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Foreword

In this edition we present 4 papers for your research and reading interest. In the first paper, co-authors Tetyana Tarnavska, Nataliia Glushanytsia, Natalia Bilous, Larysa Lyashenko and Kateryna Palamarchuk present “English for Aviation Safety: Language Training Methodology.” We hear daily so much about Aviation safety, and still, we learn of aircraft accidents and fatalities. This research identifies the crux of the problem that still exists to a worrying degree, namely the authors analyse the language-related accidents and prove that the main cause of them is not just a low level of English but the inability to conduct radio exchange in the non-native language in critical situations when the level of emotional stress increases dramatically. By establishing real life situations in role plays between pilots and air traffic control, the research contributes to the pilots and ATCs language advanced ESP language training, and therefore actual flight safety on the international air routes. Aviation English providers are encouraged to review this research and apply it in their aviation ESP courses.

The next paper is by Dr. Fahd Alalwi entitled Attitudes of Saudi Common First Year Students Towards English as a Foreign Language. The study investigated Saudi Arabian university freshmen learners’ attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language in relation to their national identity. The research found that Saudi Preparatory Year Program learners held positive attitudes towards English as a foreign language. They showed pride in their mother tongue and national identity but were keen on mastering the English language. The research suggests that students’ favourable attitudes could be attributable to their growing awareness of the importance of English as the language science internationally and their desire to introduce themselves as a new generation. The author notes other research that has opposite findings, thought the students were not enrolled in an ESP program, leading the author to suggest research needs to investigate this significant factor further.
The next paper entitled “Identifying social practices and the use of English in the Port and Shipping Management Community: A need analysis from the social-semiotic perspective” is presented by co-authors Latifa Ika Sari, Abdurrachman Faridi, Dwi Rukmini and Januarius Mujiyanto from Indonesia. Their study was aimed to identify social practices and the use of English in the Port and Shipping Management Community as part of a needs analysis in this global industry. The maritime industry has seen a significant global expansion, especially during the ongoing pandemic. As with the first article in this edition relating to training pilots and air traffic controllers, so the maritime industry needs specific and carefully tailored ESP programs. To help teachers implement professional training programs, it is suggested forums and seminars would help instructors and all concerned parties to suggest effective strategies to help improve the skills of maritime ESP learners.

The final paper in this edition is entitled “Reading Difficulties and Influential Factors Faced by Saudi Tertiary Learners,” by authors Nasser Alasmari and Najah Y. Sultan. The authors responded to reports from TOEFL and IELTS data summary that indicated that Saudi test takers’ level of reading proficiency was the lowest worldwide. Their research recommends that teachers and language instructors provide their learners with a series of strategies and vocabulary learning skills to assist them in gaining a basic knowledge of how words function so that they can use them to understand the meanings of these words once encountered in a reading, especially the ESP language.
English for Aviation Safety: Language Training Methodology

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Abstract
In aviation, insufficient English proficiency accounts for a considerable amount of fatalities. The authors analyse the language-related accidents and prove that the main cause of them is not just a low level of English but the inability to conduct radio exchange in the non-native language in critical situations when the level of emotional stress increases dramatically. Aircraft accident investigation reports enable learners to understand the pilots’ and ATCs’ language behaviour in emergency and are to be included into the curriculum for pilots and ATCs language training. The language training methodology was developed and its effectiveness was verified via experiment. The use of a systems approach enabled to design it as an integral system. The methodology helps the learners reduce the psychophysiological stress during the radio exchange in the non-native language without wasting limited time on how to share information in English, and therefore free up time to make the right decisions. The methodology’s core value is securing pilot’s and ATC’s English proficiency bearing in mind professionally important qualities necessary to conduct error-free radio exchange in the non-native language under a high level of emotional stress. It will contribute to ensuring flight safety and human factor problem solving.

Keywords: ESP, flight safety, aircraft accident investigation report, Aviation English, radio exchange, emergency, emotional stress, professionally important qualities

Introduction
Nowadays more and more aircraft accidents are caused or aggravated by human factors including language barrier (Alderson, 2009; Hazrati, 2015; Kim & Billington, 2018; Monteiro, 2018, 2019; Cookson, 2019; Mudheher, & Abdulmajeed, 2020). The increase in the capacity of passenger airliners leads to the greater number of victims of the language-related accidents.
The Tenerife airport disaster (583 killed) and Zagreb mid-air collision (176 killed) undoubtedly best demonstrate how the L1 (including L1-influenced pronunciation) can result in tragedy (Vaz, 2018).

In 1997, after the world's deadliest mid-air collision over India, Aviation English became a matter of concentration worldwide; and ICAO emphasized the importance of pilots and ACTs language training and established the PRICESG (Proficiency Requirements in Common English Study Group). The requirements were developed and the minimum level of English proficiency for pilot and air traffic controller radio communication was determined. The new regulations were intended to be brought into force in 2003, but the deadlines had to be postponed until 2011. However, the growing number of language-related accidents exemplifies that not all the pilots and ATCs of non-English speaking countries are still able to meet the ICAO language proficiency standards. Consequently, the problem remains relevant. Time alone does not remedy the situation.

At the same time, the analysis of aviation accidents and their preconditions demonstrate that the main cause of tragedies is not just the improper pilots’ and ATCs’ level of English proficiency, but their inability to use the second language knowledge in critical situations. Aircraft accident investigation reports analysis enables to understand the pilots’ and ATCs’ language behaviour in emergency and the necessity to use them in the pilots and ATCs language training. In fact, studying the fatal communication errors is not included into their language curriculum.

We also revealed that ICAO requirements do not contain development of the necessary professionally important qualities providing the reliable radio exchange in the non-native language in emergency situations.

As a result, there is a gap between the quality of pilots’ and ATCs’ language training and the ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements.

We have studied the relevant ICAO documents, PRICESG studies, publications in the fields of pedagogy, aviation English and aviation psychology, as well as the aircraft accident investigation reports and found that there is an urgent need to develop the language training program taking into account the peculiarities of pilot’s and ATC’s job.

The Institute of Aviation and Space Medicine research has shown that in critical conditions, when the nervous and emotional load of operators of particularly complex control systems increases sharply, 20% of them cannot assess the situation, and therefore do not make decisions, 10% make wrong decisions, 22% fall into a stupor and do not act, 34% perform unnecessary actions and only worsen the situation.
The need to conduct radio exchange in a non-native language causes additional nervous and emotional stress and becomes an obstacle to the operator's performance of its main professional functions (Febriantina, Marsofiyati, & Aliyyah, 2020). At the same time, the existing professional qualification requirements for pilots and ATCs call for only knowledge of the rules and procedures of radio exchange in English, but do not determine their ability to reliably control air traffic in case of deviation from standard procedures (ICAO Doc 9835-AN/453, 2004). The aircraft accident investigation reports are not used efficiently enough in the educational process. Their involvement is only informative. As a result, it can produce inconsistency and incoherence.

Therefore, the existing methodology for student pilots and ATCs language training should be revised to meet the ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements. It is especially important for non-English-speaking countries, including Ukraine. To substantiate the methodology for student pilots and ATCs language training, the current psychological and pedagogical concepts should be used.

Such a methodology will help the learners overcome the psychological barrier, reduce the psychophysiological stress during a radio exchange in the non-native language, and therefore free up time to make the right decisions.

**Literature Review**

The issues on the development of pilots and ATCs professionally important qualities, i.e. motivation; emotional stability; speed and accuracy of visual perception; distribution, switching, concentration, as well as span and stability of attention; working memory and thinking; ability to anticipate the development of the situation, to picture flight environment; to process the received information, to select proper hypotheses, and act within the time limit are widely discussed. The significant impact of pilot’s and ATC’s physiological, psychological, and physical characteristics is the focus of Wang, Pan, Si, Li & Jiang’s, 2020 research. Having studied the behaviour of pilots, they ranked the main influencing factors affecting the pilot’s intention.

Various stressors complicate the fulfilment of pilot’s and ATC’s operational responsibilities in maintaining a safe, orderly, and expeditious flow of air traffic. Under certain conditions, including language difficulties, they can even lead to burnout (Bongo, Alimpangog, Loar, Montefalcon & Ocampo, 2017; Kokarieva et.al., 2019). “In safety sensitive environment such aviation, fatigue in combination with burnout symptoms will cause degraded performance and
longer reaction times for critical tasks. This can lead to increased safety risks or can even be followed by detrimental consequences.” (Brezonakova, 2017, p. 11).

Performance shaping factors in aviation accidents and incidents were identified by O’Hare, 2006 whose experiment showed that “incidents were more likely to be attributed to failures to detect or diagnose information, whereas accidents were more likely to be attributed to failures to choose an appropriate goal or strategy”. However, the author didn’t take into account that the situations are complicated by the necessity to simultaneously conduct radio exchange in non-native language.

Raising awareness of language related factors causing accidents will contribute to aviation safety (Mathews, 2018; Karimi, Sanavi, 2014 & Cookson, 2020). We used the Simon Cookson’s list of 68 communication factors and the glossary while developing the language training methodology.

The real-life examples of current linguistic errors of pilot-ATC communication are discussed by Borowska, 2017 who presented the first comprehensive description of avialinguistics and Cushing, 1997 who explains how miscommunication has led to dozens of aircraft disasters, and proposes innovative solutions for preventing them.

Molesworth & Estival, 2015 studied the relationship between flight condition and communication accuracy by pilots across four different flight scenarios and concluded that “factors such as pilot’s workload, quality of audio signal, accent of pilot or controller, English language proficiency of operator, and failure to use standard phraseology are all thought to contribute to communication errors.” (Molesworth & Estival, 2015, p. 73)

Hazrati, 2015 considers the involvement of cultural dimensions in aviation context and also suggests paying more attention on developing intercultural communicative competence in the teaching of aviation English. “Based on cultural differences, related conventions, and diverse communication styles, air traffic controllers and pilots sometimes use English in a way that may cause confusion and misunderstanding, which in turn can result in aviation accidents or incidents” (Hazrati, 2015, p. 244).

**Research methods**

The following research methods were used:

- theoretical: analysis of publications in the field of general and aviation pedagogy and psychology, ICAO documents relating to flight safety and pilot-ATC radio exchange, aircraft accident investigation reports, and systems thinking accident analysis method;
empirical: questionnaires; interviewing and testing student pilots and ATCs; monitoring their behaviour during experimental research; pedagogical experiment to verify the effectiveness of the developed methodology;

- methods of mathematical statistics for processing the findings of the experiment. The information obtained during experimental research is mathematically processed to the level of confidence according to the Student's t-test.

**Discussion**

The aim of our research is to develop the English language training methodology and verify its effectiveness.

The reliability of pilot-ATC communication can be implemented taking into account the following factors:

- high level of professionalism and professional commitment;
- special attitude to learning English as a contributing factor to numerous accidents and incidents;
- high operating capability and physical resilience to adverse effects.

We consider that the professional training of student pilots and ATCs on the international air routes is to ensure not only the assimilation of the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities, but also the development of such mental qualities as emotional stability, attention, memory, thinking, resourcefulness, decisiveness, etc., and the process of their training cannot be organized as a simple summation of the means of professional training and other components of the educational process (Baimanova et.al, 2020). It must be a dialectically developing system.

Therefore, to develop the pilots and ATCs language training methodology, we based our research on the concepts of systemic, activity orientated and psychological approaches; personality theory, the theory of stage-by-stage development of mental actions, game and problem-based learning theories.

The systems approach and systemically important factor are particularly significant for the scientific substantiation of a training methodology as an integral system. This factor is dominant in the development of the structure and content of the training methodology because it connects all the components of the training methodology into a system, and they focus their efforts on the obtaining the intended result. Applying systems approach to identify accidents that happened in multicultural environment and reveal language related factors is significant for our research.

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At the same time, the interrelation and interdependence of the components allow to obtain the emergent effect of the training methodology as a system. Consequently, the use of a systems approach as a methodological basis for the developed training methodology allows hypothetically predetermine the possibility of obtaining the intended result, i.e., the reliability of the pilot-ATC radio exchange in the non-native language.

The psychological approach enabled to focus on the psychological aspects of pilot's and ATC's behaviour in emergency situations.

The aim of the developed training methodology is to form student pilots and ATCs reliability to conduct error-free radio exchange in emergency situations in English.

Therefore, the peculiarity of the designed teaching methodology is that, along with the four core language skills, its objectives include development of:

- motivation to perform professional activities and language errors analysis;
- emotional stability in extreme situations;
- ability to perceive and retain in memory the space and time characteristics of the flight, to recreate a model of a dynamic air situation based on information transmitted by aircraft crews in the international aviation language of radiotelephone communication;
- sustainable skills to analyse alternative models, make and implement non-standard solutions in the international aviation language of radio exchange in extreme situations;
- reliable knowledge, skills and abilities in expected and non-standard situations, which involve increased emotional stress, overload of the mental function, frequent use of long-term memory and chronic overload of working memory, and intense load on attention function;
- ability to predict the development of the situation and anticipate the result of the activity.

Taking into account the heuristic components and risk factors of pilot-ATC radio exchange, development of the professionally important qualities, will provide their efficient language activity under emotional stress, mental tension, frequent use of long-term memory, chronic overload of working memory, and constant attention strain.

The training methodology includes: analysis of aviation accidents to form the ability to analyse critical situations, using problem-search and binary methods of analysis; role-plays to simulate practical situations of air traffic control and develop dialectical and practical thinking, attention, imagination, memory, composure and other professionally important qualities; creative assignments for independent extracurricular work.

In accordance with the aim and objectives of the training methodology, the didactic principles were substantiated.
Significant attention was paid to the specific didactic processual principles of the complex control system operators professional training, i.e., strict regulation and time limitation of the actions; additional psychological stress and psychological load increase against the background of the main activity; development of psychophysiological qualities and adaptation mechanisms.

The developed training methodology includes the following methods of assessment: tests on the international aviation language of radiotelephone communication for non-standard situations; problem solving tasks, i.e.: analysis of specific situations directly related to the linguistic activity of pilots and air traffic controllers to assess the ability to recognize and eliminate radio communication errors and characterize the degree of their threat to air traffic safety; role-plays to simulate the professional environment.

Skills are applied in the best way if they were formed in conditions close to the real work-related activity. Therefore, in our research, the role-plays are the dominant assessment method.

Examples of work-related problem solving tasks based on aircraft accident investigation materials.

1. The Pan American Boeing B-747-121 aircraft did not leave the runway, the ATC knew about it. Why didn't he warn the crew of the KLM airline Boeing B-747-206B when its pilot sent the message “We are at take-off now”? Consequently, the two aircraft collided on the runway. 583 people died. Didactic task: the student pilots and ATCs face the need to justify the actions performed and find the cause of their error.

2. On 5 March, 1973, the Flying Tiger Line Boeing 747-249F, while approaching Kuala Lumpur-Subang Airport (KUL), crashed into a hill. Listen to and then read a part of the last minutes of radio exchange and find the cause of the accident. Didactic task: student pilots and ATCs must use previously acquired knowledge in real work-simulated conditions.

This accident occurred due to the fact that the numeral “two” and the preposition “to” in English sound the same. The air traffic controller relayed the message to the aircraft crew: “Take the flight level (descend) 2400”, the pilot sent a confirmation: “Okay, to 400”. The ATC did not notice the error. There are many English words with the same pronunciation but different meanings. This accident exemplifies that the pilot’s and ATC’s professional training is to take into consideration this phenomenon; and systematically include task performance focused on the ability to differentiate the meanings of such words in a specific context and prevent possible misunderstandings.

3. Read the radio exchange passage and explain the meaning of the word “hold” in all cases where it was used. Remember that the misuse of the word “hold” resulted in the plane crash.
where 34 people were injured. Paraphrase the message to avoid the possibility of misunderstanding between the ATC and the pilot.

Didactic task: student pilots and ATCs learn that some spoken English words have absolutely different meaning in aviation context.

When presenting a work-based problem solving tasks, the teacher informs the students only of the actual situation and its development. At the same time, the actions of a pilot and a controller are not analysed, and this encourages the students to activate their cognitive activity, i.e. self-actualization of knowledge, formulating a problem and its concretization, thorough study of problematic issues, developing an algorithm for correct problem solving, and implementation of a solution in similar situations. When analysing the case, the students perform the following actions: investigate the situation → formulate the problem → justify the options for hypotheses of erroneous actions of the crew or ATC. At the same time, students update all their knowledge for specific conditions.

4. Round table involving Aviation accident investigation materials discussion.

Business game plotline: in order to improve flight safety, experts gather at a round table to discuss the progress of the accident investigation, clarify the causes of the disaster, draw up a final report and develop recommendations to avoid the recurrence of similar disasters in the future.

Timing: 1 hour + debrief

Game benefits:

- learners’ opportunity to experience and test themselves in work-related situations;
- experiment and test hypotheses;
- practical skills and abilities to use theoretical knowledge;
- extensive knowledge about the causes of extreme situations and the prerequisites for them;
- willingness to investigate the causes of phenomena;
- independent decision-making ability;
- learning from analysis: ability to search, process and analyse information; compare; highlight the main points; and present the findings;
- effective teamwork;
- presentation skills;
- moral (discipline, diligence, sense of responsibility, self-confidence, self-criticism), mental and psychophysiological (logical thinking, intelligence, ability to concentrate, distribute and switch attention, adequate self-esteem) qualities.
Game participants:

- investigation group leader;
- qualified technical investigator;
- investigation group members;
- investigation technical consultants;
- flight record decoding experts;
- rescue crew member(s);
- ATC;
- pilot;
- representative(s) from the airline;
- representative(s) from the airport.

Trainer's role: the trainer plays the role of an observer noting all the mistakes to analyse them for further corrective actions.

Each participant in the game must have an aircraft accident report plan, in which he makes notes during the business game.

Game stages: due to the fact that the time for the business game is limited by the curriculum, the investigation of the accident is carried out according to a simplified scheme where attention is paid to the analysis of a pilot and an ATC’s radio communication in English.

The preparatory stage: each participant in the game is given a plan for the final report on the accident, in which they can make notes during the game. Students are to prepare reports according to their role in the game:

- general information about the accident/incident and information about the personnel;
- information about the aircraft and its technical condition at the time of the flight;
- language errors of the radio exchange;
- data on the aerodrome and meteorological information;
- navigation, landing and ATC aids;
- actions of rescue and fire brigades;
- injuries; aircraft and other damages; data on the survival rate of passengers and crew.

**Results and calculations**

In order to test the effectiveness of the developed methodology the experiment was carried out on the basis of the National Aviation University.
According to the experimental methodology, the role-plays dominated and were based on the real pilot – ATC radio exchange records. The complexity of these games should gradually increase, and the degree of extremeness of the situation should increase as much as possible up to the final role-play.

The analysis of the results of the experimental studies showed a significant improvement of General English (EG = 4.95; CG = 4.26, the level of confidence – 99.5%) and Aviation English (EG = 4.39; CG = 3.98, the level of confidence – 99.5%) (Figure 1).

The number of students who made mistakes in General English test in EG and CG before and after the experiment was compared (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of students made mistakes (%)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Essential Grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before experiment</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After experiment</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interview in Aviation English in the EG and CG before and after the experiment on a scale of 1 to 5 proved the effectiveness of the methodology (Figure 2).
Figure 2: The Aviation English interview results

The language behavior of student pilots and ATCs during the interview in CG after experiment showed the increased emotional stress and difficulties in expressing ideas. The positive results in the EG were achieved through the sustainable use of role-plays and case studies based on the aircraft accident investigation materials and reports. (Figures 3, 4 and Table 2)

Figure 3: Decision making in EG during the final role-play
During the final role-play special attention was paid to the level of motivation, since it is vital to achieve the intended effect (Rebenko, Nikolenko, & Rebenko, 2019; Hamzaoui-Elachachi, & Graia, 2014). It determines the readiness of would-be pilots and ATCs to perform their professional duties. We also assessed the emotional stability since it provides their adaptation to stressful situations. (Figure 5).

Table 2: Analysis of mistakes made in EG during final role-play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correct decisions and those that would not lead to an</th>
<th>Wrong decisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wrong information ranking according to the degree of extremeness</td>
<td>Miscommunication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We compared the professionally important indicators in both groups after the experiment:

- motivation (A)
- emotional stability (B)
- ability to recreate the image of a flight according to the information transmitted in English (C)
- the ability to rank problems according to the degree of extremeness (D)
- the ability to conduct error-free radio exchange in English in emergency situations for which standard phraseology of radio exchange is not provided (E)
- the ability to predict the development of the situation and anticipate the result of the activity (F)
- the ability to assess correctness of decisions made (G). (Figure 6)
The Student's t-test was used to confirm the validity of the study results. The formula for calculating the Student's t-test is as follows:

$$t_e = \left| \frac{\bar{x} - \bar{y}}{S_d} \right|,$$

where $$S_d = \sqrt{S_x^2 + S_y^2}$$.

In the case of sampling inequality, that is, the $$n_1 \neq n_2$$, the equation is calculated as follows:

$$S_d = \sqrt{S_x^2 + S_y^2} = \sqrt{\frac{(x_i - \bar{x})^2 + \sum (y_i - \bar{y})^2}{(n_1 + n_2 - 2)} \cdot \frac{(n_1 + n_2)}{(n_1 \cdot n_2)}}.$$
The arithmetic mean in the experimental group:
\[ \bar{x} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} x_i}{n} = \frac{163}{51} = 3,2 \]

The arithmetic mean in the control group:
\[ \bar{y} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} y_i}{n} = \frac{155}{49} = 3,16 \]

The difference in absolute values between the mean values:
\[ |\bar{x} - \bar{y}| = |3,2 - 3,16| = 0,04 \]

The equation calculation gives the following:
\[ S_d = \sqrt{\frac{24,04 + 24,7 \cdot 51 + 49}{51 + 49 - 2} \cdot \frac{51 + 49}{51 \cdot 49}} = \sqrt{0,05347} \approx 0,14 \]

Then the value of \( t_e \) is as follows:
\[ t_e = \frac{0,04}{0,14} = 0,3 \]

The number of degrees of freedom \( k = 51 + 49 - 2 = 98 \). According to the table for a given number of degrees of freedom we find \( t_{kp} \): 1,98 \( p \leq 0,05 \); 2,63 \( p \leq 0,01 \).

The Student’s t-test after the experiment was calculated. The formula for calculating the Student’s t-test is as follows:
\[ t_e = \frac{\bar{x} - \bar{y}}{S_d} \]

In the case of sampling inequality, that is, the equation is calculated as follows:
\[ S_d = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})^2 + \sum (y_i - \bar{y})^2}{(n_1 + n_2 - 2)} \cdot \frac{(n_1 + n_2)}{(n_1 \cdot n_2)}} \]

The arithmetic mean in the experimental group:
\[ \bar{x} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} x_i}{n} = \frac{216}{51} = 4,24 \]

The arithmetic mean in the control group:
\[ \bar{y} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} y_i}{n} = \frac{183}{49} = 3,73 \]

The difference in absolute values between the mean values:
\[ |\bar{x} - \bar{y}| = |4,24 - 3,73| = 0,51 \]

The equation calculation gives the following:
\[ S_d = \sqrt{\frac{29,1 + 35,6 \cdot 51 + 49}{51 + 49 - 2} \cdot \frac{51 + 49}{51 \cdot 49}} \approx 0,16 \]

Then the value of \( t_e \) is as follows:
\[ t_e = \frac{0,51}{0,16} = 3,1 \]

The number of degrees of freedom \( k = 40 + 42 - 2 = 80 \). According to the table for a given number of degrees of freedom we find \( t_{kp} \): 1,99 \( p \leq 0,05 \); 2,64 \( p \leq 0,01 \).

**Conclusion**

The English language training methodology for student pilots and ATCs was developed and its effectiveness was verified via the experiment.
As skills are applied in the best way if they are formed in conditions close to the work-related activity, the role-plays are the dominant assessment method in our research. The research outcomes contribute to improvement the pilots and ATCs language training and therefore flight safety on the international air routes.
References


Appendix 1

Pilots and ATCs’ language training
needs assessment questionnaire

Tick your answers.

1. Your work experience in aviation or Aviation English training
   □ Less than 1 year
   □ 1-5 years
   □ 5-10 years
   □ More than 10 years

2. How satisfied are you with the current pilots and ATCs’ language training?
   □ Poor
   □ Fair
   □ Good
   □ Very good
   □ Excellent

3. How much do you agree that the aircraft accident investigation materials are to be used in pilots and ATCs’ language training?
   □ Strongly disagree
   □ Somewhat disagree
   □ Neither agree nor disagree
   □ Somewhat agree
   □ Strongly agree

4. Do you consider the analysis of aircraft accident investigation materials in pilots and ATCs’ curriculum as a
   □ specialist subject
   □ separate topics within language training
   □ supplementary reading

5. If your previous answer is “specialist subject”, who, in your opinion, should teach this discipline:
   □ English teachers
   □ philologists
   □ Psychologists
   □ pilot and ATC instructors
   □ other specialists

6. In your opinion, the objectives of pilots and ATCs’ language training should include development of:
   □ the four core language skills
   □ motivation to perform professional activities and language errors analysis;
   □ emotional stability in extreme situations;
   □ short-term memory;
   □ making and implementation of non-standard solutions in English in extreme situations;
ability to work in non-standard situations, which involve increased emotional stress, overload of the mental function, frequent use of long-term memory and chronic overload of working memory, and intense load on attention function;

ability to predict the development of the situation and anticipate the result of the activity.

5. In your opinion, how should the pilot and ATC’s language behaviour in extreme situation be assessed during theoretical training?

- testing
- a role-play to simulate radio exchange in a non-standard situation
Appendix 2

The Last Minutes of Aircraft Accident at Tenerife-North Airport, 1977: Cockpit Voice Recorders Transcript

At 4:58 p.m. on March 27, 1977, when this transcript begins, the KLM and Pan Am 747s are both in queue to taxi down the runway and turn around for takeoff. The KLM aircraft is ahead of the Pan Am aircraft (Figures 1, 2). Some back-and-forth occurs initially about what Air Traffic Control considers the best way to get the KLM plane into position for takeoff, but ultimately the controllers decide to send it taxiing straight down the runway. This portion of the transcript comes from the KLM cockpit voice recorder.

Los Rodeos airport, Tenerife

1. Both aircraft taxi to end of runway 11 with the KLM in front of the Pan Am
2. KLM aircraft is ordered to the end of runway 30 and to hold position before takeoff
3. Pan Am aircraft is authorised to follow the KLM aircraft and to leave runway at 3rd exit, (C3), as other exits are blocked
4. Pan Am pilot mistakes exit C4 for C3. KLM aircraft starts takeoff without authorisation
5. Pan Am aircraft tries to get off the runway but is hit by the KLM

Pan Am Boeing 747-121
Crew: 16 (9 dead)
Passengers: 380 (326 dead)

KLM Boeing 747-206B
Crew: 14 (all dead)
Passengers: 234 (all dead)

Total fatalities 503

Figure 1. Tenerife aircraft disaster information

1705:44.6 KLM RT: Uh, the KLM 4805 is now ready for takeoff and we're waiting for our ATC clearance.
1705:53.4 APP: KLM 8705 [sic] uh you are cleared to the Papa beacon. Climb to and maintain flight level 90 ... right turn after takeoff proceed with heading 040 until intercepting the 325 radial from Las Palmas VOR.
1706:09.6 KLM RT: Ah, roger, sir, we're cleared to the Papa beacon flight level 90, right turn out 040 until intercepting the 325, and we're now at takeoff.
1706:11.08: [Brakes of KLM 4805 are released.]
1706:12.25 KLM 1: Let's go ... check thrust.
1706:14.00: [Sound of engines starting to accelerate.]
1706:18.19 APP: Okay.

Why Air Traffic Control would say "okay" after KLM has said it is taking off is unknown. Perhaps, the official investigation noted, the controller thought that KLM meant "we're now at takeoff position." But the problem is compounded in the moments immediately following, when both Air Traffic Control and Pan Am RT speak simultaneously. This causes a shrill noise in the KLM cockpit that lasts for almost four seconds and makes the following three communications hard to hear in the KLM cockpit:
1706:20.08 APP: Stand by for takeoff ... I will call you.
PA1: No, uh.
PA RT: And we are still taxiing down the runway, the Clipper 1736.
The following messages are audible in the KLM cockpit, causing the KLM flight engineer, even as the KLM plane has begun rolling down the runway, to question the pilot:
1706:25.47 APP: Ah—Papa Alpha 1736 report runway clear.
1706:25.59 PA RT: Okay, we’ll report when we’re clear.
1706:31.69 APP: Thank you.
1706:32.43 KLM 3: Is he not clear, then?
1706:34.10 KLM 1: What do you say?
1706:34.15 PA: Yup.
1706:34.70 KLM 3: Is he not clear, that Pan American?
1706:35.70 KLM 1: Oh, yes. [emphatically]


**Figure 2. Orientation of runways and taxiways at Los Rodeos Airport, Tenerife**
Appendix 3

Commonly confused words in aviation context

Make sure you understand the exact meaning of these words. Explain when they are used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergency</th>
<th>Warning</th>
<th>Alert</th>
<th>Caution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>an unexpected dangerous situation that must be dealt with immediately</td>
<td>signals, that tell you that something bad, annoying, or dangerous might happen</td>
<td>a warning to be ready for possible danger</td>
<td>a warning to be careful and trying to avoid danger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Malfunction</th>
<th>Fault</th>
<th>Failure</th>
<th>Damage</th>
<th>Defect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a fault in the way machine operates</td>
<td>something that is wrong with a machine or system which prevents it from working properly</td>
<td>an occasion when a machine stops working properly</td>
<td>physical harm caused by something or someone</td>
<td>a lack of something that means that something is not perfect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fill the gaps with the words in the box.

caution, warning, alert, emergency

1. In case of fire, ___________ the hotel guests.
2. ___________ exits are clearly marked.
3. She ___________ the boys about talking to the strange man.
4. One note of ___________, don’t let your children try this trick.
5. I’m giving you a final ___________ – don’t be late again!
6. Be on the ___________ for pickpockets in the crowds.
7. You should only ring this number in a (an) ___________.
8. We were given no _____________ of possible delays at the airport.

Ground & terrain

Explain the difference between “ground” and “terrain”.
Appendix 4

Pronunciation related error detection exercises

Pay attention to the stress in the words:

\[ \text{accident – accidental – accidentally} \]
\[ \text{incident – incidental – incidentally} \]

accident (n)  incident (n)
accidental (adj)  incidental (adj)
accidentally (adv)  incidentally (adv)
incidence (n)

Read the sentences paying attention to the pronunciation of the words in bold.

Explain the exact meaning of the words in bold.

accident – accidental – accidentally
incident – incidental – incidentally – incidence

1. She was involved in serious car accident last week.
2. For statistical uniformity only, an injury resulting in death within thirty days of the date of the accident is classified as a fatal injury by ICAO.
3. She had an accident last year.
4. She accidentally knocked over a glass of red wine.
5. I deleted the wrong file by accident.
6. Incidentally, talking of Stephen, has he ever flown the A-319?
7. These points are incidental to the main problem.
8. There’s a high incidence of crime in the area.
9. There is a higher incidence of left-handedness among boys than girls.
10. Flight recorder is installed in the aircraft for the purpose of complementing accident/incident investigation.

Listen to the sounds of the alarm systems in the cockpit. What are your actions? React as quickly as possible.

Cockpit Warning Sounds

Auto pilot disconnect  MP3
Excessive rate of descent  MP3
Incorrect takeoff configuration  MP3
Wind shear warning  MP3
Exited selected altitude  MP3
Selected altitude reached  MP3
Below glide slope  MP3
Altitude loss after takeoff or go-around  MP3
Excessive rate of descent or sink  MP3
Bank angle exceeds 35 degrees  MP3
Excessive terrain closure rate  MP3
High speed at low altitude  MP3
Appendix 5

Verb tenses misuse related error detection exercise

Put the verb “to check” into the gaps in the correct form. Discuss how mistakes can lead to an incident.

(to check)

I always ___________ it before flight.
I don’t need ___________it today, because I ___________it yesterday.
   OK, if you insist, I ___________it immediately.
   Don’t worry, I ___________already ___________ it.
I don’t think it is his fault, because I’m sure he ___________it properly.
When I saw them before the flight, they ___________it.
   Don’t forget ___________ it thoroughly!
   ___________ you ___________ it properly?
He is very scrupulous! He delves into every detail! He ___________it even when it isn’t necessary!
Look! That is what I told you! He ___________it again!
   It must ___________ monthly.
   How often ___________he ___________it?
Attitudes of Saudi Common First Year Students Towards English as a Foreign Language

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Abstract

This study investigates one Saudi Arabian university freshmen learners’ attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language in relation to their national identity. Previous research has found that teaching English as a foreign language could be perceived by the Saudi community as a threat to the national identity (Al-Essa, 2009; Al-Mizini, 2010; Elyas, 2014; Elyas & Badawood, 2016). 279 students participated in this quantitative study by responding to a questionnaire. The findings shows that the participants held positive attitudes towards EFL. Students express their high integrative motivation. Results also show that students believe that communicating in English would not brand them as unpatriotic. The findings of the present study suggest that the students’ openness towards English language and its culture, and their awareness of the importance of English for education and communication while showing pride in their own national identity are signs of the openness attitude that the Kingdom of Saudi
Arabia is witnessing. Such a positive attitude could be in part attributed to Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030, which underpins all the changes in the nation.

**Keywords:** Communication; EFL; language attitudes; motivation; national identity.

1. **Introduction**

   Saudi Arabia is undergoing a significant transformation aspiring to create a modern nation through the nation’s Vision 2030. One of the thirteen programs of Vision 2030 is dedicated to enrich the national identity as described below:

   The National Character Enrichment Vision Realization Program enriches the Saudi national character by fostering a set of values rooted in the Kingdom’s legacy and Islamic heritage, through a comprehensive portfolio of initiatives aimed at strengthening the sense of national belonging and fostering the values of tolerance, moderation, perseverance and determination. The program will define an approach centered on Saudi youth through policies designed to strengthen the values of entrepreneurship, generosity, volunteering, excellence, hard work, ambition and optimism. The program’s youth-centric policies will contribute to building the national economy and expanding Saudi Arabia’s intellectual, human and social legacy in line with the Kingdom’s leading role and ambitions at the heart of the Arab and Islamic worlds. (Vision 2030, 2017)

   Saudi Vision 2030 (2017) clearly states that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia “will endeavor to strengthen, preserve and highlight our national identity so that it can guide the lives of future generations. We will do so by keeping true to our national values and principles, as well as by encouraging social development and upholding the Arabic language” (p.17)

   English is the medium of instruction in health and science majors in post-secondary education in Saudi Arabia. This has attracted some voices in the society that see contradiction between the National Character Enrichment Vision Realization Program and teaching science in a foreign language; a strategy that, according to such advocates, could jeopardize the national identity (Al-Essa, 2009; Al-Mizini, 2010). In their investigation of the Saudi Education policy, Elyas and Badawood found out that “focus on Islamic religion, Islamic Law, Islamic “civilization” and “nation” permeating education so much so that it becomes almost entirely “Islamic Education” is likely to cause difficulties in the teaching of English which some might view as a vessel for Western and even anti Islamic values” (2016, p.71). In the Saudi Arabian context, few studies have been conducted to investigate learners’ attitudes towards English as
a foreign language since the beginning of EFL learning in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Al-Mubireek, 2020). The present study is intended to investigate students’ attitude towards English language learning at an English as a foreign language program in one Saudi Arabian university’s common first year.

A Common First Year is the first year of the majority of the Saudi universities in which all students take the same courses. Once students have successfully completed it, they select different programs and put them in order since they are enrolled in their academic programs based on their GPAs and choices. Common first year and preparatory year terms are used interchangeably in this paper to refer to the same context.

In the present study, the definition adopted for the concept of attitude, as mentioned in Gardner (1985), broadly “refers to the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning plus favorable attitudes towards learning the language” (p. 10). As put in the language learning context, Gardner and Lambert (1972) posited that language learning is a task influenced by learners’ attitudes. This necessitates that language program administrations need to understand their own language learners’ perceptions of the target language in order to help learners achieve learning outcomes of programs. Furthermore, Richards (1998) claimed that students’ attitudes towards any language can influence learning that language and that learners’ attitudes towards members of one particular language group can impact their readiness to study that language. He logically argued that since attitude is subject to change, there is much that could be done to help learners learn a second language. Likewise, language proficiency can be enhanced by learners’ favorable attitudes towards their home language and culture and the target home language and culture (Brown, 2000). However, this might be attainable only if EFL learners’ attitude, of a program, is well understood.

2. Literature Review

In his study of university students’ attitudes towards EFL with regard to how motivated they were to learn English and their appreciation their perceived national identity, Chew (2013) investigated 111 university students. He found that the learners had positive attitudes towards EFL. His findings revealed that the participants wished to speak English fluently, had high motivation to learn English by watching movies, and were open and respectful for English home culture. However, they still valued their mother tongue more, and “had a sound sense of Chinese identity with an appreciation of the value of the English language” (2013, 95).

In his study of university non-English major students, Liu (2007) investigated Chinese students’ attitudes towards learning English. He found that his participants demonstrated an
overall positive attitude. His findings showed that learners were more instrumentally motivated to learn English. He attributed this orientation to the students’ belief that English language is key to more and better opportunities for advancement. More interestingly, Liu (2007) found that students were less motivated to better know and understand the people of English language whether American or British. He referred this attitude to the participants’ understanding that their life is defined more by their proficiency level than their cultural understanding of the target language group.

Al-Mubireek (2020) conducted a study to investigate Saudi university students’ attitudes towards the use of English. He found that there was an overall positive attitude, and that students were motivated by mainly instrumental factors followed by integrative factors. An interesting finding, however, was that his participants showed a positive attitude towards learning English for social and personal advancement. He maintained that these positive “attitudes align closely with recent promotion of the Saudi 2030 vision” (p.41). However, Al-Mubireek found that the participants of his study tended to reject the idea of having the English language as the medium of instruction in the primary education or the lingua franca in the country. This could be attributable to their attachment to their Saudi national identity which regards Arabic as their national language.

In his review of Saudi attitude-related research, Farouk (2014) claimed that economy and language education policies are the two important factors driving the expansion of English language teaching in the kingdom. He concluded that there is a positive attitude towards English language and that this trend is continuing on condition that the economy is booming and the relevant policies are in place.

It is worth mentioning that English is the medium of instruction in all science and health academic programs in Saudi higher education. Saudi students mainly have to pass the common first year where courses of English skills and English for specific purpose are extensively taught. As such, it probably is informative to know how learners perceive the language they learn and through which they will continue to communicate in their future professions.

Some studies found indications of Saudi learners’ increasing positive attitude towards English. In their study on the attitude of 1,176 Saudi university students, Al-Haq and Smadi (1996) found a positive attitude towards English. They found that their identity is not negatively affected by English language. Their participants confirmed that using English language does not make them lose their identity for Westernization.

Moreover, Abu-Arafah, Attuhami and Hussein (1998, cited in Faruk, 2014) found that the majority of the participants of the study preferred English as the medium of instruction for
career-related reasons since they were students of a college of technology. In a different study of female college students’ attitudes towards Arabic and English, Al-jarf (2008) found that the overwhelming majority of the participants regarded English as superior being the language of science and technology and preferred English due to career-related reasons. Al-Zahrani (2008) conducted a study exploring the attitudes of high school male students towards English. He found that the majority of the participants had positive attitudes towards English. Although the majority of his participants confirmed superiority of Arabic over English, they showed interest in learning English as a foreign language.

Similarly, students’ positive attitudes towards English were repeatedly found in studies that were conducted in different Saudi universities, and this favorable attitude seemed to be a rising trend (Alhuqban, 2009; Alqurashi, 2011).

In his review of relevant literature, Faruk (2014, p.175) noted that “A simple comparison between the findings of the studies … reveals that the Saudis were more positive towards English in 2000s than they had been in 1990s.”

Zaid (1993) maintained that learners’ lack of motivation was one of the reasons of unsuccessful English language learning in Saudi Arabia. A number of attitudinal studies conducted in the 1990s showed students’ preference of Arabic as a medium of instruction over English for medical and engineering majors (Al-Jarf 2008). However, Aldosari (1992) conducted a study in two Riyadh universities where 150 EFL learners, participated. In his investigation to find out how Saudi university students perceive learning English as a foreign language, Aldosari (1992) found that they held an overwhelmingly positive attitude towards EFL.

Alkaff (2013) investigated attitudes of 47 foundation year female students towards learning EFL in King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah. She found that the majority of students held a positive attitude towards learning English and that they were eager to develop their English language skills.

Similarly, Alswuail (2015) studied attitudes of 100 high school students (from three different regions) towards English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia. She found her participants to have hold very positive attitudes towards English and that their attitudes were mainly attributed to practical and instrumental considerations. Alswuail, furthermore, found a significant correlation between learners’ positive attitude and engagement and their belief of their own potential to learn English.

Al-Oliemat (2019) conducted a study to investigate 108 female Dammam university students’ attitudes towards EFL. The sample was composed of English major learners. He
found that the participants have had positive attitudes towards learning English, its people and culture.

From the above, it seems that attitudinal studies had mixed results, with the majority finding positive attitudes. It is worth mentioning that the majority of the previous studies conducted in Saudi Arabia took place in the major cities Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dammam. This could be a factor affecting how learners perceive English language having been born and raised in contexts where universities have been present for more than fifty years.

The present study investigated learners’ attitudes towards English language learning in a Saudi city, once a suburb of Riyadh the capital. Recently, higher education was introduced in this city, and English has become the medium of instruction in health, science and engineering programs. The significance of the present study is that no study has been conducted in this context to the best of our knowledge. Thus, this study aimed at answering the following research question:

What is the freshman’s attitude towards English as a foreign language at Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University?

3. The Study

3.1 The context of the study

3.1.1 Participants

279 Preparatory Year Program (PYP) male and female freshmen Saudi Arabian students of Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University for the academic year 2019/2020 participated in this study. The present study is quantitatively designed in order to randomly survey selected Saudi university undergraduates from the PYP at Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University. The questionnaire was electronically formatted, and distributed to all PYP students through Whatsapp study groups, and the participants were informed to participate voluntarily by filling in the questionnaire. The responses were automatically received using Google Docs. PYP students are freshmen who intend to major in either health, science or engineering colleges after they have completed their common first year program.

3.1.2 The PYP at Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University

The Preparatory Year Program was established in 2011 by a royal directive. The purpose of the PYP is to ease the transition of the students from high school to higher education and enhance students’ skills including English language skills. In general, the admission requirements are very competitive and are based on students’ high school GPA, and two standardized tests, the General Aptitude Test (GAT) and the Scholastic
Achievement Admission Test (SAAT) (Althewini & Alkushi, 2020). In the context of our PYP, there are two tracks: the health colleges track, and the science and engineering colleges track. The former leads to the college of medicine, college of dentistry, college of pharmacy, or college of applied medical sciences, while the latter leads the students to specialize in the college of engineering, the college of computer science and engineering, or the college of sciences. The PYP is one-year long program and all courses that are studied are credit courses and grades that students attain count towards their GPA. In addition to English skills courses, students are required to study course of English for specific purposes. Moreover, compulsory courses include: biology, chemistry, physics, statistics, mathematics, computer skills, communication skills, Islamic culture, and Arabic. With the exception of the latter three courses, the medium of instruction in the PYP is English.

As for English skills courses, students are required to study six contact hours of each of reading, writing, and listening and speaking, and study nine contact hours of English for specific courses: English for medical purposes for the health track, and English for engineering purposes for the engineering track. Level two of Q: Skills for Success series is assigned as the textbook for the English skills courses. Level two is selected based on the results of students’ placement test. It has been found that the majority of the students admitted in our program score levels of A1 and A2 according to Oxford placement test. Likewise, Book one of the series Career Paths: Medical is the textbook for English for medical purposes, whereas Tech Talk is assigned as a textbook for English for engineering purposes.

The instructors of the English courses represent a wide range of nationalities. While the majority are non-native speakers of English, all instructors hold degrees in TESOL with at least three years of teaching experience.

3.2 Instrument

The Language Attitudes Questionnaire of Chew’s (2013) study, originally used in Pierson, et al. (1988), was adapted for context of the present context. It is comprised of 22 items 5-point Likert scale questionnaire, ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly agree. The items were grouped into six categories, following Chew (2013) as follows:

(1) Support of the high status of English (items 1, 6, 17, 21); (2) Personal commitment to English (items 15, 19); (3) Intrinsic/integrative motivation (items 7, 9, 11, 18, 22); (4) Confidence in using English (items 8, 16), (5) Association of English with education (items 2, 4, 13); and (6) Ethnic identity (items 3, 5, 10, 12, 14, 20).
Taking into consideration students’ level of English proficiency that is about B1-B2 upon their entry into their common first year, the questionnaire was translated into Arabic. Each statement was put in both English and Arabic to ensure better understanding of the meaning. In Chew’s (2013) study, Cronbach Alpha for the instrument was at 0.89, while in the present study the reliability obtained acceptable value of Cronbach Alpha (i.e., 0.81).

3.3 Analysis

SPSS 20 was used to conduct both the descriptive and inferential analysis of the questionnaire data. First, the questionnaire data were recorded in the program. The negatively worded items were reverse coded as shown in Table 2. Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009) stated that the process of reverse coding of negatively worded statements is both compulsory and obvious especially in multi-item categories, which include both negatively and positively worded items. For example, strong agreement to the positively and negatively worded items in category (Support of status of English) is problematic without reverse coding. Strong agreement to the positively worded item reflects positive attitude towards English whereas strong agreement to the negatively worded item reflects negative attitude toward English. Without reverse coding of negatively worded items, the group mean is neither meaningful nor representative of the students' attitude towards English.

To identify the general attitude of the PYP students towards English, the mean and standard deviation of the questionnaire items and categories were calculated and analyzed. Following the criteria set by (Polit and Hungler, 1999) in the transformation of questionnaire scores, the range of mean score is interpreted as shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean score</th>
<th>Level of agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.00 – 1.80</td>
<td>very low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.81 – 2.61</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.62 – 3.42</td>
<td>neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.43 – 4.23</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.24 – 5.00</td>
<td>very high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Overall pattern

As shown in table 2 below three statements (15, 22, 12) elicited the strongest level of agreement. The first is statement 15 (mean = 4.65, SD = .799) in which the students expressed
their wish to be able to speak English fluently and accurately. In statement 22 (mean = 4.48, SD = .781), they strongly agreed with the usefulness of English as a means of communicating with the L2 community and understanding its culture similar to Olaimat (2019). Statement 12 (mean = 4.47, SD = .860), was reverse coded as it was negatively worded. Responses of the students show that they strongly denied that communicating in English would brand them as unpatriotic. In sum, the first two statements, which received the strongest level of agreement reflect highly positive attitude toward the English language, whereas the third statement shows that the students do not conceive the English language a threat to their Saudi identity. This is consistent with Al-Haq and Smadi (1996) who found whose participants confirmed that using English language does not make them lose their identity for Westernization and showed positive attitude towards English for Saudi Arab identity, and similar result was found in Chew (2013) for the Chinese identity. This suggests that learners are becoming more aware and open to other languages with appreciation of their own identity.

The only statement which received low level of agreement was statement 8 (mean = 2.58, SD = 1.319). The statement was reverse coded as it was negatively worded. It indicates that the students mostly agree that they feel awkward when using English. However, this does not necessarily reflect a negative assessment of the English language. English in Saudi Arabia is not an official language, but rather a foreign language. Arabic is the only official language, and language of instruction in public schools as well as the language used for conducting everyday transactions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Group name</th>
<th>Group mean</th>
<th>Group Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>It is a good thing that English is enjoying a high status in Saudi Arabia.</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>1.139</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.395</td>
<td>1.328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I should not be forced to learn English.</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>1.464</td>
<td>Support of status of English</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>1.229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The use of English is one of the most crucial factors which has contributed to the success of Saudi Arabia's prosperity and development today.</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>1.481</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>1.481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>English should not be a medium of instruction in any school in Saudi Arabia.</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>1.481</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>1.481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I wish that I could speak fluent and accurate English.</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>.799</td>
<td>Personal commitment to English</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I would take English even if it were not a compulsory subject in school.</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>1.226</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>1.226</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. To read English magazines is a kind of enjoyment. 3.36 1.090
9. I love conversing with Westerners in English. 3.81 1.196
11. I like to see English-speaking films. 4.16 1.059
18. The English language sounds very nice. 3.85 1.047
22. The command of English is very helpful in understanding foreigners and their culture. 4.48 .781
8. I do not feel awkward when using English. 2.58 1.319
16. I feel uneasy and lack confidence when speaking English. 3.19 1.348
2. English is the mark of an educated person. 3.37 1.242
4. If I use English, I will be praised and approved of by my family, relatives, and friends. 3.57 1.209
13. If I use English, my status is raised. 2.84 1.328
3. When using English, I do not feel that I am Saudi anymore. 3.94 1.130
5. At times I fear that by using English I will become like a foreigner. 4.22 .998
10. The Arabic language is superior to English. 4.14 1.161
12. If I use English, it means that I am not patriotic. 4.47 .860
14. I feel uncomfortable when hearing one Saudi speaking to another in English. 3.44 1.376
20. I feel uneasy when hearing Saudi speaking English. 3.79 1.281

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Intrinsic/Integrative motivation</strong></th>
<th><strong>Confidence in using English</strong></th>
<th><strong>Association of English with education</strong></th>
<th><strong>Ethnic identity</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.93 1.03</td>
<td>2.89 1.33</td>
<td>3.26 1.26</td>
<td>4.00 1.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 279
Negative statements were reverse coded.

4.2 **Within-group patterns**

4.2.1 Support of status of English. The level of agreement to the statements of this group is neutral (mean = 3.40) bordering on high agreement (3.43 – 4.23). The item with the highest level of agreement is item 1 (mean 3.77 =, SD = 1.139) "It is a good thing that English is enjoying a high status in KSA", which reflects a positive attitude towards the English language. On the other hand, the item with lowest level of agreement was item 6 (mean = 2.91, SD = 1.464), where student expressed that they should not be forced to learn English. In other words, the PYP students mostly appreciate English as a language, yet they believe that learning English should not be compulsory. Item 21 (mean = 3.48, SD = 1.481), related to approving the use of English as a medium of instruction in Saudi schools, received high level of agreement. This result is consistent with Al-jarf (2008) and Al-Zahrani (2008) who found that the overwhelming majority of the participants in their own studies regarded English as superior
being the language of science and technology and preferred English due to career-related reasons.

4.2.2 Personal commitment to English. The level of agreement to the items of this category was very high. PYP students expressed their aspiration to be fluent speakers of English (mean = 4.28, SD = 1.01). Additionally, they stated that they would study English as a foreign language even if it is not a mandatory course (mean = 3.91, SD = 1.226). This result was also found in Chew (2013), and is consistent with the following result describing students’ integrative motivation.

4.2.3 Intrinsic/Integrative motivation. The PYP students' responses to the items in this category reflects a high level of agreement (mean 3.93=, SD = 1.03) showing that they are integratively motivated to learn English as a foreign language. The means of items 7, 9, 11 and 18 were 3.36, 3.81, 4.16, and 3.85 respectively, which reflect a high level of agreement. Students expressed that English is appreciated as a medium of communication for its sound and for the fun and enjoyment it provides. In addition, students strongly agreed to item 22 (mean = 4.48, SD = .781) "The command of English is very helpful in understanding foreigners and their culture." This item and the other items in the group, indicate that the students' appreciation and positive evaluation of English is motivated by integrative goals too. A similar finding was revealed in Al-Shamy (2012), Alkaff (2013) and Al-Oliemat (2019) whose participants showed more openness to the other culture.

4.2.4 Confidence in using English. This group contains two items (8, 16) related to the self-confidence that that PYP students feel when using English. Students' responses show a neutral level of agreement (mean = 2.89, SD = 1.33). As was discussed above, this could be attributable to the language being a foreign language rather than a second language. This finding could help language teachers and curriculum designers assess the effectiveness of the current pedagogical practices.

4.2.5 Association of English with education. This group includes three items (2, 4, 13) all of which associate English with education and social status. The responses of the PYP students reflect neutral level of agreement (mean = 3.26, SD = 1.26), which means that the respondents do not subscribe to the proposal that English is indicative of high education and high social status, similar to what Chew (2013) found.

4.2.6 Ethnic identity. This category includes six items (3, 5, 10, 12, 14, and 20). They are all related to the way the PYP students view and perceive English in relation to their national identity and native language. The mean score and standard deviation of this group is (mean = 4.0, SD = 1.13), which reflects a high level of agreement. In item 12 (mean = 4.47,
SD = .860), the students strongly refused to consider using English as a threat to their patriotism. They further expressed in item 5 (mean 4.22 =, SD = .998), that using English does not influence their Saudi identity. The students’ pride in their mother tongue is reflected in item 10 (mean 4.14 =, SD = 1.161), where they agreed that their native language is superior to English. In sum, the PYP students agreed that English did not pose any threat to their Saudi identity and patriotism. In addition, their high level of agreement was indicative of their patriotism and pride in Arabic and Saudi culture rather than a negative evaluation of English in consistence with previous studies (Al-Haq & Smadi, 1996; Chew, 2013).

5. Conclusion

In the present study, the learners have shown an openness similar to what is being witnessed at the national level. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is expanding its international and regional presence by embracing new strategies towards economy, tourism, and education. In the same time, the Saudi 2030 Vision is reinforcing the national identity through the National Character Enrichment Vision Realization Program mentioned earlier. It is nonetheless stated in Vision 2030 website that “The program’s youth-centric policies will contribute to building the national economy and expanding Saudi Arabia’s intellectual, human and social legacy in line with the Kingdom’s leading role and ambitions at the heart of the Arab and Islamic worlds (Vision 2030 website, 2017).

The current study has found that Saudi PYP learners hold positive attitude towards English as a foreign language. They showed pride in their mother tongue and national identity, but were keen on mastering English language. Saudi PYP learners’ favorable attitude could be attributable to their growing awareness of the importance of English as the science and international communication language, and their desire to introduce themselves as a new generation. An interesting study in a different Saudi university has found the opposite where PYP students showed negative attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language (Alhmadi 2014). Alhmadi (2014) conducted her study to investigate the barriers that hinder learners from mastering the speaking skill. Through a deep analysis of the curriculum studied and observation of English language classes, she argued that speaking and listening skills are neglected. Alhmadi attributed this first to the structure of the program that requires students to attend long hours of English classes of reading and writing focusing only on the material of the textbook. It is possible that when learners are forced to study a foundation year before they are admitted to their academic programs that they are demotivated and drop out from school which could be the case in Tibah university study. In contrast, in the context of the present
study, the Preparatory Year Program is part of the students’ academic study program and all the courses they study are credit courses. It is also worth mentioning that in our program, there are only two tracks: one for health colleges, and the other is for engineering colleges. In both tracks, the admission criteria are very high, and students compete in order to gain seats in the colleges in which they wish to be accepted. One more factor that might be different from the Tibah context is that in our program, not only do students study English skills courses, but they also study academic courses like mathematics and biology in English.

Moreover, the second reason Alhmadi (2014) mentioned was related to assessment. She attributed students’ lack of motivation to practice speaking to the method of assessment that is in place in Tibah preparatory year program. She stated that “since students’ assessment is based on a written exam at the end of the term, and they do not have to use the second language outside of the classroom setting, they are unable to achieve the level of proficiency required to communicate in English using the four basic language skills” (Alhmadi, 2014, p. 46). Contrary to the practice adopted by the Tibah PYP, different types of assessments are conducted in our program. Although the written exam is assigned the largest portion of the grade in order to standardize the assessment as much as possible, teachers of English skills courses assess students by different means. Students are assessed through observing their participation in teamwork, mini presentations, quizzes, take home assignments, and interviews. Furthermore, students are also required to work on projects, are invited to participate in extracurricular students’ activities, and they are even encouraged to participate in competitions either in English or in Arabic. These are educational practices that are believed to relive students from the anxiety, a factor found by Alhmadi to “collaborate to hinder students’ learning language competence, especially their communication skills in a speaking class” (2014, p. 47). It is also important to note that our placement test over the past three years have shown that the majority of students graduate from high school with A1 and A2 proficiency levels according to the Common European Framework of Reference. This was taken in to account in the curriculum of our program, at which students start with A2 level textbooks. In our program, the majority of teachers of English as a foreign language hold master’s degree in TESOL, or have CELTA, and communicative approach is the most frequently used method in our program. This could be a reason for students’ favorable attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language. Moreover, enrichment classes are offered, and office hours are announced for students who want to practice more English.
One more type of assessment is scoring a minimum of 70 in a Saudi Standardized Test for English Proficiency (STEP). It is worth mentioning that it is not known what this score represents in CEFR. However, from our experience, few students can score above 70, and this is a language requirement of two colleges: the college of medicine and the college of dentistry. Upon scoring the level of proficiency required, these two colleges interview competing students in English to select among them the most promising candidates. These colleges are the most attractive colleges for health track students and their seats are very limited, and hence students, who seek their acceptance, are believed to be more motivated to learn English.

To sum up, it is important to say that favorable attitudes towards English as a foreign language seems to be indicative of the openness Saudi Arabia is witnessing. However, further studies are needed before generalizing this conclusion.
References


Identifying Social Practices and the Use of English in the Port and Shipping Management Community: A Need Analysis from the Social-semiotic Perspective

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Abstract
The globalization and internationalization in the Port and Shipping industry have made the ability to communicate using English in multilingual and multicultural settings as one of the must-have competencies for all employees. This study was aimed to identify social practices and the use of English in the Port and Shipping Management Community as part of need analysis. This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design by involving 88 alumni of a Maritime Polytechnic majoring in Port and Shipping Management. They were asked to describe their English-related duties in the workplace by using an open-ended questionnaire. A follow-up interview was conducted with 6 recently-graduated alumni, 4 alumni who have reached the managerial level, and 2 HRD managers. The results of this study show that in the Port and Shipping Management community, English is mostly used to communicate with clients or customers, both in spoken and written form. The communication is mostly conducted in a formal setting and the status role of the participants is usually hierarchic. Therefore, the use of formal language is dominant. This study has several implications for ESP teaching. It is important to improve students’ communicative competence, to use authentic materials for teaching, and to address multimodality in the classroom to prepare students in handling real communication tasks in their future workplace.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, need analysis, social practices, Port and Shipping Management

1. Introduction
Globalization and technological advancement have brought a lot of changes in human life, including in the transportation sector. The expansion of the maritime industry and the increase of international trade have caused significant consequences towards the qualifications of human resources that are needed by the Port and Shipping industry. The great number of
foreign companies and foreign vessels has made the skill to communicate with people from
different countries and with different cultural backgrounds becomes prominent (Candel-Mora,
2015). All industries nowadays highly concern with the service quality given to the customers.
Access, communication, credibility, empathy, reliability, and responsiveness during providing
services become important issues (Song & Panayides, 2015).

The development of information technology has made the barrier across nations becomes
narrow, especially in the Port and Shipping community. People communicate frequently and
intensively with other people with different nationalities through a variety of channels (Liton,
2015). As lingua franca, English is used widely in many activities and opportunities as the
“bridge” to reach understanding among people who speak different languages. Business
communication has developed greatly in recent years in which most of the business activities
nowadays are conducted in multilingual and multicultural settings. Therefore, language and
communication skills are very important for employees’ future careers (Wasikiewicz-Firle,
2013). This has made English proficiency as one of the important skills every employee must
have to support their jobs in providing company services to the customers. Good service
quality will create customers’ positive perception which can result in customer satisfaction
(Yeo et al., 2015). Therefore, from the educational point of view, it is important to prepare
students to master the language skills that are needed in the workplace. In the vocational
education, the match between students’ language skills and industry’s expectation becomes
significant.

The role of ESP in supporting students’ communicative needs
The use of English can be different from one field to another which causing different language
needs. This is illustrated by Nunan (in Basturkmen, 2010) who compared an air traffic
controller and an engineer who have different communication needs and therefore should
receive different language courses. To support learners’ needs in conducting communication
effectively in their specific working situations, careful consideration and selection towards
English materials must be made. The main objective of learning should be the students’ ability
to communicate effectively in the workplace (Faridi et al., 2016; Rahmawati et al., 2014).

Due to the raising awareness of learners’ different needs, ESP or English for Specific Purposes
has developed greatly and gained its significance in language education, especially in the
vocational education institution. Different from English for General Purposes (EGP), ESP is designed more specifically in which it considers learners’ needs as the center of the teaching and learning process. ESP also encourages the use of authentic materials in the classroom (Bruton, in Ahmmed, 2010) to facilitate the complex nature of communication in different workplace settings and contexts (Belyaeva, 2015).

Realizing the importance of need analysis in ESP teaching, many researchers, ESP teachers or practitioners have conducted studies in various fields of industry to find students’ language needs. Ping and Guo (2019) investigated the needs of college students in the workplace by involving 100 employees from five foreign companies. The study showed that the students need the skills related to translation and sentence structures, reading and writing letters (complaint letter, invitation letter, etc), creating advertisements, conducting interviews, answering and making phone calls, delivering presentations at meetings. Lu et al., (2015) investigated the communication needs of secretaries in a bicultural academic office by involving teachers, students, and secretaries. They found that secretaries in a bicultural workplace not only need basic communication skills but must also be able to deal with the unique demands of business situations, including the cultural sensitivity and socio-pragmatic aspects of business discourse. Benavent and Sánchez-Reyes (2015) conducted a target situation analysis to design an ESP syllabus for police officers. They involved police members of different ranks to probe the relevance of the competences selected. They suggested that the ESP course for police officers should include the ability to write reports, fill in forms with information provided by citizens, suspects, or witnesses; giving a presentation at an international meeting or conference, or managing databases in English. Chan (2019) conducted more specific research by interviewing three senior executives to investigate the long-term workplace communication needs of business professionals. Her study revealed three non-technical genres that are perceived as difficult to handle: minutes of meeting, email, and socializing because the language required in these non-technical genres is harder to predict and thus harder to prepare for. Vo et al., (2016) explored the gap between workplace communication and English language teaching at a university in Vietnam. They involved 14 information technology graduates and found that 2 types of communication which are frequently used in the workplace are online texting and email (informal and formal).
However, in many institutions, ESP teaching has received many criticisms. Most of the time ESP teaching has been spent on the translation of the technical terminologies from English to the mother tongue (or vice versa) with little or lack of meaningful interaction among students (Wu et al., 2016). ESP syllabi which are too general also make teachers cannot focus on specific and relevant materials needed by students (Poedjia flirtatie & Oliver, 2017). Besides that, materials that are used in the classroom are not authentic and therefore not attractive for the students due to their inability to facilitate students’ needs to deal with real communication in the workplace (Lee, 2016). Teachers’ qualification has also become an issue, in which many of them do not have appropriate content knowledge of the field (Pazoki & Alemi, 2019; YousafZai & Fareed, 2019). B esides that, materials that are used in the classroom are not authentic and therefore not attractive for the students due to their inability to facilitate students’ needs to deal with real communication in the workplace (Lee, 2016). Teachers’ qualification has also become an issue, in which many of them do not have appropriate content knowledge of the field (Pazoki & Alemi, 2019; YousafZai & Fareed, 2019). Low pedagogical and professional competencies of teachers in teaching ESP lead to ineffective teaching instruction (Wahyuni & Rozi, 2020); poor assessment (Bharati, 2019); and a stressful atmosphere in the classroom (Zrníková, 2015).

The issue of authenticity, relevance, and realistic English tasks become significant in ESP teaching since learners are expected to be ready to engage in communication of professional working situations. However, many ESP courses failed to capture the learners’ needs and skills in workplace communication (Gu et al., 2019; Liton, 2015; Vo et al., 2016). Due to the changes and development in society, the workplace community may undergo changes too. Things that are relevant in the past, may not be relevant anymore at present. Therefore, the need to revisit the ESP syllabus has become crucial to make sure that the materials taught in the classroom are still relevant to the needs in the workplace.

From the social-semiotic perspective, conducting need analysis by investigating the social practices in the port and shipping community today can become a good start to improve ESP teaching. Social practices refer to how people act when they live and work in certain communities (Mickan, 2013). As illustrated in Figure 1, identifying social practices means trying to understand people’s activity in the relationship and communication with the members of the community. Mickan (2013, p.32) further argues that “learning a language is learning to take part in community practices with language”. Learning an additional language is considered as “a process of socialization” which implies that understanding social practices is fundamental for learners to identify, comprehend, and express meanings.
People’s participation in society can be characterized in terms of field, tenor, and mode. ‘Field’ refers to the nature of the social practice that is happening, the subject matter, or the topic that the participants are involved in. ‘Tenor’ refers to the persons who are taking part in the situation, their roles and status. ‘Mode’ refers to what role is being played by language and other semiotic systems in the situation (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Mickan, 2013). Understanding field, tenor, and mode will help us to identify the social practices in the Port and Shipping Management community.

This study was aimed to identify social practices and the use of English in the Port and Shipping Management Community. The implications in language classroom will also be discussed. Social practices in this research refer to people’s practices of working in the Port and Shipping field which constitute social behaviour or process of meaning in which English is used. This study has several significances to the field of language teaching, especially in ESP. Firstly, understanding the social practices in the Port and Shipping Management field can become a valuable reference to improve the ESP teaching syllabus. Secondly, the result of this study may help the lecturers to prepare teaching materials that are more relevant to students’ needs. Finally, in the long term, industries will get a significant benefit if the graduates have the competence that matches their needs and demands.

2. Methodology

This study is qualitative in nature in which the authors attempted to explore and describe the social practices and the use of English in the Port and Shipping management community. Port and Shipping Management is one of the departments in Politeknik Ilmu Pelayaran Semarang.
It is a maritime polytechnic in Indonesia which is organized by the Ministry of Transportation. The graduates have opportunities to work in the field of Port and Shipping management such as in the port authority, logistics company, export-import company, freight forwarding company, ship agency, shipping company, etc.

**Participants**

To identify the social practices and the use of English in the Port and Shipping Management community, the researchers involved 88 alumni of a Maritime Polytechnic majoring in Port and Shipping Management to describe their English-related duties in the workplace by using an open-ended questionnaire. The researchers then interviewed 6 recently-graduated alumni and 4 alumni who have reached the managerial level in their career to obtain more detailed information. To gain perspectives from the industry or stakeholders, the researchers also involved 2 managers of human resource development from 2 companies related to Port and Shipping.

**Data Collection**

The researchers collected data by using a questionnaire using a google form to ask the participants to describe their English-related duties in the workplace. Some parts of the questionnaire required the participants to choose several options (using checkboxes), and some parts of it required the participants to describe and elaborate their answers (using long answer text).

There are 5 sections that must be completed by the participants. The first section was about general information of the participants, such as name, telephone number, the present company that the participants work at right now, and their position. The second section explored the use of English in the workplace. The third section explored the documents which the participants have to handle in the workplace. The participants were asked to mention various types of reports, letters, forms, or other documents handled by them. The fourth section investigated the participants’ activities in the workplace. They were asked to describe 12 activities that are commonly done. The list of activities was developed based on Halliday’s types of socio-semiotic activity (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 37). In the fifth section, the participants were asked to describe the language skills or knowledge that are needed based on their working experience in the field of Port and Shipping Management. They were also asked whether they were willing to be involved in a follow-up interview to enrich the information obtained. Ten
participants then voluntarily joined the interview via telephone. The interview lasted for 15 to 25 minutes. The participants were asked to describe their daily duties and the use of English in their workplace. The researchers also interviewed 2 managers of human resource development from a logistics company and a port management company to obtain the stakeholders’ perspective about the use of English. One of the interviews was conducted face-to-face, and the other one was conducted via telephone.

**Data Analysis**

After obtaining all data, the researchers began the data analysis. The questionnaires were recapped using Microsoft Excel and the interviews were transcribed. The researchers read the recap of the questionnaire and the interview transcript several times to find similar themes of social practices. The researchers used the framework of social semiotic activity by Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) to identify the social practices. After identifying the social practices, the researchers identified the field, tenor, and mode of each social practices and describe each of them.

**Results and Discussion**

As an international language, English is widely used for communication in business settings. In the work fields related to the Port and Shipping Management, the role of English is highly important. As shown in Figure 1, the result of the questionnaire revealed that 13% of the participants always use English in their workplace, while 44% of them said that they often use English and 36% of them admitted that they sometimes use English for communication. Only 7% said that they rarely use English in the workplace.

![Figure 2. The frequency of using English at the workplace](image-url)
During the interview, the HRD managers explained that English is important especially for those who have reached the managerial level in their career since they have to be able to communicate fluently and accurately both in the spoken or written mode. However, it is not only the managers who need English proficiency. Staff in the agency or logistics field also need good English to communicate with clients or customers. They have to do coordination and negotiation related to the company’s services via email, telephone, and face-to-face communication. As seen in Figure 2, the participants use English mostly to communicate with clients or customers (56%).

![Chart showing communication types]

**Figure 3. The people whom the participants communicate using English with**

For those who work in foreign companies, they also need English to communicate with their bosses or their supervisors. Sometimes they also use English to talk with their co-workers. The participants who work in a company related to port management also require good English proficiency to understand regulations or laws related to their work fields.

**Social Practices and the use of English in the Port and Shipping Community**

From the social-semiotic perspective, identifying social practices is very important to understand the use of language in a community in which the combination of field, tenor, and mode will determine different uses of language (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). In this study, the researchers identified 12 social practices to describe the use of English in the Port and Shipping Management community.

1. Explaining ideas supported by charts, pictures, audios, or videos.
Explaining ideas is usually done in a meeting in spoken mode. This activity is typically conducted by senior staff or managers. When explaining ideas, someone needs the ability to describe something and to explain it as well. The goal of this activity is to make other people understand something. In doing so, the speaker does not only rely on words, but can also utilizes charts, pictures, audios, and videos to support the explanation. The speaker can use “multimodal text” which combines written text and visual text which can be more interesting and convincing for the audience. Since the activity is conducted in a formal setting, it is important that the speaker use formal language.

2. Explaining a plan supported by a timeline, diagram, or flowchart.
Explaining a plan can be done in spoken or in written mode. The participants sometimes have to explain the upcoming activity to their supervisor as well as to the clients via telephone or direct communication. They can also give an explanation in written mode using emails or text messaging application. The use of a timeline, diagram, or flowchart can help the speakers convey their message. Similar to explaining ideas, explaining a plan also requires the use of formal language, in which the politeness of language must be maintained. However, explaining a plan can also be done by the supervisor to the staff. In this case, the language used might be slightly different in which the explanation may contain instruction and will use imperative clauses as the realization of command. Beside imperative clauses, the use of transition words (e.g., first, second, third, now, next, then, finally, etc) and future tense are significant.

3. Reporting the progress of activity (e.g., stevedoring activity, ship berthing, ship inspection) to the supervisor or the clients supported by photos or videos.
Reporting the progress of an activity can be conducted either in spoken or in written mode. The activity can be reported when it is still ongoing or when it has been completed. The use of tenses will show the difference. Some of the participants have duties to make daily reports, weekly reports, and monthly reports in which they have to be fully aware of the use of tenses. Similar to explaining a plan, the participants can report the progress of activities directly by using telephone, emails, or text messaging applications (e.g WhatsApp, WeChat, etc). The advancement of technology, especially mobile and internet technology, has changed the way how people report or share information. A long time ago, people report using written text and images. Nowadays, people can attach photos or videos to support the information given. The addressee can also receive the report immediately and can give respond immediately.
Reporting activity then is not always monologic, but can also be dialogic. It may involve an intense dialogue between the speaker and the receiver, even though it is done in written form using text messaging applications.

4. Promoting the company’s services to clients/customers.
Promoting the company’s services can be conducted in spoken mode during a business meeting, seminar, or exhibition, and also in written mode using emails sent directly to the clients or customers. In doing this activity, the participants have to be able to describe in detail the profile of the company and the services or products that are provided. They also have to describe the benefits or advantages to the clients or customers if they use their company’s services. In this context, the use of persuasive language is essential in which the speaker must give evidence to convince the audience, such as pictures or photos, videos, statistical data, and customers’ positive reviews. When convincing the audience, the speaker tries to bring the audience closer to his position and to build a good relationship. Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) call this situation as “orientation towards tenor” in which the speaker concerns with maintaining the relationship with the addressee.

5. Reporting problems, incidents, obstacles or potential risks.
During a business activity related to Port and Shipping Management, problems may happen sometimes. For example, when there is a delay in delivering goods due to incomplete documents, when there is an incident during the ship’s berthing at the Port, or when there is damage on cargo due to improper container lashing. Therefore, the ability to report problems or incidents accurately is important. Reporting problems can be done in spoken mode (reporting directly to supervisor or clients via telephone) or in written mode (completing incident report form). The use of the past tense to describe the incidents or problems which had happened will be very important. The use of informative language with accurate time markers and appropriate logical connectors is also significant since the participants have to report in chronological order.

In relation to problems, there are also potential risks that have to be anticipated and discussed before they appear. In this case, modality and conditional sentences play a very important role. When reporting problems or incidents, the participants can use photos or videos to make the report more understandable and convincing.
6. Sharing experience with co-workers or supervisors.
Sharing is one of the important activities in the workplace. Unlike the other activities that have a formal setting, sharing involves a less formal situation. Instead of hierarchic, the status role or the social role of the participants is equal. Therefore, it is usually dialogic in which the participants have equal turn-taking to engage in conversation. The orientation of “sharing” is focusing on tenor. It means that the participants are concerned with the relationship between them (the speaker and the addressee). The language used in sharing activity will be more casual, in which the topics can range from the serious one (problems at work) to a more casual one (movies, books, hobbies, etc).

7. Giving instruction to the staff or team members.
Giving instruction is typically done by someone who has authority. Usually, the speaker is superior to the listener. It can be from a supervisor/boss to his/her staff, or from a chairperson to his/her team member. In this case, the use of imperative clauses will be dominant. Since the status role is unequal or hierarchic, instruction is usually monologic in which the listener will listen to the instruction attentively and follow it without arguments. Turn-taking is minimal and the setting is formal. Besides given in spoken mode, instruction can also be given in written mode in the form of standard operating procedures or work instructions that have to be followed by all members of the organization.

8. Explaining regulation/procedure
There are many regulations related to the field of Port and Shipping Management, including International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), the International Convention for Prevention of Marine Pollution for Ships (MARPOL), the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), and the International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG Code). In addition to that, there are Indonesian regulations (laws) and the ministry’s decrees that have to be followed. More specifically, every company will have procedures or work instructions that become the guideline for all employees when working. For those who are at the managerial level, explaining regulation or procedure is something that they have to do sometimes. Different from giving instruction that tends to be monologic, when explaining regulations, the situation can be dialogic even though it is conducted in a formal setting.
9. Participating in discussion during a meeting
Discussion is an activity that the participants do very often, typically in spoken mode. The situation of discussion is usually formal if it is conducted in a meeting. However, there are several situations of discussion that are less formal. It depends on the persons involved in the situation (tenor). Discussion is usually conducted dialogic in which the participants take the turn to speak. The participants listen to other people's ideas/arguments, review them, and convey their own ideas/arguments. To be successful in participating in a discussion, the participants need more than just English proficiency. Communication strategy also plays a crucial role in affecting the effectiveness of a discussion. The topics of discussion in the field of Port and Shipping Management are actually very broad. The topics can be about the ship operation, the cargo operation, the port operation, and problems related to those operations. More specifically, in the logistic sub-field, participants usually talk about freight forwarding activity, export and import activity, problems related to delivery and distribution of goods.

10. Asking customers’ review about the company services
Asking the customers’ reviews about the company services is actually part of exploring activity which is aimed to promote services. This activity is usually done in spoken mode by asking questions directly or in written form by using questionnaires or emails. This activity is usually conducted in a formal setting. The use of interrogative clauses is dominant in which politeness and other communication strategies must be taken into account. The concern of this activity is the relationship between the speaker and the addressee (tenor).

11. Asking information to a more knowledgeable person
For a new employee, asking for information from a more knowledgeable person is very important. In this context, the status of the participants is not equal. One person has more knowledge than the other person. Asking information is a part of exploring activity in which the focus of this activity is the field. The speaker’s goal is to obtain information from the addressee. In this activity, the use of interrogative clauses is important.

12. Escorting clients/customers during a business visit
On some occasions, the participants might have to escort clients or customers that visit their company for a business meeting. This duty is not only done by those who are at the managerial level, but also by the staff. The orientation of this activity is towards tenor which means that
the objectives of the situation are concerned with maintaining a good relationship between the participants. The activity is typically dialogic and conducted in a less formal setting. The participants may have a casual conversation with clients/customers with possible topics such as local cuisine, interesting places to visit, culture, etc.

**Pedagogical Implications**

Understanding the social practices and the use of English in the Port and Shipping community has several implications in ESP teaching. The first is the need to develop students’ communicative competence. The concept of communicative competence has been discussed by several prominent scholars. It was Hymes (1967) who criticized Noam Chomsky (1957) by arguing that language cannot be separated from context, therefore it is important for language users to have the-so-called “sociolinguistic competence” to understand the rules for using language appropriately in context. Celce-Murcia (2007) then developed a model of communicative competence which consists of six competences that are interrelated as seen in Figure 3 (Celce-Murcia, 2007).

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 4. The schematic representation of ‘communicative competence’ (Celce-Murcia-2007)**

Communicative competence refers to the ability of language users to use English and interpreting the language appropriately according to the situations and show suitable behavior to respond in the cultural context of communication (Poolsawad et al., 2015). It is important that language learners are able to interact in unpredictable multicultural contexts and adapt to various communities and types of community (Nunn, 2007). Communication in the workplace involves a very complex process of making meaning in which linguistic competence alone will not be enough to overcome challenges and obstacles in various situations. Moreover, if
someone has to conduct communication with foreigners to do business negotiation, respond to complaints, or promote his/her company services, he/she will need more than knowledge about grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation. Socio-cultural competence, interactional competence, strategic competence, discourse competence, and formulaic competence become fundamental in supporting students’ communication tasks in the future.

Therefore, it is important that teachers also address other competences during the process of teaching and learning. Students must be prepared to handle communication in multicultural settings. Knowledge about the culture of the target language must be integrated into language instruction to build students’ cultural awareness (Reid, 2015). When conducting communication, students must be aware of the tenor or who is taking part in the situation. The selection of language will be influenced by the status roles (power), the familiarity (social distance), and the institutional role. The politeness strategy then also becomes important since students might conduct intense communication with clients/customers as the company’s representative. In this context, students must be aware of the choice of using formal or informal language so that they can select the appropriate language to be used in various situations in the workplace.

Interactional competence is also essentials in which students’ skills to conduct interaction with other people, including information exchanges, interpersonal exchanges, expression of opinions, feelings, problems, future scenarios, and turn-taking system can support students to achieve the communication goals. When having communication with clients/customers, students need skills such as opening and closing conversations, establishing and changing topics, collaborating, and backchannelling. Those skills are rarely addressed in traditional language courses. Nevertheless, they are very important in business communication.

Communication strategies become the next important thing. Communication strategies can make someone aware of his/her language problems or linguistic shortcomings and overcome the problems to prevent communication breakdown (Kuen et al., 2017). Besides linguistic competence, communication strategy is important to achieve autonomous language learning and to improve the speaking skill (Rastegar & Gohari, 2016). Formulaic competence can help students in improving speaking fluency. It helps to reduce the speaker’s linguistic burden since it utilizes fixed and prefabricated chunks of language. For example, when promoting the company’s services, expressions such as “we have experience and expertise in providing…”,
“our team will be happy to assist you”, “we specialize in…” will be useful for students. In business communication, there are various formulaic expressions that can be learned and practiced by students. The discourse competence which is placed in the middle of the schema shows the intersect of other competences. It refers to “the selection, sequencing, and arrangement of words, structures, and utterances to achieve a unified spoken message” (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 46). It is important that students understand the generic structure of discourse in business communication, for example, report, explanation, discussion, promotion, service encounter, etc.

The second thing that needs to be addressed in ESP classroom is multimodality. The advancement of technology has brought fundamental changes in the way people communicate. People do not only use written text to convey information or to make meaning but may also utilize pictures and videos. In professional communication, there is no clear-cut boundary between spoken and written modes. The choices of the communication channel are very wide in which people may use the telephone, video-conference, emails, text messaging application, or even face-to-face in conducting communication. It is said that communication is multimodal (Fraiberg, 2018). Traditionally, ESP has dealt with the exploitation of written text to deliver information. Vocabulary is built from reading specialized text and finding the meaning of difficult words. In this context, learners are seen as passive recipients that follow teachers’ instruction to read and complete vocabulary and grammar exercises (Plastina, 2013). Due to the trend of multimodality in today’s communication, the traditional way of teaching must be changed.

When reporting an activity, for example, the participants do not only employ written text, but may also use pictures, audio, or video to support the information given. When listening to an explanation in a meeting, the participants may listen to a verbal explanation which is accompanied by a diagram, flowchart, photos, or videos. In relation to ESP teaching, learning activity can no longer be seen as a process that focuses on language only, but learning activity may involve various or combination of modes. For example, teachers can use video to teach new vocabularies in which students can learn the pronunciation of the words, as well as the meaning. They can even learn the context of using the words. It becomes a challenge for the ESP teachers to explore the teaching materials which best support students’ learning to achieve pedagogical aims. The use of videos for teaching can expose students to authentic language
which is related to real-life experience and therefore can bring positive effects to students’ language proficiency as well as motivation in learning (Milosevic, 2017).

The use of authentic materials in ESP classroom becomes the third important thing to be addressed. Wang and Choi (in Shooshtari et al., 2017) defines authentic materials as materials used in genuine communication in the actual world, and not specially prepared for the teaching and learning of English in the classroom. Authenticity can bring the classroom closer to real-life language use in the professional working situation, thus can make language learning more meaningful, challenging, and motivating for students (Danilina & Shabunina, 2018; Klimova, 2015). It can also develop learners’ autonomy and foster students’ communicative competence in the real working situation (Shuang, 2014).

In the Port and Shipping Management community, teachers can use various authentic documents to be used in the classroom, for example, ship’s certificate, cargo certificate, emails from customers, Bill of Lading, stowage plan, cargo manifest, statement of fact, invoice, shipping instruction, packing list, delivery order, air freight documents, sea freight documents, declaration of safety, port clearance, etc. The documents communicate messages of different kinds, content, length, and have different aims and purposes. Teachers can carefully select the materials and use them for pedagogical purposes in the classroom (Danilina & Shabunina, 2018). However, when selecting materials, teachers should consider several aspects, such as the level of difficulty and the people whom the students will communicate with, whether they are native, non-native speakers, or combinations (Badger & Macdonald, 2010).

The best practice for using authentic materials is to integrate them into tasks in the classroom, in which the purpose of students’ activities should be to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form (Nunan, 2006). There are three phases of the task-based lesson as proposed by Ellis (2009) which can be adapted for this learning context: pre-task, during task, and post-task. In the ‘pre-task’ phase, the teacher can show students examples of authentic texts used in the workplace setting, for example, letters of complaints, shipping instructions, advice of shipments, etc. The teacher then explains the purpose of the texts so that the texts will be ‘make sense’ and meaningful for students. In the ‘during task’ phase, the teacher asks students to observe and analyse the language features of the texts, including the vocabulary (word choice), the grammar, the useful expressions, etc. Students learn that different selections of wording
will have different meanings and serve different purposes. After students are familiar with the texts, they can start to compose their own texts. The example of texts given by the teacher during the ‘pre-task’ phase can become a model that students can follow. In the ‘post-task’ phase, the teacher can give feedback and encourage students to reflect on their tasks. The teacher can also give another task to allow students to repeat their performance.

3. Conclusion
The globalization and internationalization in the Port and Shipping industry have increased the qualifications of human resources who want to join the industry. Being able to communicate using English effectively and accurately in multilingual and multicultural settings is one of the must-have competencies. In vocational education, it is important to prepare students with the competencies they need in their future workplaces. Identifying social practices and the use of English in the Port and Shipping Management community as a part of need analysis is fundamental. Understanding how English is used in the social practices in the field of Port and Shipping Management can be a reference to improve the ESP instruction to cater students’ needs and to fulfil the demand of the industry.

The results of this study show that in the Port and Shipping Management community, English is mostly used to communicate with clients or customers, both in spoken and written form. The communication is mostly conducted in a formal setting and the status role (power) of the participants is usually hierarchic. Therefore, the use of formal language is dominant. Communication in the workplace involves a complicated process. To be able to do their tasks well, linguistic competence is not enough for students. It is important that teachers address all competences: socio-cultural competence, interactional competence, strategic competence, discourse competence, and formulaic competence.

The advancement of information technology has changed the way people communicate. Communication nowadays is multimodal in which people use written text, as well as visual images (photos/diagram/charts) and audio-visual (videos) to convey messages. This condition has brought significant implications in ESP teaching in which teachers should address multimodality in the ESP classroom. The utilization of various teaching materials and media will bring a lot of benefits for students. Teachers should not only use written text as the learning resources, but also pictures, audios, or videos. The use of authentic materials and activities is
also important since it can improve learners’ motivation, autonomy, and communicative competence to handle real communication tasks in the future.
4. References


Reading Difficulties and Influential Factors Faced by Saudi Tertiary Learners

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Biodata
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Abstract
This study is placed within the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) reading skill and strategy research in a Saudi context. Its main purpose was to shed light on foreign language learning theory as far as reading difficulties are concerned. It also aimed to provide pedagogical
recommendations for reading instruction for the tertiary levels. The subjects for this paper were 72 Saudi students at fourth-year level, majoring in English, at Khulais faculty at the University of Jeddah. Two reading tests were used to identify those with reading difficulties and a questionnaire was used to highlight the most common reading difficulties and their causes. Results showed that most of the participants were suffering from various difficulties related to both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects. The most commonly identified problematic issues the informants suffered from and voiced as reasons that cause their reading low level are linguistic, personal, and academic. More interestingly, results displayed the high level of awareness the Saudi learners have about their own reading difficulties as they effectively identified the causes of their reading problems which lends strong support for other researches call for more focus on the “learner” as the center of the learning approach. Furthermore, the current paper includes pedagogical implications and recommendations that may be accounted for as helpful guidelines for educational parties and stakeholders when taking actions and considering remedial measures in order to solve such problems and thus improve the reading level of the learners.

**Keywords:** reading strategies, reading comprehension, reading difficulties, EFL learning

**Introduction**

Thousands of people around the world use English as a second language (ESL)/foreign language (EFL). Examples of such use include sending and receiving emails, conversing with tourists, applying for jobs, etc. This urges many governments to admit the English language as a compulsory subject in their academic institutions and to try to support the learners to acquire it effectively and reach the proficiency level needed to achieve academic and career success. One area that researchers have shed light on in the field of EFL/ESL is the improvement of reading skills. The development of this skill becomes more and more critical and substantial because of technological advancements and the bulk of information on the internet being available only in English. In every respect, Grabe and Stoller (2011) maintain, “English continues to spread, not only as a global language but also as the language of science, technology and advanced research” (p. xiv). However, according to the same authors, reading proficiency in a second or a foreign language is not likely to develop as “easily” or “completely” as it seems to do in a native language.
Statement of the Problem

The question investigated by the present research is based on the fact that most Saudi tertiary students majoring in English have difficulty in acquiring the reading comprehension skills needed to understand the relevant ideas, draw inferences and predications, determine the meaning of vocabulary from context, recognize the author’s purpose and identify relations between sentences (Al-Qahtani, 2016). They tend to work much harder than necessary, aiming to understand every single word they read. This makes it necessary to examine the reading difficulties Saudi learners face in order to come up with remedial suggestions that may improve their reading skill.

Significance of the Study

Even though reading is a seemingly widely researched area dating back many centuries, and thousands of papers have been written on the subject, the current study has its own place in the literature, based on two main reasons that make it novel in the area. Reading skill has been chosen as an area of investigation based on a recent concerning statement by Al-Qahtani (2016), who complains that reports from TOEFL and IELTS data summary indicate that Saudi test takers’ level of reading proficiency is the lowest worldwide (IELTS, 2012; Educational Testing Services, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013). The University of Jeddah is a newly established institution in an environment where investigations and research are still rare. All research studies in this setting will be highly informative regarding the samples. Thus, this study is meant to inform university teachers of English of the different types of reading difficulties that are encountered by EFL learners when going through these activities, and it will put teachers in a better position to diagnose the causes of the reading difficulties and to offer appropriate remedial work when necessary.

Literature Review

Nature of Reading

Providing a unified definition for reading skill seems to be as difficult as the act of reading itself. This difficulty is owed, according to Hadi and Priyana (2018), to the existence of various and complex definitions proposed by researchers. Stephenson and Harold (2009), for instance, define reading as a complex activity that necessitates the interaction between the information decoding/processing skill (bottom up skills), on the one hand, and the incorporation of background knowledge that is based on social experience, on the other hand. They add that
readers make use of their social, cultural and personal knowledge in order to understand a text. Reading can also be defined with reference to the purpose of doing this activity. It can be simply an attempt to extract the information from a text and understand the message it includes. In educational settings, reading is a widely practiced skill, given the bulk of the required activities that students frequently perform through reading, as they are assigned to read different written documents for different purposes. This leads Kasim and Raisha (2017) to consider reading as the most substantial skill that students should develop if they want “to learn new information, to gain access to alternative explanations and interpretations and to start the synthesis of critical evaluation skills” (p. 309).

**Reading Comprehension Difficulties**

In general terms, Samad et al. (2017) summarize in three major points the reading problems that EFL learners struggle with. The first is related to poor vocabulary and background knowledge. The second has to with grammatical knowledge, while the third is the deficit in the reading strategies these learners employ. In another vein, reading and comprehending texts in the mother tongue is different from that in a foreign language. It appears that most readers are able to understand texts in their native language quite effectively, for a variety of reasons. The first has to do with the knowledge of the code and the fact that certain combinations of items are more likely to occur than others, in addition to the knowledge of the topic as well as the lexical, syntactic and rhetorical devices that guide readers to comprehend a written text as efficiently as possible. Unfortunately, foreign language learners are still in the process of acquiring this knowledge and it is not clear whether explicit training in guessing and using contextual and other clues to meaning will actually help them to understand a text (Grabe & Stoller, 2011).

Many research studies into reading difficulties have been conducted in various Arab countries as an ELF setting. Al Khawaldeh (2012), for instance, tries to identify the perceptions of Jordanian students about the different problematic areas regarding reading. The author asserts that these students suffer from such problems as non-familiarity with the vocabulary items, and the discrepancy between the learners’ authentic life and the reading materials that these learners are instructed to go through, which intensifies the incongruence between the learners’ prior knowledge and the content of the passage. The same subjects also raise the problem of their teachers’ “mal-practices” as well as the methods they adopt while teaching reading, which do not fit their levels and preferences. In Oman, things do not differ that much given the low level of performance in reading, as indicated in the research. In effect, poor test results were reported
in national reading exams, where most of the grades range from D to F (Al Khamisi, 2014). The same author highlights difficult vocabulary items and the failure to automatically associate sounds with words as the most frequently encountered problems by the Omani students. O’Sullivan (2009), however, has Emirati students as participants in his study and attributes the reading problems that these students suffer from to two basic reasons. The first involves the difficulty of letter and word identification, while the second is related to poor knowledge of vocabulary items inserted in a given passage. Kayaoglu and Turgut (2011) attribute EFL learners’ struggle in reading and comprehending to the “failure of conception” of what reading really means and add that the main aim of these learners is limited to understanding the words and grammar of a given passage or a text. They assign this misconception to the practices and processes teachers use to teach reading, which could be the cause of many problems the learners encounter.

In a Saudi setting, researchers such as Raihan and Nezami (2012) investigate the reading difficulties experienced by Saudi students at Najran University in order to find reasons that explain the poor performance of these students in reading comprehension. Results of their research indicate spelling and pronunciation problems as the most frequently encountered difficulties. Likewise, Rajab and Al-Sadi (2015) conduct an empirical research study on the reading habits and interests of Saudi University EFL learners and highlight the lack of motivation and interest in “academic reading” as one of the main reasons explaining the failure of these learners to reach a high level of performance in reading.

In his attempt to answer the question “Why do Saudi EFL readers exhibit poor reading abilities?”, Al-Qahtani (2016) examines the comprehension strategies and reading skills used by a group of university EFL Saudi learners and comes up with the following problems: inability to understand meaning; limited range of vocabulary items; linguistic issues such as spelling and pronunciation; lack of motivation; no further reading at home; difficulties in syntactic parsing, skimming and scanning; the inability to predict or summarize; and a reluctance to use prior knowledge.

**Influential Factors in Learners’ EFL Reading Skill Development**

The reading ability of the EFL learner is influenced by several factors:

- **Complexity of the Reading Passage** The complexity of the reading text is one of the factors that influence learners’ reading comprehension. This factor itself is influenced by the learners’ “competence in the FL[foreign language], especially at the fluency level, which reflects their ability to comprehend and apply different meanings. According to Dennis (2008), acquiring
the bulk of vocabulary items helps learners explain unknown words through applying the opinions of context.

**Environmental Influences** The second factor that may influence the comprehension of a given passage has to do with environmental conditions. Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) claim that reading comprehension is hampered if the reader is situated in an “unorganized” place and the focus on reading is less likely to happen. However, if the reading takes place in a “safe environment”, their reading ability will be much better and thus comprehension takes place.

**Anxiety During Reading Comprehension** A difference in the reading motive may also affect reading comprehension. Even though learners react differently to exam situations, those who experience such feelings as anxiety and pressure may not fully understand the passage and thus no comprehension occurs.

**Interest and Motivation** Some learners are not particularly concerned about their reading, while others are. The extent to which learners’ intrinsic motivation propels them toward this skill enhancement will certainly influence their reading habits as well.

**Decoding or Word Recognition Speed** This factor is pertinent to those who are classified as slow readers, who find it difficult to speedily decode a word or recognize meaning. Again, Dennis (2008) values the importance of acquiring as much vocabulary as possible in understanding and clarifying meaning in the fastest way possible.

The interest in conducting the current research originates from the almost common agreement that in EFL settings, learners struggle to comprehend the given readings. The aim of this research is to add to the reading literature about a new, unexplored setting, that is, the University of Jeddah. To this end, it intends to answer the following questions:

1. What are the most common reading difficulties the Saudi learners at Jeddah University suffer from?
2. What are the reasons that justify the reading comprehension level of the Saudi learners at Jeddah University?
3. To what extent are the Saudi learners at Jeddah University aware of their difficulties?
Method

Subjects
Out of the general population of 156 students in their fourth year majoring in English at the university of Jeddah, 72 students were deliberately selected to participate in the conduct of this research. The selection of this level is justified by the assumption that learners at this stage of education have mastered the language and will be proficient enough to be granted a diploma in few months, and it is a serious issue if they are still encountering language difficulties. It is worth noting that these students volunteered to sit for two reading tests and only those who failed the tests (N=72) were administered a questionnaire afterward. This population has difficulties in reading skills. These subjects, who are Saudi EFL learners studying in the four-year Bachelor of Arts (BA) program at the University of Jeddah, are potential teachers of English in Saudi academic institutions in the coming years. They are all male students whose ages range from 22 to 26.

Selection Procedure
The procedure for selecting the informants started by raising the students’ awareness of the importance of reflecting on the questions in the most credible way and that the information they provided would be used for strictly scientific purposes and would have nothing to do with their own marks or ever affect their results in any way. Then the students (N=156) were handed a sheet (Appendix A), which comprised two questions that would reflect how they perceived their level in reading. Only those who evaluated their level as low and reported that they faced difficulties in reading (N= 97) took the two tests (Test 1 and Test 2) (Appendices B and C, respectively). The average of each student was calculated by adding their marks in the two tests and dividing them by 2. Only those whose scores equaled 11 or less (N= 72) were administered the questionnaire (Appendix D).

Instruments
Two instruments were used for data collection. The first includes two reading tests (Appendices B and C), which were meant to measure the participants’ reading comprehension skills in this study through the use of two passages, one of which was chosen from the international test (TOEFL) and the other one from an English coursebook. The researcher’s selection of passages was based on a number of criteria, such as length, complexity, authenticity, genre and assumed interest.
The second instrument is a student questionnaire (Appendix D), which, in turn, is divided into two main parts. Part 1 aims to determine the frequency of the different kinds of difficulties the Saudi participants encounter when reading, while Part 2 intends to cover the most influential factors that cause such difficulties. The questionnaire as a whole includes 24 statements (Part 1 includes 15 statements and uses a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = usually, 5 = always, while Part 2 includes nine items and uses a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = not influential at all, 2 = less influential, 3 = influential to an extent, 4 = influential, 5 = very influential). The items on each part of the questionnaire were deliberately scrambled and the degree to which the contributors to this research are aware will be reflected through the proper order of statements on the questionnaire that fall under different categories.

**Results and Discussion**

![Figure 1: Saudi Learners' Kinds of Difficulty Frequency](image)

Results, as shown in Figure 1, indicate that all the informants in this research (N= 72) suffer from all the kinds of difficulties listed on the questionnaire. In fact, number 1 on the Likert scale (never), which refers to the frequency of encountering a given difficulty, was not ticked by the informants even once. This is explainable to a certain extent with reference to these learners’ aforementioned acknowledgement that they always face reading difficulties (Appendix A) as well as to their low scores in the two reading tests (Appendices B and C). The addition here involves the kinds and frequencies of the difficulties they encounter when reading, a point that the first part of the questionnaire intends to cover. The average for each
category has been calculated by adding the total of all the responses of the informants and dividing it by 5 (the number of statements for each kind of difficulty).

**Linguistic Deficiency**

According to Figure 1, linguistic deficiency ranks high in terms of the most commonly encountered problem Saudi learners suffer from when reading. These findings are congruent with those found by Lili (2014), who confirms that poor readers frequently face linguistic reading issues and summarizes all these instances into three main points, which are semantic, syntactical and lexical complexities.

Linguistic difficulties, under which statements 1, 3, 6, 7, and 12 fall, is the most frequently encountered problem the Saudi learners suffer from. As Table 1 below displays, their responses towards these statements do not have wide variations, wherein the average response value ranges between 4 and 5.

**Table 1**

*Frequency of Saudi Learners’ Linguistic Difficulties*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unfamiliarity with vocabulary words</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to comprehend the spelling and the form of the words in a reading</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to identify the meanings of these words out of context</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to pronounce words when reading them</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of automatic recognition skills that enable the recognition of sounds and words</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instances of linguistic deficiency that learners highlight as being always encountered are their lack of knowledge of words in the reading (83%) and their failure to understand the meaning of these words out of context (60%). This lends strong support to Al Brashdi (2002), whose subjects named difficult vocabulary items as their most frequently faced challenge. Still, the confusion between the letters and the sounds they refer to (68%), as well as their ignorance of how to pronounce these words, are very challenging to these learners (80%). This is in line with the findings of Melby-Lervag et al., (2012) who maintain that one obstacle that plays a
significant role in hampering reading comprehension is the lack of phonological awareness. Additionally, most (70%) of the learners admit that they often lack the automatic recognition skills that enable them to recognize sounds and words. This supports Grabe and Stoller’s (2011) claim that what makes EFL learners fluent in reading is “rapid and automatic word recognition (or lexical access – the calling up of the meaning of a word as it is recognized)” (p. 15) – the lack of which would significantly affect the comprehension of any given passage.

Reading Skills Deficiency

The statements listed on the questionnaire in the order 2, 5, 8, 10 and 15 reflect the reading skill deficiency that, according to the findings in this paper (see Figure 1), ranks as the second most-mentioned problem to be commonly faced by Saudi learners and said to hamper their reading comprehension.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to connect the ideas together</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to recognize the difference between main ideas and supporting details in a given passage</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in inferring information from a given passage</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure to predict or guess what the text contains or what happens next</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure to interpret the text or identify the author’s aim</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In fact, many of the responses indicate that the informants always find it difficult to draw inferences (48%) and recognize relations between sentences or logical sequences of ideas (36%). Most of the subjects also suffer from the inability to distinguish between main ideas and supporting details (42%). The difficulties involve their frequent failure to determine the author’s purpose in writing a given text (44%) or predict what may happen next (44%). In this respect, Haager et al. (2007) claim that this difficulty is tightly related to decoding problems and insists that those who have problems with decoding cannot easily distinguish between significant and minor details in a passage, they confuse meanings and they cannot easily find
connections between the different ideas in the reading text. The same signs are highlighted by the subjects in the current research, which makes the findings of both studies concomitant.

**Retention**

The Saudi learners suffer from other problems such as retention, the statements of which are displayed on the questionnaire as follows: 4, 9, 11, 13 and 14.

**Table 3**

*Frequency of Saudi Learners' Retention Difficulties*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to remember and summarize what is read</td>
<td>0  0</td>
<td>17  10</td>
<td>15  21</td>
<td>20  28</td>
<td>20  15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incongruence of some reading materials with their authentic life and mismatch between their pre-knowledge and existing ideas in the passage</td>
<td>0  0</td>
<td>12  17</td>
<td>13  18</td>
<td>15  21</td>
<td>32  45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to activate prior knowledge</td>
<td>0  0</td>
<td>17  24</td>
<td>10  14</td>
<td>18  25</td>
<td>27  37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of content/background knowledge</td>
<td>0  0</td>
<td>20  28</td>
<td>3  4</td>
<td>14  19</td>
<td>35  49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little knowledge of the cultures the readings handle topics about (unfamiliarity with the rituals, beliefs or traditions)</td>
<td>0  0</td>
<td>11  15</td>
<td>21  29</td>
<td>18  25</td>
<td>22  30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>0  0</td>
<td>13.4  16</td>
<td>8.4  14.4</td>
<td>17  23.6</td>
<td>33.2  29.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signs of retention difficulties are the inability of these learners to summarize or remember what is read (15%) in addition to their failure to activate their prior knowledge in order to understand what they read (37%). More than half of the learners also mention that they feel unable to apply the content of what they read to their real-life experiences (45%). They also mention struggling with the mismatch between their own culture and the topics handled in the reading (30%) as well as their lack of background knowledge to help them understand the text (49%). The same results were found by Al Ajmi (2003), who explores the reading problems some of the Omani students suffer from and maintains that retention necessitates such cognitive ideas as memory and the ability to retrieve connected details.

Results of the second part of the questionnaire indicate that many factors contribute to the Saudi learners’ poor performance in reading and thus engender difficulties and problems that hamper comprehension. These can be divided into linguistic, personal and academic reasons and, even
though they differ in frequency, they all still exist and affect the reading skill development of these learners. The chart below displays how influential these factors are in hindering this study’s informants’ comprehension of a given reading.

As shown in Figure 2, linguistic variables rank first in terms of the most influential factors that contribute to the poor reading level of the participants.

**Table 4**

*The Influence of Linguistic Factors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited range of vocabulary and lexis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor level in the English language as a whole</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The difference between mother tongue and English</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This factor involves statements 18, 21 and 24 and is portrayed as very influential by 73% of the learners, as indicated in Table 4 above. It includes the poor level in the English language in general (63%), the wide gap between the mother language (Arabic) and English (64%), and, most importantly, the limited range of English vocabulary (90%). These results are congruent with those found by Mebarki (2011), whose subjects were Algerian university students who
stated that the lack of lexical knowledge and the morphological difference between their native language and English were the main sources of their poor performance in reading. The limited range of vocabulary items stands as the most influential reason explaining the poor level of reading comprehension of the Saudi learners. This echoes the findings of Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016), who foreground the importance of vocabulary and maintain that the difference between successful and less successful readers can be measured by their word knowledge. When it comes to the overall poor English level item, most of the respondents agree that this is a major factor that constrains reading comprehension. Many other authors converge on the same conclusion and report that students who lack English language proficiency and suffer from poor performance cannot read and understand the given English materials (Jalaluddin et al., 2008).

The lack of correspondence and the linguistic differences between their mother tongue and English is indicated as a strong factor that makes reading very difficult for the informants in this study. In effect, Arabic is an opaque consonantal-alphabetic language whose orthography is different to the Romanized alphabet used in English and, given that the process of comprehending written language is linked to different types of orthographic structure, as claimed by Wang and Koda (2005), challenges in EFL reading are very likely to take place.

Within the category of personal factors, the statements of which display in the order 16, 23 and 20 on the students’ questionnaire, the major factors highlighted by the Saudi students are memory (41%), motivation (15%) and anxiety (43%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory difficulties</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These three cognitive variables are claimed to be among the factors that affect how far a learner can advance in reading. According to Torgesen (2006), students with memory problems find it very difficult to understand the text, which is the case in the current research as well. The same is also true when motivation is considered. In fact, many students indicate that the informants have no interest in the reading materials or in reading in general. This is in line with the results
found by Qrqez and Ab Rashid (2017), who claim that Saudi Students at Umm Al-Qura University lack interest in reading English books and have no motivation to do so. When it comes to anxiety, the respondents still relate this to their problems with reading. This supports Vazalwar (2011), whose findings indicate a positive association between anxiety and reading comprehension breakdown. He claims that the higher the level of anxiety is, the lower the level of reading comprehension is gained.

The factor that ranked third, as shown in Figure 2, has to do with academic reasons, which display under the items 17, 19 and 22 on the questionnaire.

Table 6
The Influence of Academic Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The complexity of the reading textbooks</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-related malpractices in teaching</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading comprehension</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ineffectiveness of related reading</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaching methods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This includes the strategies teachers use to teach their learners to read and the different malpractices that arise as a result of inappropriate strategies (21%) as well as the complexity of the reading textbooks (31%). As a matter of fact, most of the informants highlight the methods the teachers are using from influential (20%) to very influential (25%) and confirm that they are inappropriate. Al Qahtani (2016) comes to the same conclusion and argues that most teachers in Saudi settings make use of incompatible strategies and are unfamiliar with the latest developments in language teaching as a whole, which negatively affects their classroom practices and their choices of suitable strategies. The Saudi learners also attribute their struggles in reading comprehension to the complexity of the reading textbooks. The same holds true for Al Qahtani (2016), whose findings indicate that Saudi learners are always uncomfortable with the reading textbooks, which they describe as having too many lessons with long lists of strange words in addition to unfamiliar topics that do not fit into their conservative society. Some of the subjects in Al Qahtani’s study assume that the prescribed textbooks are “responsible” for their failure.

When it comes to the third question the current research attempts to answer, it is found that the subjects are aware of their reading difficulties and the sources of these. Even though the
statements on the questionnaire are scrambled and are not deliberately categorized, these subjects are able to identify the category that their reading problems fall under and are able to describe the sources. As a matter of fact, the same group of statements identified by the students as the most frequently encountered difficulties are all of the linguistic type. This was evidenced by their choice of linguistic reasons as the most influential factor contributing to their struggle with reading comprehension. This match and homogeneity reflect the degree of awareness these learners have of their reading problems and their sources, as the results show that the learners are able to depict the different kinds of problems and match them to their sources. Interestingly, one possible explanation for the other difficulties being identified as less frequently encountered is the students’ ignorance of these difficulties. In the first instance, these students are suffering from linguistic issues, which do not allow them to go beyond this level to other language levels. Obviously, without language or at least a certain level of competence, these learners cannot acquire and develop other skills needed for reading comprehension. The important role of language competence in English for successful reading comprehension is all too evident. This may explain, to a certain extent, the “failure of conception” theorized by Kayaoglu and Turgut (2011), who assert that the major source of the students’ poor level and low performance in reading originates from their failure to know what reading means. This failure of conception is attributable to the poor linguistic level these learners have. If the students identified linguistic problems as the most frequently encountered issue, with the other issues being mentioned in second and third place, this does not necessarily mean that they have minor problems with these variables; on the contrary, it means that understanding is out of their grasp because of their poor linguistic ability. The linguistic issue stands out as a big handicap that does not allow the learners to be aware of the existence of other issues. Accordingly, if the students mention linguistic deficiency as the most encountered difficulty, this automatically means that they must suffer from other kinds of difficulties.

**Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations**

The most interesting implication that can be deduced has to do with the degree of consciousness these subjects have. In the first place, they identified linguistic challenges as the most commonly encountered difficulty and matched this to linguistic factors as the most influential variables that contribute to their poor level of reading and of language as a whole. This implies that more focus should be placed on the students, not only as the center of the learning process, but also in terms of their perceptions and views concerning the different issues raised in EFL classrooms that stand as a hindrance to their language development.
In addition, if the students still feel they are “word-bound” and consider vocabulary as one of their biggest challenges and, given the positive impact a strategy can have on the acquisition and recognition of words, helping learners expand their understanding of words will necessarily improve their reading abilities. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers and language instructors provide their learners with a series of strategies and vocabulary learning skills to assist them in gaining a basic knowledge of how words function so that they can use them to understand the meanings of these words once encountered in a reading. Many other authors, such as Alfallaj (2017), call for the teaching of comprehension strategies to EFL learners and maintain that this would improve reading skills. They add that exchanging ideas between learners and voicing their ideas for ways to approach and understand a given passage through the employment of individualized strategies will help improve the reading comprehension of the whole group of learners. The current research shares the same principle and supports this call.

Motivation, in addition, is a widely researched theme within EFL classrooms. If language instructors attempt to find and create ways to help their learners enjoy their reading, this will increase their motivation and lower their level of anxiety. Plenty of suggestions are available in literature, which go beyond the scope of this paper. One example is to provide learners with “fascinating” reading materials and help them set their own goals from the reading. This urges them to assume more responsibility when approaching the text and accordingly finding ways to understand it.

One final implication that arises from the results in this paper is that the difficulties were similar to many other cases and samples in other settings, which makes it easier to find common solutions and remedial suggestions that may apply in these areas. Forums and seminars held in EFL settings could help instructors and all the concerned parties to suggest effective strategies to help improve the reading skills of EFL learners. With all the current technological advancements, the social media and the means of communication used in the modern world, collaboration and cooperation among EFL instructors around the world becomes easy and obvious. Sharing their experiences and exchanging ideas will definitely be of help in achieving common goals.

**Limitations**

The findings of the current research are meant to add to the reading literature in EFL settings in general and in the Saudi context in particular. However, it is of relevance to mention that
these findings are subject to a number of issues, the first of which is that all the subjects were male students. Even though this was because of cultural considerations, this paper would have included more comprehensive accounts on the topic if female contributors had been invited. Another shortcoming is related to the relatively small number of informants (72 students). The research could have been expanded to include more branches of the same university or even others with a more representative mix of students to come up with more reliable and generalizable results.

In addition, the findings of the current study are based mainly on a sole instrument, that is, a student questionnaire. If other instruments such as a semi-structured interview for the students were included, more inclusive insights about these students’ perceptions would be gained, which, in turn, would provide information about other factors that influence the students’ reading level and cause them concern.

**Conclusion**

Evidently, reading is as substantial as the other constructs of the language that learners should master in order to reach high language proficiency levels, especially in the EFL context where English is not spoken and thus reading is considered the prime source of language input. Within the principle of “find the cause to find the cure”, this and other studies inform educators about the different causes that stand behind the breakdown in reading that Saudi learners suffer from. In more particular terms, the aim of this paper was to investigate the reading comprehension problems and challenges that Saudi learners at Jeddah University face, as well as the causes of these problems. The study reveals that these subjects were struggling with linguistic and reading deficiencies and retention problems caused by linguistic, personal and academic variables.

A short review of reading literature foregrounds that overtime learners of English are suffering from the same kinds of difficulties in different EFL settings in the Middle East and other countries. The question that may be posed in this respect is: “Why is the reading level of EFL learners still so low?” Accordingly, a revisiting of the teaching and learning strategies becomes essential to adapt them to the renewed needs of the students of the 21st century. students’ “overall low level of language proficiency” and “limited vocabulary” are at the heart of the problem.

Despite the insights this paper provides, more research studies are recommended, especially those of a qualitative nature that would allow researchers to go into the classrooms and closely observe the teaching practices and how the reading lessons are carried out. In addition, training
the teachers and helping them to understand and cope with their learners’ reading difficulties would be very effective in helping learners overcome the aforementioned reading problems and thus develop better reading skills.
References


Dennis, D.V. Are Assessment Data Really Driving Middle School Reading Instruction? What we can learn from one student’s experience. Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, Vol. 51, 578-587, 2008.


Appendices

Appendix A

QUESTION SHEET

1. How do you evaluate your writing proficiency?

2. Do you face any difficulties in reading in English?

Appendix B

TEST 1

The hippopotamus is the third largest land animal, smaller only than the elephant and the rhinoceros. Its name comes from two Greek words which mean "river horse". The long name of this animal is often shortened to the easier to handle term "hippo".

The hippo has a natural affinity for the water. It does not float on top of the water; instead, it can easily walk along the bottom of a body of water. The hippo commonly remains underwater for three to five minutes and has been known to stay under for up to half an hour before coming up for air.

In spite of its name, the hippo has relatively little in common with the horse and instead has a number of interesting similarities in common with the whale. When a hippo comes up after a stay at the bottom of a lake or river, it releases air through a blowhole, just like a whale. In addition, the hippo resembles the whale in that they both have thick layers of blubber for protection and they are almost completely hairless.

Questions: Choose the correct answers:

1. The topic of this passage is
   
   (A) The largest land animals  
   (B) The derivations of animal names  
   (C) The characteristics of the hippo  
   (D) The relation between the hippo and the whale

2. It can be inferred from the passage that the rhinoceros is
   
   (A) Smaller than the hippo  
   (B) Equal in size to the elephant  
   (C) A hybrid of the hippo and the elephant  
   (D) One of the two largest types of land animals

3. The possessive "Its" in line 2 refers to
   
   (A) Hippopotamus
It can be inferred from the passage that the hippopotamus is commonly called a hippo because the word "hippo" is
(A) Simpler to pronounce
(B) Scientifically more accurate
(C) The original name
(D) Easier for the animal to recognize

5. The word "float" in line 4 is closest in meaning to
(A) Sink
(B) Drift
(C) Eat
(D) Flap

6. This passage serves as a (n)
(A) Instruction
(B) Benefit
(C) Aid
(D) Warning

7. According to the passage, what is the maximum time that hippos have been known to stay underwater?
(A) Three minutes
(B) Five minutes
(C) Thirty minutes
(D) Ninety minutes

8. The expression “has relatively little in common” in line 8 could best be replaced by
(A) Has few interactions
(B) Is not normally found
(C) Has minimal experience
(D) Shares few similarities

9. The passage states that one way in which a hippo is similar to a whale is that
(A) They both live in the bottoms of rivers
(B) They both have blowholes
(C) They are both named after horses
(D) They both breathe underwater

10. The word "blubber" in line 11 is closest in meaning to
   (A) Fat
   (B) Metal
   (C) Water
   (D) Skin

11. The passage states that the hippo does not
   (A) Like water
   (B) Resemble the whale
   (C) Have a protective coating
   (D) Have much hair

12. It can be inferred that the writer of the passage is
   (A) Interested in animals
   (B) Interested in sea
   (C) Interested in stories
   (D) Interested in life
Appendix C

TEST 2

Match the following correctly and decide which comes first and which come next?

Example: (1) is connected to (E). (1) comes before (E)

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Advertising, therefore, has a valid social justification.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>In addition, advertising can help a Company to improve both its public and its industrial relations. Often, advertising also enables a Company to control demand, and to protect itself against competitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2- The benefits of advertising to an individual Company are many. First and most important, advertising enables the Company to sell more goods more effectively so that profits are maximized.</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>The advertising profession claims to benefit not only individual companies, but also the Consumer, the economy as a whole, and the society of which this economy is part. In short, though advertising is essentially to help the businessman, it does benefit the whole of society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- In this study, however, we are not only interested in how advertising serves the firm, but also how it serves the public. Among other things, advertising is supposed to help consumers to buy more easily and efficiently.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>These benefits to the consumer as an individual are accompanied by even greater benefits to the economy as a whole. By raising the standard of living, advertising is a factor which encourages growth, research, higher production and employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4- In short, advertising is not merely a means of spreading information about products but of controlling the economy.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Finally, advertising contributes to society in other ways. In America, for instance, it is advertising which by paying the bill for the mass media, makes them less subject to other control and more reliable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5- In addition, other forms of advertising are used to combat harmful propaganda and to promote social and national causes. It is, in short, a</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Moreover, by educating them to a higher standard of living, it increases their enjoyment of life. In addition, advertising is supposed to encourage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public servant used in the public interest.</td>
<td>product improvement, and to lower costs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

A STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear student, this questionnaire’s aim is to determine the most common difficulties you encounter when reading. It also intends to identify the most influential factors that contribute to the encounter of these difficulties. Please read through it thoroughly and complete all the required statements even if you feel that some may seem redundant. This may require 20-30 minutes of your time.

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

Part 1: How frequently do you face the following problems when reading in English?
Never (1)- rarely (2)- sometimes (3)- usually (4)- always (5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Unfamiliarity with vocabulary words</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Inability to connect the ideas together</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Inability to comprehend the spelling and the form of the words in a reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Remember and summarize what is read</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Inability to recognize the difference between main and ideas supporting details in a given passage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Lack of automatic recognition skills that enable you to recognize sounds and words</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Inability to pronounce words when reading them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Difficulty to infer information from a given passage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Incongruence of some reading materials with your authentic life and mismatch between your pre-knowledge and existing ideas in the passage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Failure to predict or guess what the text contains or what happens next</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Inability to activate prior knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Inability to identify the meanings of these words out of context</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Lack of content/background knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Little knowledge of the cultures the readings handle topics about (unfamiliarity with the rituals, beliefs or traditions)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Failure to interpret the text or identify the author’s aim</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part 2: How influential is each of the following factors in the reading difficulties you face?
Not influential at all (1)- less influential (2) influential to an extent (3) influential (4) very influential (5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16. Motivation</td>
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<td>17. The complexity of the reading textbooks</td>
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<td>18. Limited range of vocabulary and lexis</td>
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<td>19. Teacher-related mal-practices in teaching reading comprehension</td>
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<td>20. Memory difficulties</td>
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<td>21. The difference between mother tongue and English</td>
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<td>22. The ineffectiveness of related reading teaching methods</td>
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<td><strong>23. Anxiety</strong></td>
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<td><strong>24. Poor level in the English language as a whole</strong></td>
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