Allusions to and quotations from him are more numerous in his writings. Counting the mottoes to his leaders and separate works, Ribbles identified "at least 85" taken from Horace, and references to him in the corpus of Henry Fielding's writings were so varied that they could adduce only a selection. Inscribing a copy of Horace's works, which he presented as a gift to his friend Jane Collier, Henry Fielding called him "the best of all the Roman Poets" (Ribbles 38). Elsewhere Horace is "my Friend," "my great Master" (*Covent-Garden Journal* [22 August 1752]).

an admittedly tenuous subject “Nothing” by commenting on its nature meanwhile discussing its very essence. He begins by refuting another “Falsehood”: “That no one can have an Idea of NOTHING” (181). Only when prior authorities are rebutted that he proceeds to advocate his own statement of purpose for the subject of “Nothing”: “but as I can support the contrary by such undoubted Authority, I shall instead of trying to confute such idle Opinions, proceed to show; first, what Nothing is: secondly, I shall disclose the various kinds of Nothing; and, lastly shall prove its great dignity, and that it is the end of everything” (181-182). The persona outlines in convincing tones his plan of attack, illustrating then the orderly aspects of his treatise while displaying a greater sense of determination and confidence. He argues that he must resort to his own knowledge in order to explain the essential materiality of nothing, finally only to prove that it is “the End of every Thing” (182). He then comically defines “Nothing” the negative, claiming that “Nothing is then not Something” (182).

He in fact, further sustains his argument by alluding to the debate over the question of materiality: an issue that began with Hobbes and continued with Locke. Yet, rather than enthusiastically contributing to the debate, Fielding’s persona mocks the relevance of such debates and parodies the discourse itself as Fielding adds a footnote in which his persona explicitly claims that:

The Author would not be here understood to speak against the Doctrine of Immateriality, to which he is hearty Well-wisher; but to point at the Stupidity of those, who instead of immaterial Essence, which would convey a rational Meaning, have substituted immaterial Substance, which is a Contradiction in Terms. (181)

At such particular points, the author drops his ironic pose and addresses directly his readers. The author’s intrusion strengthens indeed the satiric impact and shows Fielding’s own distaste for abstract learning and obtuse language. As such, Fielding’s persona is to be viewed as a literary personality deployed mainly for rhetorical purposes. In fact, the voice in “Essay on Nothing” remains unidentified with no name, no history and no firm setting, allowing Fielding himself the possibility to enjoy manipulating and ridiculing this literary projection of himself. The element of fiction in Fielding’s essay should be then noticed especially, when the persona’s position differs appreciably, even if not consistently, from that of the real author’s. In each section, the persona’s mind itself becomes an important element of fiction, and in each case the mind is mocked—affectionately. The essay is as much about Fielding’s own attitudes as about the debate over “Nothing”. For instance, unaware of his comically complex prose, the persona enthusiastically claims that the topic of “Nothing” is the origin of intellectual discourse: “it will have a Right to claim itself the Origination of all Things” (181). The tone becomes more Menippean when the persona defines “Nothing” in the negative, resulting in the claim that “Nothing then is not Something” (182). He offers a final proof of the materiality of nothing by arguing against “contrary opinions” which assert that Nothing does not reside in a specific place. The persona of the “Essay on Nothing” exemplifies as well a bold concentrated focus on mental attitudes and on occupational behaviour. It becomes an embodiment of what Professor Paul Zall refers to as “mind satire” (367), displays himself only in this aspect. According to professor Zall “Menippean satire mixes anything and everything that comes to mind. It

dramatizes thought process rather than thought, and ought to be looking at those processes rather than at autobiography or persona per se" (367).

In this regard, Relihan also has recently made important contributions to Frye's observations regarding intellectual enthusiasm: "Menippean satire rises through time to philosophical formulations of the inadequacies of human knowledge and the existence of a reality that transcends reason, but in its origins the genre merely thumbs its nose at pretenders to truth" (29). Relihan also points to the irony in virtually all Menippean satires, ancient and otherwise. He suggests that Menippean authors are usually studious figures and/or intellectuals, abounding with scholarly minds. Thus, when they satirize the claims of knowledge, they often use a narrator, a persona or a critic who makes a fool of himself in his comic interpretations and misapplication of his own knowledge (30). What Frye considers as central to the genre—exuberance of wit, scholarly knowledge, and elaborate analyses of human nature—convinces him that the genre should be called "anatomy", not Menippean satire. Frye is referring specifically to Erasmus, Rabelais, Burton, and subsequent Menippeans, authors who are largely responsible for the anatomic nature of Menippean satire after the Renaissance.

In the middle of the third section, the persona continues his encomium but becomes more inclined towards expressing Fielding's own view, in his denunciation of the two vices, Fielding constantly condemned: excessive ambition and avarice. At this particular point in the essay, Fielding seems careless about maintaining a consistent point of view and reliable stance. First, the persona explains that if the world began with nothing, then it would logically end with nothing, a claim easily accepted by a "Nation of Christians" (188). Second, "if the end of the world will end in nothing, then it follows that the ends of the vices of ambition and avarice are nothing as well" (188). Fielding uses a number of successive interrogatives to demonstrate his point: And as Nothing is the End of the World, so is it of every thing in the World. Ambition, the greatest, highest, noblest, finest, most heroic and godlike of all Passions, what doth it end in?—Nothing. What did *Alexander, Caesar*, and all the rest of that heroic Band, who have plundered, and massacred so many Millions, obtain by all their Care, Labour, Pain, Fatigue, and Danger?— Could they speak for themselves, must they not own, that the End of all their Pursuit was Nothing? Nor is this the End of private Ambition only. What is become of that proud Mistress of the World,—the *Caput triumphati Orbis*? that Rome, of which her own Flatterers so liberally prophesied the Immortality, In what hath all her Glory ended? surely in Nothing. (188) He asks, what, then, is the end of avarice? Playing on the words "miser" and "misery", Fielding through his author asks: if the miser will not "part with a shilling" to gain pleasure or power, what does he desire? Nothing. A miser is unable to explain what he pursues in the world besides more misery because "the more he attains of what he desires, the more uneasy and miserable he is" (188). A miser pursues only misery; he pursues nothing: "May not therefore, nay, must we not confess, that he aims at Nothing? Especially if he be himself unable to tell us what is the End of all this Bustle and Hurry, this watching and toiling, this Self-Denial, and Self-Constraint!" Towards the end of the essay, Fielding protracts the shift in voice and tone as his author renounces one of the greatest moderns. When the persona uses the phrase "The Great Mr. *Hobbes*," we should be alert to Fielding's subtle intentions. The Scriblerian Fielding, uses the word "great", purely ironically. In fact, in his *Leviathan*, Hobbes argues that humans are essentially animalistic in their pursuits, driven by and guided by one basic

drive: the ends justifies the means. Fielding's persona disagrees with Hobbes because Hobbes' theory, he maintains, did not recognize that the ends of avarice and ambition is nothing:

He [Hobbes] advanced a very strange Doctrine That in all these grand Pursuits, the Means themselves were the End proposed, viz. to Ambition, Plotting, Fighting, Danger, Difficulty, and such like:—To Avarice, Cheating, Starving, Watching, and the numberless painful Arts by which this Passion proceeds. (189)

He goes on to further discard Hobbes' theory as deficient because at its very core there is nothing. He states: However it may be to demonstrate the Absurdity of this Opinion [the ends justifies the means], it will be needless to my Purpose, since if we are driven to confess that the Means are the only End attained,—I think we must likewise confess, that the End proposed is absolutely Nothing. (189) The end of the parodic encomium provides the harshest satirical note in the essay. After summarizing his philosophic-scientific proofs on the essence, dignity, and importance of "Nothing," he writes that "surely it becomes a wise Man to regard Nothing with the utmost Awe and Adoration" (189). In his final satiric gesture, Fielding gathers all learned fools, politicians and associates their ill-conceived plans with Nothing:

The Virtuous, Wise, and Learned may then be unconcerned at all the Changes of Ministries and of Government; since they may be well satisfied, that while Ministries of State are Rogues themselves, and have inferior Knavish Tools to bribe and reward; true Virtue, Wisdom, Learning, Wit, and Integrity, will most certainly bring their Possessors—NOTHING. (190)

The final ironic claim, with the unexpected "nothing" which is the reward of good as well as evil in this deceitful society, suggests that there is no reward, even for the virtuous. The fundamental method of satire and the irony for Fielding to make believe that he possesses the faults which he intends to attack, and that he satirises also the qualities which he means to praise or valorise. Self-parody, as Bakhtin writes, "reinforces the multi-styled multi-toned nature of the Menippean; what is coalescing here is a new relationship to the world as the material of literature, a relationship characteristic for the entire dialogic line of development in artistic prose" (118).

At the heart of his satire in "Essay on Nothing", there is then no consistent persona but an ironical pose, which achieves its literary effect only to the degree that it is seen through. The persona remains then detached, limiting the possibilities a unified text, creating cohesion when none is needed and falsifying the inconclusive effect Fielding is generally trying to establish. And when it appears, the reader's assistance is enlisted in determining exact tone and emphasis. The search for unity in the "Essay for Nothing" leads to the figure of Fielding who speaks to us in parodic passages to his own satiric vision, his irony, his relationship with the intended audience or readers, to a persona or mask developed by Fielding himself into a full developed portrait, virtually a protagonist.

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## **The representation of Gulf War II in the Washington Post from 20<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> March 2003: An interdisciplinary approach**

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### **Abstract**

The present paper studies interdisciplinarity between media discourse and two other disciplines, namely grammar and pragmatics, a topic which has not been sufficiently covered by media studies. It investigates the use of reporting verbs as well as conjunctions as strategies to frame the reader's conception of presented states of affairs and trigger the desired reaction. A corpus of American news reports drawn from The Washington Post was used as study case and was confined to the first two days of the coverage of Gulf War II (20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> March 2003) which were peak days in that military battle. The findings revealed the influential role of pragmatic notions as context, modality and intention in determining the choice of the target grammatical items.

### **Key Words**

interdisciplinary – issue-sensitive – modality – intentionality – reporting verbs – adversatives – paradigmatic – syntagmatic

### **Introduction**

Media discourse, notably the press, has increasingly become a fruitful area of study. It has been much written about by academics and tackled from different angles. Stylisticians, for instance, such as Freeborn (1996) and Thorne (1997) have classified newspapers into tabloids and broadsheets focussing on their differences in graphological (i.e., orthographic and typographical) features, grammatical structures, vocabulary, etc. ... These stylistic variations have been attributed to both papers' different readership profiles (Crystal & Davy, 1969; Duff & Shindler, 1984) and to their different political and ideological leanings (Duff & Shindler, 1984; Freeborn, 1996). Many other linguistic approaches to news discourse, notably Content Analysis (Hogben & Waterman, 1997) and Critical Linguistics (Fowler, Hodge, Kress, & Trew, 1979; Kress & Hodge, 1979; Wodak, 1997) have challenged the objectivity of news maintaining that media texts are complex artifacts encoding social, political and ideological discourses (Kellner, 1995) through linguistic choice and have tried



to unveil their underlying ideologies. Finally, Bhatia (1993) has dealt with newspaper reports from a genre analysis perspective considering them “as a fairly well established genre” (p. 20) and referring to the non-discriminative<sup>5</sup> linguistic strategies employed by journalists to manipulate their readers and mystify them.

In the light of the above-mentioned researches, this paper aims at studying the interface between news reporting and grammar by investigating the use of reporting verbs and conjunctions as framing strategies to influence the reader’s perception of mass-mediated events and yield the desired effect on him. What is meant by framing is to present a given news item in a way telling the audience how to think about it (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) by selecting some of its aspects and making them more salient (Entman, 1993). Both grammatical devices have pragmatic implications as they are not only intentionally selected but also impregnated with the reporter’s modal stance towards the reported state of affairs.

## **1 Framing Strategies**

This section is deals with the analytic tools investigated in the current study which are reporting verbs and conjunctions. Both framing strategies are presented in the coming sub-sections.

### **1.1 Reporting Verbs**

Reporting verbs have become the focus of ongoing research due to their importance in news discourse where their paradigmatic choice as well as syntagmatic position within the report are modally loaded (Thompson, 1994; Maalej, 2002; 2017). The functional role of these narrative introducers has been tackled by many scholars as Caldas-Coulthard (1994, pp. 305-6) who classified speech-reporting verbs into:

- (i) Neutral structuring verbs: they are verbs referring to the occurrence of speech without any evaluation such as ask, say, and reply.
- (ii) Metapositional verbs: they are verbs labelling and categorising the speaker’s contribution by making explicit the illocutionary force of the quote they refer to. They include assertives (agree, counter, explain), directives (instruct, order, urge) and expressives (accuse, complain, grumble).
- (iii) Metalinguistic verbs: they are verbs referring to language itself or the act of speaking such as quote, narrate and recount.
- (iv) Descriptive verbs: they are verbs referring to the prosodic as well as paralinguistic aspects of vocalisation, that is, voice qualifier (manner) as in murmur, mutter and whisper and voice qualification (attitude) as in laugh, groan and sigh.
- (v) Transcript Verbs: they are verbs marking “the relationship of the quote to other parts of the discourse” (Caldas-Coulthard, 1994, p. 306) such as add, echo and repeat.
- (vi) Discourse-signalling verbs: they are verbs marking discourse progress such as continue, go on and pause.

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<sup>5</sup>Non discriminative strategies are strategies that do not change the genre’s essential communicative purpose.

Other scholars focussed on the evaluative potential of reporting verbs such as Floyd (2000) who considers these items “as a guide as to the reporter’s attitude towards the speaker” (p. 45). He classifies them into (a) favourable reporting verbs, that is, verbs impregnated with positive connotations (announce, appeal, disclose) and (b) unfavourable reporting verbs, that is, verbs impregnated with negative connotations (allege, claim, profess) (ibid.).

Similarly, Bednarek (2006) comes up with a number of core evaluative parameters<sup>6</sup> applying to reporting expressions such as verbs; three of which are COMPREHENSIBILITY, EMOTIVITY and RELIABILITY. This typology reveals the evaluative potential of reporting verbs. The first parameter is, in Bednarek’s (2006, p. 67) view, concerned with the writer’s evaluation of aspects of reported events as being within the grasp of human understanding (COMPREHENSIBLE) or beyond it (INCOMPREHENSIBLE). It involves [COMPREHENSIBLE/Clear] verbs as make clear and [INCOMPREHENSIBLE/Unclear] verbs as hint. As for emotivity, this parameter refers, according to Bednarek (2006, p. 74), to the writer’s evaluation of the reported state of affairs as good (EMOTIVITY: POSITIVE) or bad (EMOTIVITY: NEGATIVE). It is expressed through evaluators such as hope [POSITIVE/Good] and admit [NEGATIVE/Bad]. The last core parameter is defined by Bednarek (2006, p. 52) as being related to epistemic modality since it involves modal meanings as reliability, certainty, confidence and likelihood. It has to do with the writer’s evaluation of both the likelihood of reported propositions as certain (RELIABILITY: HIGH), probable (RELIABILITY: MEDIAN) or possible (RELIABILITY: LOW) and the genuineness of entities as genuine (RELIABILITY: GENUINE) or artificial (RELIABILITY: FAKE). Reliability includes verbs such as point out [RELIABILITY: HIGH] which indicates certainty and claim [RELIABILITY: LOW] which indicates doubt.

In addition to their functional and semantic meanings, reporting verbs’ syntagmatic positioning within the reported discourse is, as argued by Thompson (1994), Triki and Bahloul (2001) and Collins (2001), highly indicative of the reporter’s point of view and rhetorical strategies. It is actually an intentional act aiming at manipulating the intended reader and producing the desired effect on him. (Triki, 2000) In fact, placing the narrative introducer in initial position serves to foreground the reporter’s words (Thompson, 1994) and therefore convey his reservation on the reported proposition, which stimulates the reader to be himself detached and distant from what is reported (Triki & Bahloul, 2001). However, placing the inquit in a middle or a final position serves to foreground the speaker’s words (Thompson, 1994) and subtly communicates the reporter’s commitment to the factuality of the reported message. In this respect, Triki and Bahloul (2001) assert that preposing is a mystifying technique designed to incite the reader to accept the reported event as objective fact.

### **1.2 Conjunctions**

Conjunctions are, as considered by Toolan (1998), overt markers of connection between the foregoing and following text. They are classified by Halliday and Hasan (1976) into temporal, causal, adversative and additive conjunctions. Of these four types, only adversatives are examined in the present study since they are broadly conceived of as significant carriers of ideological viewpoints and drives (Schwenter, 2002). Indeed,

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<sup>6</sup> They are defined by Bednarek (2006, p. 44) as evaluative qualities attributed to the evaluated entities, situations or propositions and consisting of evaluative scales with two poles and potential intermediate stages between them.

“[i]deological clashes between different viewpoints in discourse are”, in Schwenter’s (2002, p.43) view, “encoded in linguistic structure in the form of adversative expressions, whose meanings provide us with indications as to how these viewpoints relate to one another.” Similarly, Yu (2008, p. 130) defines adversatives as “the connectives that bring in the expressions that are contrary to expectation. The expressions indicate a contrary result or opinion to the content mentioned previously. In this sense, adversatives signal the beginning of a different viewpoint.” Thus, these conjunctions do not have just a textual function but also a pragmatic one. This is why they are useful indicators of point of view.

## **2 Methodology**

The methodology section provides a description of the pilot corpus and the procedure followed to investigate the role of reporting verbs and conjunctions in affecting public thinking and shaping its world-views.

### **2.1 Corpus**

The corpus made use of in the current research consists of 26 news reports retrieved from The Washington Post – an American broadsheet (Li, Zhang & Du, 2014) – covering the first two days of Gulf war II, that is 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> March 2003, which was a period showing the military invasion on Iraq at its peak. The choice of this particular topic is motivated by its newsworthiness. It was an event which skewed the content of mass media worldwide and elicited not only controversial representations of what was happening in Iraq but also controversial reasons about the legality of this war. In fact, the U.S. legal theory, to borrow Murphy’s (2004) concept, was critically assessed by many scholars such as Bellamy (2003) who argued that the invasion is illegal since the UN Security Council resolutions do not support the use of force against Iraq. Schmitt (2006), likewise, maintained that the preemptive self-defense act has no legal basis because there was no compelling evidence of Iraq possessing weapons of mass destruction, sponsoring terrorism and threatening the national security of the United States. Finally, the humanitarian scope of the intervention which is to put an end to the human rights abuses committed by Saddam’s regime lacks, according to Sifris (2003), legal grounds since military intervention is only allowed in case of grave human rights violations. This controversial debate over the main arguments put forward to justify the U.S. deployment of force against Iraq revealed different ideological frames and value-laden attitudes, which makes the target topic worth studying.

### **2.2 Procedure**

The pilot corpus was manually tagged for reporting verbs and adversatives. The former analytic tools were limited to indirect discourse presentation while the latter are limited to the finite clausal level. The tagging process led to the retrieval of a checklist of 51 reporting verbs which were, as displayed in Table 1, modally classified using Caldas-Coulthard’s (1994) taxonomy of verbs of saying which was extended to include writing and thought verbs.

Table 1  
List of Covertly and Overtly Modal Reporting Verbs

Covertly modal verbs	Overtly modal verbs
Neutral verbs ask – radio – radio back – report – say – tell – write	Metapropositional positive verbs agree – announce – assert – assume – assure – believe – chime in – confirm – convince – declare – determine – disclose – emerge – emphasise – find – indicate – insist – let know – make clear – note – observe – pledge – quip – reassure – recall – reveal – show – state – stress – vow
Discourse signalling verbs add	Metapropositional negative verbs acknowledge – caution – claim – counter – demand – predict – query – speculate – think – warn
Descriptive verbs chant – mutter – shout	

This table shows two types of reporting verbs, namely covertly modal verbs and overtly modal verbs. The former verbs include neutral verbs, discourse signalling verbs and descriptive verbs. Despite their apparent neutrality, these verbs are modally loaded since they implicitly express the reporter's modal stance which is detachment from the report in the first two categories and evaluative description of speech performance in the last category (Couldas-Coulthard, 1994). As for the latter verbs, they consist of metapropositional verbs, that is, speech act verbs which are explicitly modal since they reflect both the reporter's degree of commitment to the reported proposition and his viewpoint towards it (ibid.) These illocutionary verbs can be either positive or negative. Consider the following:

- (1) He [President Bush] also **asserted** that Hussein had committed "a final atrocity" against his people by putting troops into civilian areas in an effort to Iraqi citizens as shields. (WP11)
- (2) Reynolds **warned** that politicians, such as Daschle, who hail from states Bush won in 2000 are particularly at risk in 2004 if they criticize the president's Iraq policy. (WP21)

The reporter intentionally employs in the first segment verb *assert* which is a verb bearing positive connotations to present an atrocious act (Saddam's use of Iraqi citizens as shields) in order to justify U.S. military invasion on Iraq and, therefore, the legality of this attack. However, the verb *warn* in the second segment is employed to introduce politicians' freedom of speech and right to have anti-war views as a risky act. What is clear in the two examples is that such reporting verbs reflect both the reporter's as well as the newspaper's stance towards the reported state of affair. They are made use of to serve the U.S. newspapers' aims to manipulate their readers and influence their reactions to the war by framing their news reports in a way favourable to the interest of America and its foreign policy.

As regards adversatives, the tagging process yielded 8 conjunction entries, namely although, but, however, instead, on the other hand, still, though and while. These

grammatical items are presence indicators par excellence as they serve to disseminate the reporter's attitude towards the reported state of affairs. Consider the following examples:

- (3) Throughout the day, they [White House officials] emphasized that Bush had made the decision to go to war if Hussein did not leave, and that he would leave it to his military advisers to determine the timing to begin the fighting. **But** the first strike in the war caught even some military personnel in the Gulf by surprise. (WP11)

- (4) Sen. John F. Kerry (D-Mass.), who is running for president, has come under heavy criticism within his own party for backing Bush on war. This week, **however**, he sharply criticized the president's diplomacy before the start of the war. (WP21)

The conjunction *but* in segment (3) signals opposition between what was emphasised by White House officials (President Bush's decision to allow the military forces determine the timing of the opening stages of the war) and what happened in reality (a preemptive strike). It is used by the reporter to cast doubt on the honesty of both White House officials and implicitly Bush. This authorial involvement in what is being reported is indicated cotextually through the use of the words *even* and *surprise*. As for example (4), the conjunction *however* is used, as explained by Maalej (2017, p. 155), to indicate counter expectation. Kerry's sharp criticism of Bush's diplomacy is incredible since he is known for his supportive stance towards Bush's Foreign policy. This unexpected behaviour is triggered by his own party critical reaction to his backing for Bush on the war. This implies that Kerry has changed his behaviour out of obligation rather than conviction. In short, both conjunctions illustrated above were employed as framing devices to convey the reporters' viewpoints towards the reported events and, hence, influence the reader and incite him to react accordingly.

Just like reporting verbs, the positioning of the adversative conjunction within the report is another act of selection intended to frame the reader's conception of the reported proposition. In fact, to follow Maalej (2017), when preposed, the conjunction denotes the reporter's modal involvement in the reporting act by foregrounding his own reading of the report rather than presenting the report *per se*. However, when intercalated or placed in final position, the authoritative power of the conjunction is weakened, as illustrated in example (5), where the focus is on the statements issued in support of the war and NOT on those in opposition to it which are not worth highlighting since they are not only few but also expressed by some politicians. This reveals the writer's pro-war stance and his attempt to convince the reader of the legality of using military force against Iraq especially after getting congressional backing (both parties).

- (5) Congressional leaders from both parties issued statements of support, **although** there were a few statements of disagreement from some politicians. (WP11)

### 3 Findings and Discussion

The present study yielded findings relating to the frequency of reporting verbs as well as that of adversative conjunctions in terms of choice and position within the news report.

#### 3.1 Reporting Verbs

This sub-section deals with the distribution of reporting verbs in the research at hand paradigmatically as well as syntagmatically. These narrative introducers play a significant role in framing public opinion.

### 3.1.1 Lexical Choice

The frequencies for reporting verbs, both implicitly and explicitly modal, in The Washington Post are reflected in Table 2.

Table 2

Distribution of Reporting Verbs in The Washington Post

A	Reporting verbs		The Washington Post	
			no.	%
Implicitly modal verbs	Neutral		307	74.51
	Discourse signalling		8	1.94
	Descriptive		3	0.73
Total			318	77.18
Explicitly modal verbs	Positive metapositional		76	18.45
	Negative metapositional		18	4.37
Total			94	22.82

quick inspection of this tabular data shows the predominant use of implicitly modal verbs in the whole corpus where they amount to 77.18% of the total number of reporting verbs due to broadsheets' creed of objectivity. As regards explicitly modal verbs, positive verbs are predominant accounting for 18.45% of all metapositional verbs comparing to negative verbs. (See further examples about positive and negative verbs in Section 2.2)

This result is tremendously important since it reflects The Washington Post's support for the war in Iraq and endorsement of the Bush policy and the coalition as well. This broadsheet's pro-war stance is related to its ideological affiliations being a right-wing newspaper promoting government propaganda by reporting the battle in a way that is favourable to the U.S. interests and objectives but unfavourable to the Iraqi regime in order to persuade its readers of the legitimacy of that invasion and win popular support.

### 3.1.2 Syntagmatic Position

This sub-section is devoted to dealing with the syntagmatic positioning of the reporting verb vis-à-vis the reported proposition. The frequencies of the various positions of the reporting verb in The Washington Post are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3

Tag Position in The Washington Post



Tag position	The Washington Post	
	no.	%
Initial position	253	61.41
Medial position	21	5.10
Final position	138	33.49
Total	412	100.00

The most common position for the reporting verb in the above-mentioned table is the initial position which amounts to 253 (61.41%) occurrences in the whole corpus, followed by the final position which amounts to 138 (33.49%). As for intercalated reporting verbs, they are rarely used as they account for 5.10%. These findings results lead to the conclusion that when reporting events, The Washington Post tends to foreground the reporter's words rather than the speaker's, and therefore explicitly express its attitudes, be they positive or negative, towards what is being reported. This modal explicitness tends to be motivated by issue-sensitivity and the central role played by the United States in this war, broadly known to be the leader of the coalition military action against Iraq. Hence this American newspaper's explicitness in its support for its country's foreign policy is driven by its patriotism agenda.

### 3.2 Conjunctions

This sub-section deals with the distribution of conjunctions in the current research at the level of both choice and position. These grammatical items can be used in affecting public thinking and shaping its world-views(Maalej, 2017).

#### 3.2.1 Choice

The very choice of the target conjunction is worth investigating since it reflects, as it has been previously indicated, its user's viewpoint towards the reported message. The findings displayed in Table 4 are limited to the use of adversative conjunctions in finite indirect Speech, Thought and Writing Presentation ST&WP clauses (including reporting clauses) due to space constraints.

Table 4

NC Distribution in The Washington Post

Adversative conjunctions	The Washington Post	
	no.	%
Although	4	7.54
But	34	64.15
However	7	13.21
Instead	1	1.89
On the other hand	1	1.89
Still	1	1.89
Though	1	1.89
While	4	7.54



Total	53	100.00
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The tabular data above show that the conjunction but outnumbers all adversatives used in The Washington Post. It represents 64.15% of the total frequency of conjunctions in this paper due to its various discourse functions (See Bednarek, 2006)<sup>7</sup>. The next preponderant conjunction is however (13.21%) followed by while (7.54%). These findings shed light, as highlighted in Sub-section 1.2, on the way discourse markers are used to frame the reported event and, therefore, influence the reader rather than to examine relations of opposition.

### 3.2.2 Position

As has been stressed in Sub-section 2.2, the positioning of the conjunction within the proposition is as important as its very selection since it is an intentional act which is highly indicative of the reporter's framing strategies. Table 5 shows the preponderance of preposed adversatives in the whole corpus.

Table 5

NC Position in The Washington Post

	NC Position	The Washington Post	
		no.	%
	Initial position	48	90.57
	Medial position	3	5.66
	Final position	2	3.77
	Total	53	100.00

They actually occur 53 times. This reveals that The Washington Post is

overtly modal despite broadsheets' tendency to be more covert through their use of postposed conjunctions. This modal explicitness is issue-sensitive due to the United States' involvement in Gulf War II, which makes it difficult for American reporters to be detached from the reported event, and therefore incites them to frame reality in a way serving their US political and ideological affiliations.

<sup>7</sup> In her corpus-based analysis of contract conjuncts, Bednarek (2006, p. 90) refers to seven different functions of BUT; the most frequent one of which is contrasting attributed propositions of different Sayers or same Sayer.

## Conclusion

The study of news discourse has proved to be interdisciplinary par excellence as it pertains to more than one discipline in its analysis and process. This research is at the crossroads of two disciplines concerned with language use, namely Grammar and Pragmatics. It is of great relevance to the discipline of grammar through its investigation of the frequency of reporting verbs as well as adversative conjunctions in the broadsheet at hand. Moreover, it is pertinent to the field of pragmatics as it highlights the pre-eminence of modality and intentionality in news reports. It actually gives credence to the biased nature of news production through the series of intrinsically selective acts made by the reporter relating to the lexical choice and positioning of target items. In fact, The Washington Post's results relating to the paradigmatic as well as syntagmatic use of reporting verbs have stressed the strong affinities, either implicit or explicit, these reporting devices have with the notion of modality. Moreover, the low but significant use of metapropositional reporting verbs along with the prevalence of initial position occurrences have challenged this quality paper's apparent tendency to be objective and neutral in its coverage of Gulf War II. As for adversative conjunctions, the present study has highlighted the pragmatic function of these discourse markers which serve as framing tools to manipulate readers and influence their reactions to the war by presenting it in a way favourable to the interest of the United States. What is worth noting is that this corpus-based work has wide implications for the teaching of media discourse. It has actually extended the framing toolkit to include other grammatical devices employed to communicate certain ideological viewpoints and perspectives, be they personal (reporter-based) or institutional (newspaper-based).

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## **The use of English-Arabic code-switching in the first-Year English classroom at Yarmouk University in Jordan: A powerless or powerful teaching strategy?**

*By Hedia Ben Elouidhne, Nadia Rahali, and Razan Khasawneh*

### **Abstract**

Assisting English language teaching and learning requires searching for the appropriate strategy that goes on par with the principle of assistance itself. For those classrooms where English is deemed a target language (TL), the use of code-switching (CS) has become a serious concern in linguistic and conversation-based studies (Alshehab, 2014). Illustrating the interchangeable switch between two languages, CS can be considered a crucial tool for assessing both performance and proficiency in TL. From this angle, the current research aims to shed light on it by anchoring it in the non-native university classroom setting pertaining to the Middle-Eastern region of the Arab world; in particular, a first-year English class at Yarmouk University in Jordan where the two languages of focus are both English and Arabic. It seeks whether English-Arabic CS, in particular, is a powerless or powerful teaching strategy, which entails a series of questions converging towards its appropriateness in the targeted Jordanian classroom where English is used as a second language (ESL).

**Key words:** Code-switching (CS), strategy, first-year English university classroom, powerless, powerful, appropriateness, English as a Second Language (ESL).

### **Introduction**

Since the 1990's, numerous studies have concentrated on the analysis of the CS phenomenon in the ESL classroom setting (Alshehab, 2014). Besides, some research works have recently shown that the use of First language (L1) has so far been welcomed, even embraced as a major pedagogical tool of ESL instruction that is meant to uphold it and scaffold it (Bouchnak, 2015). This scaffolding strategy has taken several dimensions which have led to questioning the extent of its appropriateness according to the way whereby it impacts the learning process. More, "effective learning depends on the ability of teachers to communicate in a manner that is comprehensible to students. The most important function of education is that teaching should result in effective learning" (Makgato, 2014). From this angle, comprehensibility is a serious concern in CS not only in the path towards fulfilling

effectiveness in the teaching and learning process but also in the drive towards achieving communicative and interactive success.

## **Literature Review**

### **1.1. Code alteration: CS/Code mixing**

In bilingual and multilingual communities, the use of CS and code-mixing is quite inescapable. As some teachers and learners tend to use the two terms interchangeably without being aware of how to distinguish between them, this study finds it necessary to define them and highlight the difference between them. Needless to say, miscellaneous studies on CS and code-mixing have hitherto been conducted. The problem is that there has been no consensus among sociolinguists regarding the distinction between the two notions. Wardhaugh (2006), for example, underlines the correspondence between both concepts. As far as Hudson (1980) is concerned, he considers CS as the speaker's use of different varieties of the same language in different contexts and at different times. Such definition is almost similar to that of diglossia.

Fasold (1984) underscores that code mixing is the speaker's use of two languages almost at the same time to the extent that the speaker changes from one language to the other in the course of one sentence. Gumperz (1976) and Bokamba (1990) rather find a compromising definition of both concepts. According to Gumperz (1976), employing two codes interchangeably in a single sentence is called intrasentential CS, whereas the alternate use of two codes between sentences is rather labeled intersentential CS. In this respect, Bokamba (1990) states that

code-switching is the mixing of words, phrases and sentences from two distinct grammatical sub- (systems) across sentence boundaries within the same speech event. In other words, code-switching is intersentential switching. Code-mixing is the embedding of various linguistic units such as affixes (bound morphemes), words (unbound morphemes), phrases and clauses from two distinct grammatical sub- (systems) within the same sentence and the speech event. That is, code-mixing is intrasentential switching.

Thus, both CS and code mixing are complementary. Both concepts converge towards code alteration (Kumar et al, 2012). Alteration involves the alternation between languages which is in turn a widely observed phenomenon in ESL classrooms (Sert, 2005). Such classrooms proffer a suitable ground to anchor the present paper in which CS is tackled in the context where English is the matrix language and Arabic is the embedded language.

### **1.2. A sociolinguistic approach to CS**

Sociolinguistically speaking, CS is quite common in bilingual and multilingual countries, namely among educated people who code-switch for many reasons. In fact, some of them code-switch to emphasize their literacy, competence, and knowledge of a second language (L2). A case in point is Jordan (Alshehab, 2014) where English is L2 and can be used as an alternative to Arabic (L1). In this frame, CS is a result of school bilingualism and a direct indicator of the educational background of the person, even their rate of literacy (Hudson, 1980).

Social motivations catalyze CS. They involve "status, solidarity, formality and functions, which are very significant aspects in describing language choice or alternation between speakers that shared or used more than one language of communication within a particular context" (Inuwa et al , 2014, p. 45). As a matter of fact, status entails the social positions of speakers, which have in turn their say in determining the particular code to use to convey the targeted message. This is true in such Middle Eastern countries as Jordan where the substitution of Arabic by English is tied to the speaker's intention to fit within the educated community even if s/he is not well-educated (Alshehab, 2014). CS is hence related to high prestige.

As far as solidarity is concerned, Inuwa et al (2014) define it as "the social distance between the participants, which involves the relationship that exists between the speakers. Are they friends, host-stranger, instructor-students, preacher-audiences, doctor-patient, news caster-listeners, etc.?" (p. 45). In this respect, CS can exclude those who do not speak L2, those who feel at-ease and make sure that the others do not understand what is said. Moving to functions, the latter encompass the part of the language that partakes in shaping a given discourse. In other words, the reason behind the use of a language and whether participants are "giving directives, seeking for an apology, exchanging greeting or jokes and so on?" (Inuwa et al , 2014, p. 45). Thus, function is linked to the type of meaning to convey, be it affective or referential, and vice versa.

Cook (2001) underlines that CS can contribute to building close relationships between the teachers and their students. The language shift is itself an opportunity to mirror ethical identities, notably if both parties belong to different ethnic groups. The result is CS instilling solidarity among language classroom members. Furthermore, this kind of language alternation helps create a supportive learning environment in the classroom. Although CS serves speech continuity and paves the way for recuperating the inability of expression, some teachers and linguists, who are in favor of the communicative techniques in the language teaching environment, may not appreciate the use of the native language in the classroom (Cook, 2001).

### **1.3. An educational approach to CS**

CS has not only social but also educational motivations (Hudson, 1980; Fasold, 1984). It can influence the educational process in many ways. In Middle East regions such as Jordan, where Arabic is deemed L1 and English is L2, most of the children are monolinguals. Hudson (1980) highlights that, at an early age, the vernaculars of these geographical areas are the only languages of communication for them. During the first six years of their primary school. They study Standard Arabic that can only be learned through formal education. Standard Arabic is the language of instruction not only in primary schools but also in secondary schools. Only in their six-year primary school do they begin to learn English. At this level, both Standard Arabic and English start co-existing in the speech stock of the child in this Arabic-speaking community (Badarneh et al, 2017) where children step into becoming bilingual and referring to CS as a linguistic strategy to express their ideas.

Teachers' use of CS is an issue that is highly discussed by linguists and conversationalists. Some of them think it is beneficial in the educational process whereas others believe that this teaching strategy has to be avoided in the classroom setting, namely the university one and where students specialize in English studies. Cook (2001), for



instance, sees that CS contributes to an efficient understanding of a particular topic and it is a basic component of L2 learning. According to him, it is very helpful in the grammar and vocabulary courses. It does not prevent students from acquiring their L2. In such Middle-Eastern regions as Jordan, the switch to students' L1 (Standard Arabic) cannot be avoided, mainly that it can assist learners in understanding the course material (Cook, 2001). In Grammar courses, some English grammatical functions are like the Arabic ones. Moreover, the use of grammatical knowledge and terminology of Arabic can be very useful in helping them understand and memorize what is learned in English. To Cook (2001), students with high L2 proficiency level can better understand grammar if it is in their L1.

## **2. Research Methodology**

### **2.1. Triangulation**

The study made use of two structured questionnaires. Both instruments were based on closed questions. It is true that this type of questionnaires is useful in collecting data and cross-checking it easily and quickly, with the provision of maximum of responses rates, hence ensuring more validity and reliability to the study (Phellas et al, 2011). However, it generally limits respondents' freedom to answer in their own words and to express their ideas more thoroughly (Phellas et al, 2011). All in all, the amalgam of both questionnaires resulted in their triangulation. The latter means the use of more than one method to collect data (Johnson & Turner, 2003). Such an inter-method mixing bridged between one questionnaire addressed to six teachers of English teaching first-year English classes at Yarmouk University in Jordan and another targeting a specimen composed of 42 of their students.

### **2.2. Questionnaires' description**

#### **2.2.1. Teacher questionnaire**

The first teacher questionnaire encompasses six questions. The first question asked the six teachers of English about the reasons behind the use of CS in the classroom. The second question targeted what language their students thought in. As far as the third question was concerned, it was about the appropriateness of using Arabic in an English class. With regard to the fourth question, it asked teachers whether Arabic could help their students learn English. As regards the fifth question, it was about the frequent switches of languages. Eventually, the sixth question asked the cohort of teacher respondents about the situation for teachers' articles behavior that could be best evaluated in English.

#### **2.2.2. Student questionnaire**

The second questionnaire was addressed a sample composed of 42 students studying English at the university of Yarmouk in Jordan. It is made up of six questions that were related to the different details about the students' use of CS in their first-year English classrooms. The first question focused on the number of languages spoken by these Jordanian students. The second question was about the place of CS (inside or outside the classroom). The third question addressed the appropriateness of using Arabic in an English class. The fourth question aimed at finding out about the usefulness of the Arabic language in learning English. With respect to the fifth question, it sought the language the students used to talk with their peers. Reaching the final question, it was about the reasons behind



the use of Arabic in English classrooms. Responses are encapsulated in the following section.

### 3. Results

The present study used two structured questionnaires: one addressing teachers and another targeting students. The triangulated data were polled, interpreted, then compared.

#### 3.1. Teacher-questionnaire-based results

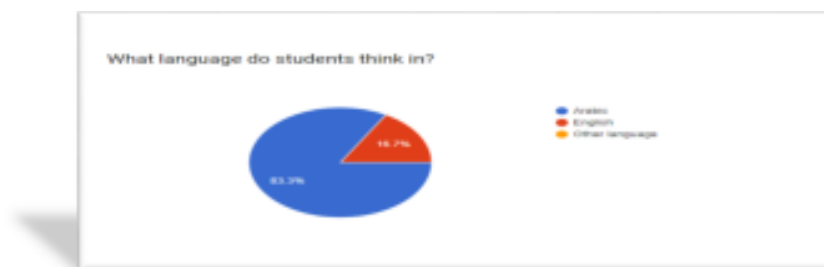
Regarding the first questionnaire, it was based on the responses of a cohort composed of six teachers of English from Yarmouk University. Results are illustrated through the following figures.



**Figure 1: The reasons behind the use of CS in the classroom**

As Figure 1 shows, the majority of responses (33.3%) converged towards filling stopgaps and avoiding misunderstanding while the remaining responses (16.7%) were divided between explanations and the tendency to convey intimacy. Therefore, the majority of teacher participants use CS for more instructional than relational purposes.

The second question of the teacher questionnaire targeted what language students thought in. Figure 2 makes it patent that the majority (83.3%) opted for Arabic. Thus, the teacher respondents were aware that their students were thinking in Arabic before converting to English. Very few responses (16.7%) chose English.



**Figure 2: The language students think in**

As far as the appropriateness of using Arabic in an English class was concerned, Figure 3 shows that most of respondents (83.3%) found it inappropriate. Therefore, CS was seen an incongruent teaching strategy in English-based instruction.



**Figure 3: the appropriateness of using Arabic in an English class**

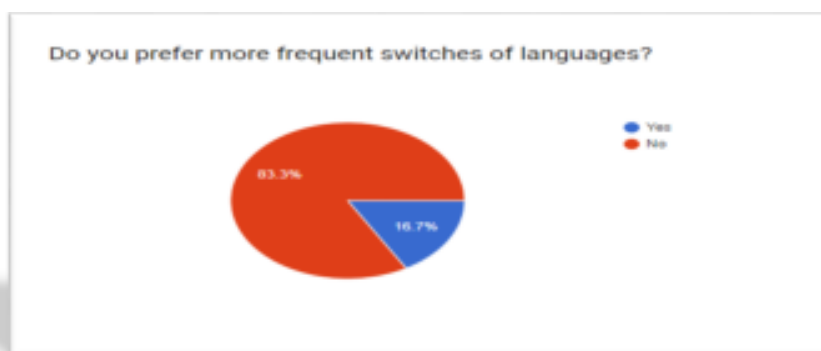
With regard to the fourth question, it asked participants whether Arabic could help learn English. Results are displayed through Figure 4.



**Figure 4: The contribution of Arabic to English learning**

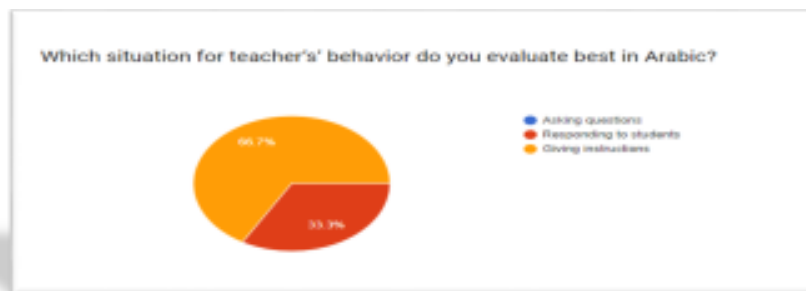
As Figure 4 highlights, the majority of teachers (**83.3%**) claimed that Arabic could not help learn English whereas a minority of them (**16.7%**) saw the opposite. Thus, there was consensus concerning the importance of teachers' sticking to English in English-based instruction.

The fifth question targeted the frequent switches of languages. As Figure 5 demonstrates, the majority of teacher respondents (**83.3%**) did not prefer more frequent switches of languages. They displayed a negative behavior with respect to CS. Only a few of them (**16.7%**) approved.



### Figure 5: Teachers' preferences concerning more frequent switches of languages

The sixth question asked the cohort of teacher respondents about the situation for teachers' behavior that could be best evaluated in English. Findings are underpinned in Figure 6.

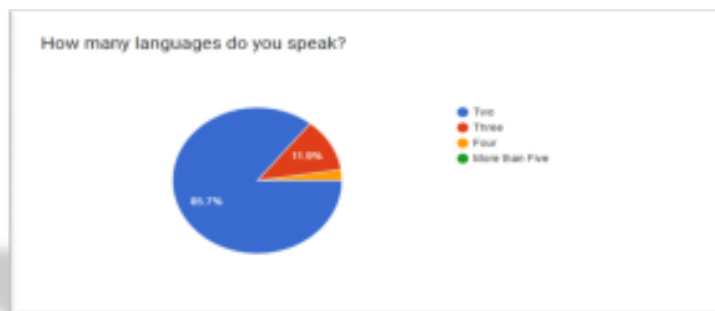


### Figure 6: Teachers' evaluation of the best situation in Arabic

Figure 6 depicts that the majority (66.7%) opted for giving instructions. Only a few of responses (33.3%) selected responding to students. No responses were noted down with respect to asking questions.

### 3.2. Student-questionnaire-based results

As far as the second questionnaire was concerned, its results were displayed as the following. When asked about the number of languages they were speaking, the majority (85.7%) answered two. Only 11.9% declared that they were speaking three languages (Figure 7). Hence, results confirmed that respondents were bilinguals.



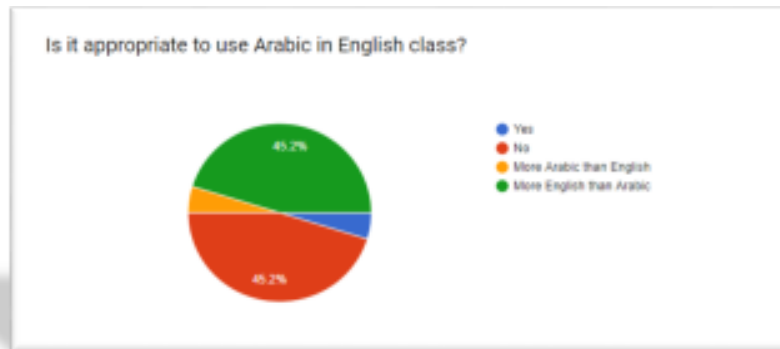
### Figure 7: The number of languages spoken by respondents

When asked when they do speak English (Figure 8), most of participants (40.5%) answered that they did only in class. Some of them (23.8%) claimed that speaking English could occur inside and outside the classroom while a close percentage (26.2%) opted for other. Very few of them (9.5%) stressed that speaking English was practiced beyond the classroom borders.



### Figure 8: When do students speak English?

Respondents were equally asked if it were appropriate to use Arabic in English class. Figure 9 makes the responses patent.



### Figure 9: The appropriateness of Arabic use in English class

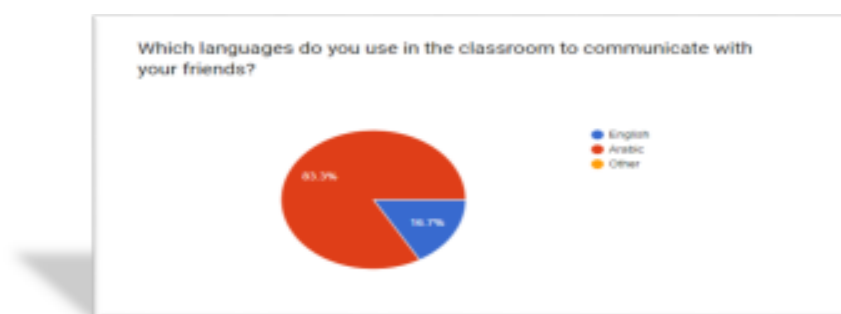
As Figure 9 shows, there were equal responses as far as this question was concerned. Indeed, some participants **(45.2%)** found it appropriate to use Arabic in English class while the same percentage was found out among some other respondents who did not recognize any appropriateness in this respect. Thus, appropriateness was relative.

Regarding the role of Arabic in learning English, it is displayed in Figure 10. The latter highlights that **54.8%** of respondents answered with "Yes" while **45.2%** chose "No". Thus, the use of Arabic depended on students' urgent needs for it.



### Figure 10: The role of Arabic in learning English

With respect to the languages that students were mostly using in their classrooms to communicate with their friends, it was proved that Arabic was ranked first, receiving the majority of responses **(83.3%)** followed by English with **16.7%**. Figure 11 visualizes such findings.



**Figure 11: The languages students used in the classroom to communicate with their friends**

The last question asked participants why they chose words in Arabic to speak in English class. Figure 12 shows that **52.4%** of them underlined that it was for the sake of avoiding misunderstanding. The same percentage (**16.7%**) clarified that it was meant either to fill the stopgap or to make it easier for them to grasp what was said. Only a few (**7.1%**) confessed that they were not familiar with words in English. Thus, L1 was used either for comprehension purposes or to underline the lack of pragmatic proficiency in TL.



**Figure 12: Why do students choose words in Arabic to speak in English class?**

#### 4. Discussion

The results displayed in the previous section show some points of convergence and others of divergence between teachers and their students' responses. It is undeniable that CS is a mode of T-S and S-S communication and a basic feature of classroom spoken discourse, be it initiated by the teacher or the student: "In ELT classrooms, code switching comes into use either in the teachers' or the students' discourse" (Sert, 2005). However, and in such an ESL-based university classroom setting as the first-year one at Yarmouk university in Jordan, CS proved to be controversial. It was deemed an advocated teaching strategy in certain occasions, while in some others it was rejected.

#### **4.1. Negative and positive pragmatic perceptions of respondents about English-Arabic CS in the EFL university classroom setting.**

##### **4.1.1. CS as a powerless teaching strategy**

To some participants teaching first-year English at Yarmouk university, CS represents a weak teaching strategy that has to be rejected for appropriateness-based reasons. Indeed, most of the teacher participants (**83.3%**) denied the appropriateness of using Arabic in an English class (**Figure 3**) on the ground that it generally represents a weak teaching strategy. They even highlighted that Arabic could never help learn English. This implies that the interactive conversational process taking place in the targeted classroom should be English-centered (**Figure 4**). The interference of L1 was completely rejected by the majority of teacher respondents (**83.3%**). Besides, the same percentage was found out with regard to the frequent switch of languages in a two-hour English course (**Figure 5**). Therefore, CS was gauged by most of teacher participants as a sign of pragmatic inappropriateness and deficiency. Some student respondents shared this stance, as **45.2%** did not recognize any appropriateness with regard to Arabic use in English class (**Figure 9**).

##### **4.1.2. CS as a powerful teaching strategy**

In many other respects, CS could however be perceived as a powerful teaching strategy. To begin with, comprehension issues could be at stake. As **Figure 1** demonstrates, the majority of teacher responses (**33.3%**) converged towards filling stopgaps and avoiding misunderstanding. More, **66.7%** of these teachers advocated the best situation for English-Arabic CS was that of giving instructions (**Figure 6**), hence feedback provision. Therefore, CS could bridge learning gaps, mainly those between production and comprehension. This point was further stressed by student participants in **Figure 12**, since **52.4%** of them underlined that English-Arabic CS in the classroom could clear misunderstanding.

Comprehension issues involve not only the content of the lesson per se but equally teacher-student (T-S) and student-student relationships (Cook, 2001). As a matter of fact, only a few teacher respondents (**16.7%**) acknowledged the need for CS to convey intimacy, hence to build solidarity among classroom members. Consequently, only some teacher participants drew attention to the use of CS for socialization purposes. This position was also indirectly hinted at by student respondents when most of them (**54.8%**) believed that Arabic generally helps learn English (**Figure 10**) and when also the majority (**83.3%**) declared that Arabic was the language mostly used to communicate with friends (**Figure 11**), hence providing CS with a social attribute.

#### **4.2. Appropriating CS to meet students' needs**

The cross-checking of findings showed CS as a controversial teaching strategy that has its pros and cons. Wardhaugh (2006) confirms that CS is deployed by people who are either bilingual or multilingual. In L2 classrooms where some students have English-limited proficiency and might face a problem of communication, CS could be one of the solutions. This was quite the case of the targeted bilingual classroom (**Figure 7**). However, this will entrap students who will remain accustomed to the habit of thinking in Arabic before speaking in English. This was illustrated through **Figure 2** which proved that students'



mental processes were operating in Arabic before English, as the majority of teacher respondents (**83.3%**) declared.

CS could be appropriated through reduction and reflection. Indeed, reduction can be fulfilled when teachers use compensation strategies that reduce the use of English-Arabic CS in their classrooms. To explain a given word, for example, they can use drawing or collocations to approximate the meaning. Inciting students to use proper English inside and outside the classroom should equally be enhanced (**Figure 8**). Both production and comprehension are much better achieved through the appropriation of CS according to students' requirements.

CS could be appropriated not only through reduction, but also through reflection. In this regard, teachers are invited to use it with care. It should not frustrate TL learning or delay its acquisition. EFL teaching in the Arabic countries, particularly, should help their bilingual students use CS to solve their communication problems instead of aggravating them. It should be used to handle classroom spoken discourse, including theirs and their students'. It should not monopolize the instructional process. It should rather support it to meet students' needs in the shorter and longer runs. To this effect, CS should be construed as an effective social skill that facilitates the flow of conversation between classroom interactants. This recalls Malik's (1994) tendency inculcate CS as a mirror that reflects speakers' involvement and engagement in the conversational process.

## Conclusion

CS is an eminent classroom practice whereby to realize continuity in the language and contextualize the conversational process. It represents a linguistic tool that researchers should not stop rethinking its use particularly in the non-native academic setting in relation to higher education. It can either push or pull language development. **It is a major part of the teaching and learning process and a tool whereby teachers can empower their instruction, if used appropriately. Only then can its functionality be accredited, especially in the ESL education applied to Arabic bilingual settings.**

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## Teacher Questionnaire

*I hope that you would be kind enough to fill in the following questionnaire by selecting the right options:*

---

1. What are the reasons behind the use of code-switching in the classroom?
  - A. To explain.
  - B. To fill the stopgap.
  - C. To convey intimacy.
  - D. To avoid misunderstanding.
2. What language do students think in?
  - A. Arabic.
  - B. English.
  - C. Other (-----).
3. Is it appropriate to use Arabic in an English class?
  - A. Yes
  - B. No
4. Do you think Arabic can help learning English?
  - A. Yes
  - B. No
5. Do you prefer more frequent switches of languages?
  - A. Yes
  - B. No
6. Which situation for teacher's' behavior do you evaluate best in Arabic?
  - A. Asking questions.
  - B. Responding to students.
  - C. Giving instructions.

## Student Questionnaire

*Please fill this*

*completely by selecting the options.*

*questionnaire*

1. How many languages do you speak?

A. Two

B. Three

C. Four

D. More than five

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

2. When do you speak English?

A. Only in class

B. Inside and outside the classroom

C. In school and at home

D. More ...

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

3. Is it appropriate to use Arabic in English?

A. Yes

B. No

C. More Arabic than English

D. More English than Arabic

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

4. Do you think that Arabic helps you learn English?

A. Yes

B. No

☐  
☐

5. Which languages do use in the classroom to communicate with your mates?

A. English

B. Arabic

C. Other

☐  
☐  
☐

6. Why do you choose words in Arabic to speak in English?

A. Not familiar with words in English

B. To fill the stopgap

C. Easier to speak in Arabic

D. For more emphasis

E. To avoid misunderstanding

☐  
☐  
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☐

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