



كلية الشرق الأوسط
Middle East College

الاتجاهات الناشئة والقضايا المعاصرة
في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية
Emerging Trends and Contemporary
Issues in Language Learning



2nd MEC TESOL Conference

مؤتمر كلية الشرق الأوسط الثاني
حول تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية للناطقين بغيرها

2nd MEC TESOL Conference

28th October 2020

**Emerging Trends and Contemporary Issues in
Language Learning: The EFL Context**



Book of Abstracts





MESSAGE FROM THE CONFERENCE CHAIR, DR. KIRAN G.R.



On behalf of the MEC TESOL Conference Organizing Committee, I am honored and privileged to welcome you to our Second Conference, “Emerging Trends and Contemporary Issues in Language Learning: The EFL Contexts” at Middle East College, Oman.

This conference provides a platform for researchers, language teachers, curriculum developers, and experts from various disciplines to share pedagogical practices and research findings in language teaching and learning. Sharing of insights into the unique situational factors that underpin local and international language teaching contexts can help us identify best practices as well as address the challenges encountered. The need for such dialogue is all the more urgent at this time when we are called to be dynamic and flexible in our blended approach to pedagogy without compromising on the quality of the educational experience of students.

Today’s programme includes two keynote speakers and four parallel sessions comprising 50 paper presentations and workshops.

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Second MEC TESOL Conference.

*Dr. Kiran G. R.
Dean
Middle East College*



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Conference Programme

8:00 – 8:30	Getting Online Join the session using this link	
8:30- 8:40	Recitation of the Holy Quran National Anthem	
8:40 - 8:50	Welcome Remarks	Dr. Kiran G R Conference Chair Dean, Middle East College
8:50 - 9:00	Introduction to the event and the first keynote speaker	Dr. Samia Naqvi Conference Secretary Head, Center for Foundation Studies, MEC
9:00 - 9:40	First Keynote Speech	Prof. Thomas Robb Professor Emeritus Kyoto Sangyo University
9:40-9:45	Break	
9:45 - 1:15	Parallel Sessions 9:45-10:10 Presentation 1 10:10-10:45 Presentation 2 10:45-11:10 Presentation 3 11:10 -11:35 Presentation 4 11:35 -12:00 Presentation 5 12:00-12:25 Presentation 6 12:25-12:50 Presentation 7 12:50-13:15 Presentation 8	4 parallel online sessions
13:15-13:50	Lunch Break	
13:50-13:55	Introduction to the afternoon programme and keynote speaker	Mr. Suleiman Rashid Said Al Adawi Assistant HoD and Programme Manager, Centre for Foundation Studies
13:55-14:35	Second Keynote Speech	Dr. Ali Al-Issa Associate professor Department of Curriculum and Instruction College of Education Sultan Qaboos University, Oman
14:35-14:40	Break	
14:40-16:55	Parallel Sessions 14:40-15:05 Presentation 1 15:05-15:30 Presentation 2 15:30-15:55 Presentation 3 15:55-16:20 Presentation 4 16:20- 16:45 Presentation 5	4 parallel online sessions
16:45- 16:50	Break	
16:50-16:55	Summary of Findings / Deliberations	Dr. Priya Mathew Head, Center for Academic Writing, MEC



16:55-17:00	Closing Remarks / Vote of Thanks	Dr. Ahmed Nawaz Conference Vice Chair, Associate Dean, MEC
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Conference Committee

Conference Chair	Dr. Kiran G.R, Dean of Middle East College
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Emerging Trends and Contemporary Issues in
Language Learning: The EFL Context



Ms. Abeer Mazroui, Media Communications and Admissions Department
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Keynote Speeches

1st Keynote Speaker

Professor Thomas Robb, University of Hawaii

TEACHING READING IN AN ONLINE WORLD: HOW TO GET THEM TO READ AT A DISTANCE



Of the four skills -- reading, writing, speaking and listening -- the single skill that can be most effectively practiced in distance learning is reading. Yet, many of the methods that are usually used in classroom-based reading instruction do not translate well when used in distant learning.

One important issue is the traditional over-emphasis on "language-focused learning" rather than other learning activities such as "meaning-focused input", "meaning-focused output" and "fluency development", which according to Paul Nation's "Four strands" principle, should each comprise about 25% of the students' language learning activities. Yet around the world "Language-focused learning" often comprises nearly 100% of what teachers do in the classroom.

The current focus on distant learning, however, now provides us with an opportunity to emphasize these other neglected aspects since "language-focused learning" itself, does not work so well at a distance.

In this presentation, we will examine the rationale for concentrating on reading practice in distant learning and examine methods that will work with your students to enhance their learning. Useful sites for reading materials will be introduced along with tips to make them work effectively but with less work on the already over-burdened teacher. Approaches to evaluation will also be discussed.



BIOGRAPHY

Thomas Robb, Ph.D., University of Hawaii, is Professor Emeritus, Kyoto Sangyo University where he was Chair of the English Department. He is a long-time user of CALL and the Internet and has created a number of websites and applications for Extensive Reading, student projects, interactive learning and professional exchange. He was instrumental in developing some of functions useful for language learning such as the quiz import function, and the item analysis function in Moodle. One site for extensive reading, mreader.org has over 100,000 student users in 40+ countries. He has been President of JALT, served on the Board of Directors of International TESOL, and is the past president PacCALL. He has been Chair of TESOL's EFL Interest Section, Chair of the CALL-IS Interest Section and now is Chair of the new Reading-Vocabulary Interest Section which he was instrumental in founding. He is also Chair of Extensive Reading Foundation, the editor of TESL-EJ, the first online journal for ELT, and the founder of the annual GLoCALL conference and a member of the organizing committee of WorldCALL.

In the past three years he has conducted over 30 workshops on Extensive Reading to teachers in Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, the Philippines and Malaysia.



2nd Keynote Address

Dr. Ali Al-Issa, Sultan Qaboos University

**CYBER ELT IN OMAN: CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR TESTING
THEORY AND PRACTICE**



The uses and values of the English language continue to evolve and the number of people learning this international language for multiple purposes is rapidly increasing. This has made teaching and learning English more challenging and demanding than ever. More and more English Language Teaching (ELT) practitioners worldwide are hence showing growing interest in using technology in their classrooms to help facilitate their learners' learning. However, teachers, with their intellectualism and agency, are not only expected to demonstrate critical awareness and informed decisions about the theory and practice of using technology inside their classrooms, but they also need to go the extra mile and show how such decisions can impact their professional development and that of others sharing the same professional community.

Therefore, unlike many presentations, which discuss the nuts and bolts of using technology inside the ELT classroom, this talk takes a more macro approach. It attempts to propose a “fresh” perspective on “planning” integrating technology into ELT in the Sultanate of Oman and the implications of this for testing theories and practices. It starts by developing a theoretical framework for the interrelatedness between technology and the English language to justify both constructs' local and global values. The talk then moves on to narrow the focus down to defining “Cyber ELT” and its multiple advantages. The next part of the talk discusses the advantages of Cyber ELT in Oman and ways of achieving it. The talk wraps up with some “food for thought” for the audience about how they can make the most of Cyber ELT to pursue lifelong learning.



BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Ali Al-Issa has a Master of Arts in Education (TESOL) from University of London in the U.K. and a Ph.D. in Education (Applied Linguistics) from University of Queensland in Australia.

Dr. Al-Issa is currently an Associate Professor of English Language Education at the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University, Sultanate of Oman.

Dr. Al-Issa has extensive experience in different areas of English Language Education and has been involved in the planning and implementation of English Language Education in the Sultanate of Oman for over 30 years. He has presented and published widely about English Language education in Oman. He is a recipient of several local and international teaching and research awards and recognitions. In addition to teaching ELT Bachelor's and Master's students and supervising postgraduate theses, he has published two books, several book chapters, and numerous articles about ELT in Oman in different prominent journals. Dr. Al-Issa has been the "Best Cited" Omani English Language Education scholar since 2005. His research interests include, but are not limited to, foreign/second language education policy and planning and teacher training and education.



Abstracts

Maher Al Rashdi

Middle East College, Muscat, Oman

A SMALL-SCALE EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY ON STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PRAGMATIC MEANING EMBEDDED IN MEMES



Memes are a viral phenomenon in contemporary digital culture. The modern, digital definition of memes depicts them simply as pictures with texts circulated in social media platforms that tackle a particular issue in a humorous way (Chen, 2012; Rogers, 2014; Shifman, 2014). Due to its growing popularity, memes have been considered as a tool to negotiate cultural-social norms especially among teenagers (Gal et al., 2016). However, not much research has been done on memes in relation to other fields. Therefore, the present study attempted to examine how the educational field could utilize memes in discourse analysis. To be specific, the aim of this small-scale exploratory study was to examine the extent to which memes might help undergraduate students infer pragmatic meaning, and to explore their perception of memes in teaching and learning. Primarily, data was collected through observing 29 Semester 3 Foundation Programme students in a higher education institute by giving them 5 different memes to infer their pragmatic meaning. After the observation, a short questionnaire was distributed to students to investigate their perception of memes. The findings revealed that most students were able to infer the pragmatic meanings embedded in memes. In addition, students held positive attitudes towards the use of memes in their study. The paper concluded with some practical implications on the best methods to utilize memes in education. This exploratory study was significant since it contributes to the body of literature in the field of discourse analysis and memes.

Keywords: *memes, discourse analysis, pragmatic meaning, education*



Maryam Haghi

Middle East College, Muscat, Oman

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FLIPPED CLASSROOM IN ELT CONTEXTS: A
REVIEW OF RECENT LITERATURE**



The emergence of new technological tools has affected and changed the realm of education to a great extent. This has led many teachers and instructors to adopt innovative steps in their teaching methods. For instance, flipped learning has emerged as an innovative teaching/learning approach in which students watch the videos related to the course content and materials- provided in advance by the teacher-before attending the lecture outside of the class, and then engage in activities applying the course concepts during the class time. In flipped learning contexts, teachers free up the time in class for students to analyze, explore, and apply course content. Flipped learning/teaching has gained increasing importance and popularity in higher education contexts. In such contexts, students are required to actively participate in their own learning process as autonomous, self-regulated learners. The purpose of this paper is to provide information regarding the definition of flipped learning, to focus on the recent literature of flipped learning, to highlight advantages and disadvantages of flipped learning, and to focus on how to apply this approach in English language teaching and learning contexts. The paper concludes with recommendations on how to promote flipped classroom environments in ELT teaching and learning contexts which will help ELT teachers and practitioners who are thinking of implementing new technological tools in their teaching practices.

Keywords: *flipped classroom, flipped learning in ELT, flipped learning and teaching*



Asiya Tabassum

Nizwa College of Technology, Oman

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TRADITIONAL FLIPPING VERSUS VIRTUAL FLIPPING

The Flipped classroom approach is one of the most sought after neoteric pedagogical approaches in the present times. This approach is attracting considerable recognition as it employs a blend of techniques and technologies. The present study compared flipping between a traditional class and a virtual class. The study aims to weigh the effects of flipping a writing skills course in a traditional class and virtual class on English Language learners' performance, attitudes and perceptions. The research was conducted by employing a quasi-experimental design with pre-test and post-test with a control group. The group consisted of 25 English language learners attending a Level Four foundations programme at Nizwa College of Technology. The same group was given instructions by flipping traditional class for 3 weeks and virtual class for 3 weeks. Independent and paired sample t-tests were implemented for interpreting the pre-test and post-test data. The results showed a statistically significant difference between the traditional flip and virtual flip of the writing skills course. It was evident that the students in the traditional flip surpassed the students in virtual flip in performance. Students in both modes showed positive attitudes towards the approach. This study would benefit educators in Oman in general and at NCT in particular in adapting a very effective approach which would help them in improving students' performance by involving them and making them responsible of their learning. The limitations of the study were absenteeism and limited sample size. There was also a little reluctance from students towards this approach. Studies on flipped classroom approach in language learning classrooms are limited, but studies on flipping a virtual class are even more limited. Therefore, more research is needed in this aspect. Long-term research is needed with different skills and with a larger sample size to uncover the efficacy of the approach in flipping both traditional and virtual class.

Keywords: *traditional flip, virtual flip, flipped classroom approach*



Noureen Aslam And Ali Furrqan Syed

Government College Kot Momin, Pakistan

**ERROR ANALYSIS OF PREPOSITIONS IN THE WRITING OF INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS
AT GOVERNMENT COLLEGE KOT MOMIN, PAKISTAN**

The current research has been undertaken to analyze one-word prepositional errors in the writing of intermediate students at Government College for Woman Kot Momin, Sargodha, Pakistan. It has been observed by the researcher that the students make errors of preposition in their writings as they produce prepositional errors of substitution, addition and omission. The researcher has adopted a quantitative approach to this case study. Data was collected from grade 11 and grade 12 students through tests. A sample of 20 students were selected from intermediate colleges of Kot Momin Sargodha, Pakistan. Eighteen (18) questions were included in the test to analyze one-word prepositional errors under Etherton' Model for one-word preposition. The results of the research show that students produce errors of prepositions due to lack of grammatical rules set out for prepositions, overgeneralization of the prepositions and interference of mother tongue. The research suggests that teachers should give proper guidelines and eliminate those elements which are the causes of producing errors in students' writing.

Keywords: *error analysis, prepositions, overgeneralization, mother tongue*



Dr. Mohammad Athar Khan

Sultan Qaboos University, Oman

TEST PILOTING AND ITEM ANALYSIS: WHAT, WHY AND HOW?



In any teaching-learning scenario, assessment plays a crucial role. A test is expected to sample students' behaviour and provide evidence to draw inferences about the status of learning. Therefore, creating quality tests that provide evidence must be both valid and reliable. These issues are ensured through test piloting and item analysis. This paper will, thus, outline the process of test piloting and item analysis. The presentation will shed light on the following questions: What is the rationale for pilot testing (Is there something wrong with the test?), What does piloting a test involve? What do we do with pilot test performances? What is item analysis? What is the purpose of item analysis? How is it done? What information do we get from classical item analysis? What statistical figures are important? What item analysis tools are available? Why ITEMAN? The data from an actual test will be looked at and ITEMAN figures on item difficulty and discrimination indices will be discussed. Moreover, through the visual display of an item analysis report performance of items, response options and the relationships of item scores and test scores will be discussed.

Keywords: *assessment, validity, reliability, test piloting, item analysis, ITEMAN*



Shadma Iffat Rahmatullah

King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia

**SIGNIFICANCE OF MOTHER TONGUE IN EFL CONTEXT: A CRITICAL
DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

This critical study makes an endeavor to examine the extent of influence of the mother tongue on EFL learners' speaking performance. This research is carried out through a qualitative approach using a critical discourse analysis method to probe into the Arab EFL learners' oral performance. To explore the influential aspect of mother tongue on English language speaking, the participants, selected from multidimensional sections of undergraduate colleges in King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia, were interviewed and their conversations were recorded to analyze the interference of their mother tongue on their English language speaking. To determine the faculty teaching efficacy, the participant group is divided into two sections; the Arab undergraduate students (100); and the non-native English speaking teachers (25) belonging to 5 different nations, who also exhibit the influence of their mother tongue on English language speaking. The language patterns of both students and the teachers vary, eventually affecting the language learning process. The significant outcome of this study reveals the possibility of the pros and cons of the mother tongue on L2 learning. The familiarity with the sound patterns of the English language assists the learners in uttering the words correctly. Furthermore, the similarity of some phonemes in Arabic and the English language helps EFL learners to grasp the lexical accent as well as the articulation of the English words quickly and accurately, whilst, the difference in sound patterns in various languages causes the learners to pronounce the words awkwardly. The data also revealed that the inability of faculty members' producing the correct accent of the English language make a significant effect on the learners' speaking performance.

Keywords: *EFL learners, discourse analysis, mother tongue influence, faculty members, non-native speakers*



Moin Amena

Sultan Qaboos University, Oman

PROBLEM BASED LEARNING: ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING LEARNERS



Problem Based Learning (PBL) is a learner centered approach that aims to develop the skills of collaboration, problem solving and self-directed learning. The presentation is an attempt to demonstrate how to empower learners by engaging them in real world issues surrounding business, economics, environment or management themes that the learners are interested in. The presentation starts with a historical background to problem based learning and goes on to talk about the rationale and relevance of PBL in teaching learning situation and then shows how PBL motivates and promotes self-directed learning and active learning.

In English for Business 1, PBL fosters self-directed learning as the students make choices and take decisions with regard to current economic problems in various stages throughout the semester. They discuss the strategies to combat the problem, divide the work amongst the team members, discuss their findings and peer- teach what they learn. The group members then develop an outcome for the problem and present their findings to other groups. Students reflect on the way they had learnt in their groups. This process helps the learners become responsible for their own learning as they indulge in reflective, critical thinking about what is being learned, which in turn makes them life-long learners.

The paper sheds light on ways learners can take charge of their learning, make their own connections with authentic business material, take responsibility for their own learning, build on prior knowledge, focus on the process of knowledge acquisition (rather than on the product), engage in collaborative decision-making and team-building skills as they learn to solve the problem through group negotiations.

Keywords: problem-based learning, collaboration, problem solving, self-directed learning, active learning, critical thinking



Mohammad Na'man Khan and Dr. Mohammad Athar Khan

Sultan Qaboos University, Oman

LINEAR OR LOGRATHMIC MEASUREMENT: A DILEMMA?



The topic of this proposal focuses on comparing and contrasting the two different number systems that exist: the linear and logarithmic scale. Although there is ample evidence that the logarithmic scale is well-rooted into humans and animals, over the centuries globalization and development has led us to adapt to the linear scale. Our presentation aims to identify the arguments for and against why each system is beneficial to us. Our presentation thesis is as follows: although it is essential to continue using the linear scale, there are specific instances where we will have to transition to the logarithmic scale to have a deeper understanding of reality. It is therefore essential to be comfortable with both systems and to understand the difference, which we aim to be the focus of the presentation. We will explore drawbacks of the linear scale such as flawed grade boundaries (Rasch analysis) and advantages such as precise, accurate and reliable means to model our world. The effectiveness of the logarithmic system, on the other hand, will be assessed by collecting primary data (surveys, and experiments) as well as secondary data to analyze how deeply they are rooted in us and situations in which they prove to be more useful than the linear system. Primary data includes experimental methods to assess how the logarithmic scale of children (with no external influence) changes to a linear scale over time as they grow older and are swayed by external factors. Secondary data will include the analysis of previous experiments on the view of numbers by indigenous communities who are not externally influenced by our linear culture. In a time where calculations and a strong understanding of numbers are vital to our technological advancement and our well-being, it is crucial to understand and appreciate the difference between the above two systems and the usefulness and limitations associated with each.

Keywords: *linear measurement, logarithmic measurement, Rasch analysis*



Ahlam Tabib

Sultan Qaboos University, Oman

MULTIMODALITY AND ESL: A CASE STUDY OF ALIGNING ASSESSMENT WITH DIGITIZED CURRICULUM

I present an explanatory case study that investigated how a constructive alignment can be reached between assessment and Multimodal digitized curriculum in an ESL program in Post-secondary education. Study questions concerned the main reasons behind the misalignment and how to create a constructive alignment between assessment and Multimodal digitized curriculum. First, I discuss my theoretical framework and how I employed theoretical bricolage; the Multimodality and multiliteracies framework and Assessment Theory elucidated data collected from semi-structured interviews and curriculum and assessment documents. The Actor Network Theory (ANT) was used to “follow the actors” which created an alignment/misalignment between Multimodal curriculum and assessment. Second, I will discuss results, which indicated that accountability models aborted or partly mitigated the implementation of an aligned Multimodal curriculum and assessment as language proficiency tests often deviated classroom practice from Multimodality and multiliteracies framework. I elucidate how data also intimated assessment “for” learning, “while” learning and authentic assessment that maximize the learners’ chances to demonstrate their understanding in different forms of representation. This study may provide teachers with a myriad of strategies, tactics and techniques which may facilitate the implementation of an aligned Multimodal digitized curriculum and assessment in ESL/EFL programs in Post-secondary education. Additionally, Learners may be given the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding in different forms of representation, hence, unlock their full potential, optimize their learning and maximize their success chances. I reveal how the study entertains implications for curriculum development, assessment design and teacher professional development.

Keywords: *EAP, alignment, digitized curriculum, assessment for learning, multi-literacies, post-secondary Education*



Vikas Rao Naidu, Shyamala Srinivas, Mahmood Al-Raisi And Vishal Dattana

Middle East College, Oman

EVALUATION OF HYPERMEDIA TOOLS IN TERMS OF USABILITY HEURISTICS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING



Technology-assisted teaching and learning process has its root since for many decades. Starting with a simple Over Head Projectors (OHP), where the teachers used to write their teaching materials on transparent OHP sheets and projecting it for the students, the education technology field has rapidly embraced every new tool and technique which was developed in different parts of the world to enhance students learning experience. With the evolution of multimedia elements such as digital images, audio, video, graphics and animation, there is a considerable amount of improvements in teaching and learning methodologies. During these days, when almost every campus is completely Wi-Fi enabled, it is easier for the students to learn from their smart devices. Hypermedia plays a vital role in this. Hypermedia, which is also called as, active media is the set of multimedia content, which is interactive, where the user can interact with the system instead of viewing its content in passive mode. Some examples of hypermedia are, interactive quizzes, games, interactive videos etc. There are many interactive multimedia-based tools available for almost every subject area these days. And still many software industries and developers are continuously working towards the development of such solutions for the future. For an interactive application design, user interface plays a vital role. This research paper highlights some of those interactive tools which are designed for English Language learning. Some of these tools are FluentU, Hello English, Duolingo and Livemocha. These tools could be really useful for TESOL professionals. To evaluate the usability heuristics of these interactive tools, the authors will be taking a reference of 10 general principles of Human-Computer Interaction, defined by Dr Jacob Neilson. Based on the critical evaluation of these tools, recommendations for user interface design will be drawn which could be helpful to refer for the future development of such interactive tools.

Keywords: *Education Technology for TESOL professionals, English language learning through interactive tools, HCI principles for educational tool design, Human-Computer Interaction principles, interactive multimedia, Smart Education for TESOL, usability heuristics*



Vikas Rao Naidu and Baldey Singh

Middle East College, Oman

**INNOVATIVE APPROACH FOR LEARNING MATERIAL AUTHORIZING BY
TESOL PROFESSIONALS IN MATROSKA MULTIMEDIA CONTAINER
FORMAT - A PROPOSED FRAMEWORK**



Education technology has stretched its root in almost every educational institution. It is hard to find any school, college or university that has not tailored technology-assisted teaching and learning approach. When it comes to e-content design, Smart technology was very quick and easy to adapt in the disciplines such as IT and Computer Science. However, this has always been a challenge for many TESOL professionals since many of them do not have extensive knowledge of multimedia-based content creation tools. Several multimedia-based learning materials are already being in use by the teachers of the English language. Still not every audio-visual based content is found to be versatile on every platform or hardware device. This research paper proposes an innovative approach of usage of Matroska Multimedia Container file format for audio-video based content development by TESOL professionals. Matroska is a free and open-source format. It is not just a format, but it is an envelope that can accommodate any number of Video, Audio and subtitle tracks in it. This format has amazing features such as the fast seeking of media, multiple chapter selection, quick switching between multiple audios, video and subtitle tracks, and many more. Moreover, this can be streamed over the internet and hence appropriate for online teaching. While creating teaching material (e-learning content), teachers need to follow some important steps, as suggested by the authors. A detailed framework is suggested by the authors with recommendations for infrastructure requirements for real-time implementation of this approach. This approach could be executed by anyone with basic knowledge of computer and audio-video production. The cross-platform versatility of this format is the main advantage of this approach since the students would be able to view the learning materials on any device, whether its Windows or Mac or smart device.

Keywords: *Content design by TESOL professionals, Education Technology for TESOL, Material development by TESOL professionals, Matroska Container format for E-Learning, Interactive Multimedia Container, Smart Education for the English Language Learning, Versatile content development for the English Language Learning.*



Zainab Al Ajmi

Middle East College, Oman

THE ROLE OF ONLINE PLATFORMS TO ELEVATE LEARNER'S UNDERSTANDING



Over the last decades, individual and groups were extremely using face to face strategy to attain a native language, and make advising associated with English language learning as there were a few applications of the online platforms incorporating in some enterprises, including pedagogic institutions that are in line with the Ministry of Higher Education to deliver this language. In this status quo, there is a rapid implementation of these programmes, especially during the outbreak of Covid-19. In fact, this emergency has influenced the international economy in a wide-spread space as numerous activities have been halted by this crisis. Nowadays, many scholars affirmed the cooperation between the virtual programmes and language learning as they are overlapping and goes hand in hand to cope with the immediate changes across the instructive institutions. This research will outline one of the fundamental topics which is the role of organizational platform to mitigate the literacy and elevate the learner's language learning level. Initially, it will introduce the platform concept, and its significance in the education field. Then, it will demonstrate a critical understanding of the significance of the online platform to promote the English language learning on some contemporary theories. Later, a questionnaire will be disseminated to a group of General Foundation Programme (GFP) students to collect their standpoint towards learning English language through virtual program. It will ultimately showcase an example of online learning applications, an initial move to a hypothesis where the two e-learning types, such as: Microsoft Teams and Zoom are introduced, including a concise conversation the traits, and weaknesses of each. Adding to that, the student's perspective towards these platform in the context of English language learning.

Keywords: *E-learning, online platform, technology*



Moza Al-Malki

Rustaq College Of Education, Oman

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES OF WRITING COURSES
AT UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND APPLIED SCIENCES-RUSTAQ,
OMAN**



This longitudinal qualitatively based research study aims at critically examining the factors that hinder or facilitate English Language learners' writing courses at Rustaq College of Education in Omani context. Based on Academic Literacies framework, which postulates that writing is a social practice taking into account learner's identity and the context in which they are operating (Steet, 1984, Street, 2003 & Lee and Street, 1998). This study is a case study where it investigates English Language learners' experiences of the writing courses at English Department and Literature and the factors that impact writing courses from foundation level till final year of their studies. Specifically, the study aims at answering one research question: what are the factors that English language learners perceive as supporting or hindering them achieve success in writing courses at Rustaq college of Education? A total of five participating learners and their writing teachers took part in this research study where semi structured interviews were utilized at the end of each semester to obtain data. The initial findings from the thematic analysis of the data revealed that the factors that support ESL learners achieve success in writing are a) variation of task requirement in a course; 2) teacher's approach and attitude of writing; 3) teacher's supplementary materials in the classrooms; and 4) family support. On the other hands, factors that hinder ESL learners achieve success in writing are 1) the unmatched books to the writing outcomes; 2) inadequacy of support from the college. The study is still on progress, but the implication of this study is for policy makers to continuously review the writing courses descriptions and outlines and to involve the learners in the college activities regarding writing.

Keywords: *writing as a social practice, English language learners*



Dr. Amjed Ayyat

Middle East College, Oman

**ENHANCING WRITING SKILLS OF ESL STUDENTS BY USING COCA IN
THE GENERAL FOUNDATION PROGRAM CONTEXT**



Embedding technology in second language learning has become a 21st century feature. Therefore, many second language teachers are incorporating a lot of e-tools in their daily practice to teach the four skills. This study aims at investigating the use of COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English) for teaching writing in the General Foundation Program. COCA is an e-tool that is based on a linguistic corpus collected from different spoken and written English language contexts. The corpus contains more than one billion words in which there are six features that can be explored to search the corpus. These features are List, Chart, Collocates, Compare, word and KWIC. Since teaching writing includes many challenges such as exposing learners to authentic context, and applying the product-based approach by teachers, this study claims that the use of COCA can enhance students` writing skills using the process-based approach of writing. Furthermore, this study maintains that teaching writing skills can be successfully achieved using a student-centered approach. The process-based approach of writing is based on three stages, namely; the brainstorming stage which contains collecting details and information about the topic, the while-writing stage in which students can reduce their wrongful use of certain vocabulary and finally the post-writing stage which concentrates on assessment and feedback. The exploration of COCA revealed that COCA is an effective tool to improve students` writing skills when using the process-based approach. Further research needs to be conducted to confirm the effectiveness of the use of COCA in English language teaching and learning by adopting it to teach other English language skills such as grammar, reading, and vocabulary.

Keywords: *Corpus linguistics, COCA, English language learners, teaching writing skills, GFP Context*



Dr. Tareq Aldamen

Sultan Qaboos University, Oman

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHER FEEDBACK IN ASYNCHRONOUS EFL TEACHING: A CASE STUDY OF ENGLISH FOUNDATION STUDENTS AT SULTAN QABOOS UNIVERSITY



Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, educational systems around the world, including Oman, were affected as this led to temporary closures of schools, colleges, and universities. In response to the cancellation of face-to-face classes, Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), the only public university in Oman, decided to shift to emergency remote teaching (ERT) through asynchronous teaching mode. In asynchronous teaching, students are given flexibility to access the materials posted by teachers whenever they are able. However, asynchronous teaching does have some challenges for both teachers and students in many areas. One of these challenges is the teachers' ability to give proper feedback and the way their students comprehend and respond to it. In this case, teachers give electronic feedback (TEF) asynchronously using some techniques such as track changes in electronic drafts submitted by students, chats, and voice comments on Google Docs. Therefore, this study aims at investigating the effectiveness of asynchronous TEF on English foundation students enrolled in the FPEL 0450 Course, offered at the Centre for Preparatory Studies at SQU. To identify to what extent the TEF was successful with students, samples of TEF extracted from essay and project drafts, emails, and chats were collected and analyzed. Perceptions of 260 students and 18 teachers were solicited through surveys and semi-structured interviews. Findings indicate that TEF strategies were implemented successfully. Conclusions drawn indicate that asynchronous TEF is effective in the EFL context during emergency remote teaching. However, some potential limitations should be noted such as limited prior studies on the topic and the student sample size selection for the interviews. It is suggested, therefore, to conduct further studies on the topic.

Keywords: *emergency remote teaching ERT, asynchronous teaching, distance learning, teacher electronic feedback TEF, asynchronous TEF, foundation program FP*



Dr. Samia Naqvi and Insiya Zehr

Middle East College, Oman

**ONLINE EMERGENCY REMOTE TEACHING DURING COVID 19:
CHALLENGES AND INNOVATIVE PRACTICES**



The emergent situation brought about by COVID 19 has led to an unprecedented change in the educational sector worldwide including Sultanate of Oman. Most of the educational institutions here have responded swiftly to fulfill the requirements of academia by switching to an online emergency remote teaching mode overnight. To get adjusted to the ‘new normal’, teachers across all academic disciplines, including the English language, have had to adapt to new teaching approaches and to learn new skills and competencies to confront this challenge. This empirical cross-sectional research study explores the teacher technology self-efficacy, the challenges faced, and the innovative practices adopted by the EFL teachers during the crisis. A mixed-methods approach was used here which included an online survey and in-depth, semi-structured interviews with six teachers. The survey was administered to 100 EFL teachers from fourteen higher-education institutions whereas the interviews were held with six survey participants. The study found that majority of the teachers had a strong sense of self-efficacy in using technology as well as considerably positive learning experiences and novel innovations, which all resulted out of the various ways they faced pandemic-related challenges. The paper gives, in particular, an account of the innovative techniques adopted by the interviewed teachers during the Pandemic crisis. This investigation hopefully adds to the field of knowledge by sharing effective innovative techniques which have relevance to EFL teaching in Oman and beyond.

Keywords: *English language teaching, Covid 19, Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT), technology, self-efficacy, innovative techniques (TTS)*



Dr. Samia Naqvi

Middle East College, Oman

**NURTURING ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS, CREATIVITY AND
COMMUNICATION SKILLS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON ARAB EFL
LEARNERS**



In order to prepare students to face the world of work, universities should ensure that engineers graduating from their campuses demonstrate entrepreneurial skills and ability to understand market forces alongside domain knowledge. This exploratory study focused on the design, application and evaluation of a research-based assignment in a Business communication course offered to undergraduate level engineering students. The assignment aimed at developing students' entrepreneurship skills alongside basic business concepts, creativity, critical thinking, communication skills and research skills. Student perceptions on the role of assignment in developing the above-mentioned skills and in influencing their affective domain were gathered using a survey questionnaire carrying closed and open-ended questions. The data was analysed using SPSS and frequency tables were generated. The results of the survey revealed that the students enjoyed working on the assignment and showed strong agreement for most of the items on the role of assignment in developing their skills and knowledge.

Keywords: *affective domain, entrepreneurship skills, business communication, communication skills, content knowledge, creativity, critical thinking, research skills*



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Middle East College, Oman

**TEACHING IELTS ACADEMIC WRITING AND EXAM STRATEGIES ONLINE
TO DEVELOP OMANI STUDENTS' WRITING PROFICIENCY**



The restrictions imposed by the COVID 19 pandemic have forced educators and students worldwide to adapt to online learning. Language teaching in L2 contexts also had to shift to the online mode without compromising on the quality of teaching and learning. This paper examines the perceptions as well as the performance of the participants involved in the online IELTS course offered by Middle East College via MS Teams, an online teaching platform. Most IELTS courses offered online focus on improvement of exam techniques; however, the developers of this course designed a syllabus based on a needs analysis to cater to the specific needs of the candidates which would not only improve their test-taking strategies but also develop their writing skills. Adopting the Test, Teach, Test method, a diagnostic test was conducted initially followed by teaching interventions and post-tests. Interviews with teachers, feedback from students, a comparison of diagnostic test scores with exit level scores, and the use of corpus linguistic methods to examine lexicogrammatical features were carried out to determine the effectiveness of the online course. The results indicated that those students who were not motivated performed poorly whereas the high achievers were those who engaged in self-study and were to some extent, autonomous learners. This paper contributes to our understanding of the effectiveness of short-term online language classes for Omani learners as well as provides some recommendations for improving the design and delivery of such courses.

Keywords: *online learning, L2 contexts, IELTS, writing skills, effectiveness, motivation*



Syerina Syahrin

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**A CASE STUDY OF AN ONLINE EXTENSIVE READING PROGRAM IN THE
SULTANATE OF OMAN**



This paper reports the implementation of an online Extensive Reading (ER) program in an English proficiency course at a higher education institution in the Sultanate of Oman. The program utilized a readily available website, Voice of America (VOA) Learning English. The study explored the effectiveness of the online ER program and sought the perspectives of the participants of the online ER program. Data was gathered from undergraduate students of Omani nationality enrolled in an English proficiency course during the Covid-19. The data of the study included record of the participants' reading speed, comparison of pretest and posttest scores, semi-structured interviews, online focus group discussion, and the course instructor's reflection of the implementation of the online ER program. The backgrounds of the students were considered too. The findings revealed that the average students' reading speed was consistent at 100wpm (word-per-minute) throughout the ER program. The students' posttest scores were significantly improved when compared to their pretest scores. The study also revealed that the number of online articles the participants read correlate significantly to their posttest scores. The data from the qualitative inquiry provided an insight into the use of modified texts to encourage more reading. Although the research did not investigate the best practices for an online ER in the context of an English proficiency classroom in Oman, it showed how an ER can be implemented online given the circumstances of the Covid19 pandemic.

Keywords: *extensive reading, ESL, online, reading*



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Fldm Usmba Fes, Morocco

THE INCORPORATION OF SOFT SKILLS IN THE NEW REFORM OF THE MOROCCAN BACHELOR: IMPLEMENTING DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIAL INTEGRITY THROUGH PROJECT-BASED LEARNING



Recent debates about the Bachelor in Morocco show that teaching learners to maintain positive attitudes and take over responsibilities for social and political processes is an important educational asset of soft skills, mainly for schools which adopt project-based instructions. To support students' understanding of both political and social participation in this newest reform, important preconditions of a democratic school culture are set as effective outcomes in order to generate ethical behaviors. Today, social and political measures, which are incorporated by project-based learning in schools, provide important opportunities to engage students in autonomously ethical activities. Thus, the central aim of these measures is to promote the efficiency of decision making within schools, which shapes all classic criteria for both functioning democracy and social integrity. This paper aims at examining important venues that Moroccan school leaders, along the bachelor outcomes, wish to implement to foster democratic participation within and outside school life by adopting project-based learning. It attempts to unravel the timely challenges of such implementation and the different perspectives for the progress of Moroccan educational institutions. Hence, the paper adheres a meta-analysis technique, whereby a special examination of the various already conducted studies came out with conclusions: perspectives and challenges. The typical meta-analysis method disengages readings of various scholarly academic sources related to school effectiveness with respect to the implementation of project-based instruction, specifically after a long journey of debates about the bachelor. Owing to its descriptive, diagnostic, and generative nature, this method allows the researcher to explore the wide range of pitfalls and weaknesses which provide potential opportunities of alternative conclusions to be adopted in restructured and well-run approaches. The major results and conclusions drawn from this paper are to be deeply and qualitatively discussed and analyzed.

Keywords: *project-based learning, undergraduate students, social integrity, reform, meta-synthesis*



Hussam Alzieni

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THE IMPACT OF MOBILE LEARNING ON THE ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LISTENING SKILL: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY



Mobile technologies are one of the fastest growing technologies in education. For learners, they offer an appealing opportunity to access multiple sources of information anytime and anywhere.

This study was an attempt to examine the impact of the use of mLearning on students' acquisition of English language Listening skill at Dubai Men's College (DBM), the United Arab Emirates. The study also investigated teachers' perspectives on the implementation of mLearning and its effect on the listening skill of the students. The research question was: To what extent have students' listening skills in the experimental group developed through the use of mLearning compared to the students in the control group? To answer this question, a mixed method approach composed of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis was used. 66 students participated in a quasi-experiment of an experimental group and a control group and 20 teachers. The findings indicated that there were statistically significant differences between both groups in favour of the experimental group concerning listening skills. Finally, some teachers showed a lot of support to the use of mLearning with some cautions.

As far as the limitations of the study are concerned, the time constraints of the short third cycle (8 weeks) was the researcher's top priority. Even though the course was intensive, it couldn't give enough training to the students. However, some of these students were familiar with using mLearning in their previous courses. Others were exposed to mLearning for the first time. Additional empirical research should be conducted to increase the generalizability of the findings owing to the context and the limited number of the subjects of the current study (33 students in the experimental group).

Keywords: *mobile learning, language acquisition, listening skills*



Saadia Mesti

**GRAMMAR TEACHING: A CASE STUDY OF A PAKISTANI SCHOOL IN
SULTANATE OF OMAN**



Grammar constitutes an important element in the learning and teaching of any language. English as a foreign language is being taught in Pakistani government-run schools and in non-elitist private schools, which have a number of implications for the teaching process. The content analysis of textbooks and review of teaching methods are used as methodological tools. The results suggest that the grammar teaching methods are often outdated, the text material contains misleading explanations, lack understanding of descriptive linguistic concepts on grammar, and inconsistent contextual use of grammar. The main recommendation is that the grammar teaching methods and text material in question should be reviewed and updated with a more up to date material which uses contemporary material, including different approaches to language description, and including communicative language activities.

Keywords: *grammar teaching, textbook contents, grammar translation method*



Saadia Mesti

LANGUAGE POLICY AND THE USE OF ENGLISH AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN PAKISTAN



Pakistan is linguistically a diverse country. The language policies of successive governments resemble a kind of educational apartheid, where local languages are constantly been discriminated against the use of English. The failure to consider local languages in national language policies naturally will have far reaching implications on linguistical nature of Pakistani society. The paper is designed to review various language policies in Pakistan, and then, critically examines the recent government language policy regarding English as the medium of instruction. The analysis suggests that linguistic cohesion with multi linguistic policies are needed to adopt a multilingual approach in language planning policy in Pakistan. A more pluralist approach to language planning and policy (the mother tongue and provincial language for local/regional communication, and Urdu and English for international and international communication, respectively) may present a range of implementation challenges. This indicates the need for further research to develop an ecologically valid model for bi/multi-literacy for such complex linguistic contexts.

Keywords: *language policy, planning, medium of instructions, socio-linguistic implications*



Muhammad Rashid

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STUDENT-DIRECTED LEARNING – CREATING AUTONOMY BY INVOLVING THEM IN THE COURSE DESIGN



Student autonomy has been relatively a new phenomenon among researchers, curricula developers and teaching and learning Community across the globe as it emphasizes on giving students greater control and ownership over their learning process to develop their life-long skills. The main objective is to assess the benefits of involving my undergraduate class students in assessment design of one of components of the assessments of their Academic English for International Business module. Another aim was to investigate the benefits achieved by the students who were involved in the assessment design and also teaching other students the topics related to their assignment and compare their achievements with those students who were not involved in any of the afore mentioned activities My undergraduate (UG session A - LANG 10003, Academic English for International Business Module) class consisting of 25 students took part in designing content/components, marking criteria and learning activities for portfolio assessment of this module. They also presented the relevant topics such as MEC e-library resources, Academic advising, Exam stress, Employability skills, Plagiarism, Tips to improve English etc. to two GFP level 1 sessions as part of their portfolio evaluation. After the practice, feedback was gathered from different participants. Students involvement in the assessment design and later teaching GFP students as the requirement of the assessment helped me in knowing their viewpoints, needs , values and different learning styles whereas this practice increased the knowledge, sense of responsibility and motivation of students .The students also developed their employability skills such as cooperation, exchanging opinions, negotiation and decision-making.

Keywords: *GFP-General Foundation Programme, Undegraduate students, Middle East College*



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SKILL-BASED ESP CLASSROOM: TEACHING FOR PRESERVING AND ENHANCING OMAN'S COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES IN AN ERA OF ECONOMIC AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION



An ESP oriented enquiry spans different territories and domains (Basturkmen, 2013). Firmly established in the ESP teaching and learning practice developed in Oman's tertiary education, this paper focuses on a skill-based teaching approach ascribable to its far-reaching partnership with Oman 2040 vision initiative, and 21st century educational thinking and planning for the future. In particular, it extends ESP enquiry and explores how ESP classroom provides broader skill sets and job-specific capabilities. The discussion of skill development is supported by the analysis of self-perceived responses to the survey that involved English for Business Omani tertiary education students. The results reveal that adaptability/flexibility, time management, English oral communication, critical thinking and problem solving are the most important student perceived transferrable skills in relation to their future employability and professional success; however, the perceived opportunities to use and improve these skills as well as student satisfaction with the ability to use them in the classroom vary, and, therefore, should be addressed when considering further development of the English for Business course curriculum and its delivery. As an outcome of this study, ESP program providers and educators will have a better understanding of the students' skill set and be able to provide their students with the tools and strategies they need to effectively learn and thrive in the ESP courses.

Keywords: *ESP classroom, 21st century educational thinking and planning, tertiary education students, English for Business course curriculum, Oman*



Maysa Qutob, Fatimah Alzahrani and Eatedal Alghamdi

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AN INSIGHT INTO FEMALE SECONDARY LEARNERS' DIFFICULTIES AND NEEDS IN WRITING IN THE SAUDI CONTEXT



Curriculum development has been carried out to improve English as a foreign language (EFL) courses in Saudi public schools; however, EFL learners still have difficulties in writing. This study examines the difficulties that Saudi EFL learners face in writing in secondary high schools. The study also aims to identify 12th grade EFL learners' needs in improving their writing skills. This study can provide curriculum designers and EFL teachers with the data needed to make improvements to a curriculum that meet EFL learners' needs. The participants were 216 female EFL learners studying in public schools in Jeddah. A questionnaire including closed items on a Likert scale and one open-ended question were used to collect data, which were then analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The results illustrate that learners' main difficulties in EFL writing are mechanics, use of proper vocabulary, and organization of texts. Additionally, learners expressed their needs and suggestions for improving their writing skills which are related to the specific difficulties they face. Moreover, most of the learners suggested extra training in writing as a solution to overcome the difficulties they face. These findings are discussed in the light of previous literature, and theoretical and practical implications are proposed. Accordingly, we suggest establishing a well-designed writing program which provides learners with sufficient training in writing skills by increasing the number of hours given to writing. In addition, schools should also consider using technology to provide online training, so learners have the chance to practice writing outside the class with close follow-up by an English teacher. Moreover, schools might establish summer writing courses or after school writing training programs for learners to join and improve their weaknesses.

Keywords: *needs analysis, curriculum design, writing skills, EFL difficulties, high school*



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Vivekananda Global University, India

CLOUD TECHNOLOGY FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES



Language should not be a barrier to learning, be it an engineering class having students of diverse background, culture and language or be it a class in a professional medical college with students of medicine and surgery. Teaching subjects in English to those who are not native English speakers is most of the times a challenging job especially in circumstances where English language is introduced late in the school academic curriculum. There are several challenges faced by students as well as teachers and several mechanisms have been suggested and adopted to deal with such situation so that student learning experience is not affected in a significant manner and at the same time teachers are also not facing problems while explaining concepts or topics to students. This research paper is a study pertaining to helping teachers and students in these situations by providing cloud-based knowledge base related to TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), repositories and apps that may help and assist teacher and students. This research paper explores the technological assistance that can be provided to teachers in the age of Information and communications technology. This research paper is a mere effort to enhance teaching experience by providing appropriate cloud resources to teachers and students.

Keywords: *Cloud for TESOL, Cloud Computing, Cloud Support*

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**PGCET FACULTY PERSPECTIVES WORKING ON
ONLINE COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS: A CASE STUDY
IN MIDDLE EAST COLLEGE**



The present paper sought to find answers to these questions: (a) What do faculties involved in online collaborative projects think about this type of projects?, (b) What issues, if any, do they report they have faced when working on online collaborative projects (OCPs)?, and (c) What impacts do they state OCPs have on their teaching practices? It used a questionnaire administered to a group of PG Cert student-faculty (n=50) from Middle East College to get to know about their personal perspectives concerning the questions set above. The results obtained revealed (a) a highly positive feedback on the part of the study participants as to their involvements in online collaborative projects, (b) very different reports on issues faced when working on online collaborative projects, and (c) varying degrees of impacts of OCPs on their teaching practices. The potential implications of these and other results on teacher practices and involvement in such OCPs are discussed.

Keywords: *Online Collaborative Projects (OCPs), teacher beliefs and practices, PG Cert student-faculty, teacher professional development*



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EDUCATION RESILIENCE IN THE OMANI HEIS IN TIME OF COVID-19



This research examines aspects of resilience that is built into the Omani higher educational system. Resilience is a term in education concerned with the readiness of the educational institution to respond to challenging and unpredictable conditions. The rapid spread of COVID-19 has put the higher education institutions worldwide in an unprecedented situation that they had to respond to. As a way to respond to this pandemic, Omani higher education institutions transitioned to distance and or online learning. This situation has posed questions about the readiness of these institutions for such a transition in terms of the skills and traits their stakeholders possess in such challenging and unforeseeable circumstances. The study integrates quantitative data (surveys) as well as qualitative data from focused interviews and semi-structured interviews of practices and policies that contribute to the readiness of Omani HEIs to respond to unforeseeable conditions. The study, being carried out simultaneously with COVID-19, provides uniquely rigorous data. In light of the findings, the study presents a model for developing educational policy that ensures building resilience in the Omani higher educational institutions. This model functions as a guide to prepare stakeholders and to design adaptable programmes for any future unpredictable and challenging conditions.

Keywords: *resilience, readiness, educational institution, COVID-19*



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UNLOCKING TECHNOLOGY FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING: A VIABILITY AT THE TIME OF TRANSITION FROM TRADITIONAL TO ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING



Online teaching and learning activities are no longer ‘a nice-to-have extracurricular facility’ but an answer to what, how, when people learn and where they learn it from. The digitization of education helps us to find answers to how technology can enable teachers and students to access specialized materials outside classroom, in various formats and ways that help to utilize both time and space. Virtual laboratories are providing an opportunity not only to learn about experiments but also how to design and conduct them. Educators all over the world are trying to overcome the limitations of being physically separated by moving onto online learning platforms. This paper attempts to answer the following questions: (i) Is virtual language learning feasible and a viable alternative to traditional teaching methods? (ii) How effective it is going to be in helping the learners of EFL? (iii) Will technology replace the conventional education in all its entirety, or the older methods will coexist? (iv) Is the learning environment in Oman sufficiently equipped to implement Virtual Education as an alternative? What are the opportunities and difficulties? (v) Is the use of technology indispensable for language learning in the present-day context? If so, then will it be a supplement or a complement to traditional way of language learning. Evidence for this research is based on literature review and an online questionnaire answered by teachers and students involved in teaching/learning EFL. It was found that the concept of virtual education is feasible, but its success depends upon the effective content generation, designing and planning for its delivery and the effective use of teaching/learning tools that can supplement the efforts of the teachers. Machines cannot replace teachers because learners not only require content, they need motivation, inspiration and emotional support which can be given only by humans. Not only do the colleges and educational institutions need to be well-equipped the learners also need adapt to the changing scenario.

Keywords: *digitization of education, access to specialized materials, classroom, online learning platforms, feasibility, effective content generation, motivation, inspiration, emotional support*



Thomas Brett

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PRINCIPLED ECLECTICISM IN THE CLASSROOM

Many language teachings approaches have come in and out of fashion. The Audio-Lingual method, which emphasizes behaviorist inspired, teacher-led, repetitive drills was once considered the quintessence of ELT (English Language Teaching). Nowadays the constructivist Communicative Approach which places the learner at the centre of the language learning process (Prida, 2017) is the standard in most ELT settings.

Exploring the tension between behaviorist/constructivist dichotomies and searching for common ground between the two schools of thought can give rise to alternative ELT approaches. A 'Principled Eclectic' Approach to language teaching (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, Mellow, 2000) is one such approach whereby a pluralism of methodologies is favoured in the pursuit of more effective Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Using Brown's Post-Method Principles (2002) and Mellow's Two-Dimensional Model and Centring Principle (2002) as a guide and point of reference, teachers can gauge their approach and effectiveness in a more dynamic learning environment.

A two-part research study aimed to introduce a more Principled Eclectic Approach to academic English instruction in higher education. Firstly, translation aimed to let students bring their mother-tongue into the classroom as a way to compare and contrast Arabic idioms with English equivalents. The rationale for this exercise being the more meaningful the encounter with the target language, the better the acquisition. The second experiment looked to use music as a way to create a more relaxed learning environment during reading comprehension activities. The premise being that we acquire language better when we are relaxed. Both teacher and student feedback from the study revealed that the content was balanced, coherent, met the needs of the learners and the needs of the wider syllabus. Students were positive when taking part in the lessons as they believed that the methodologies tested helped them with their English SLA. Subsequently, they wanted further exposure to these methodologies.

Keywords: *principled eclecticism, pluralism of methodologies, post-method principles, two-dimensional model, centering principle, translation, music, second language acquisition*



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**SUMMARY VERSUS ARGUMENT TASK CONDITIONS: BOOSTING
READERS' META PRESENTATIONAL CAPACITY IN MULTIPLE TEXTS
COMPREHENSION**

This experiment examined the impacts of summary and argument task conditions. The objective of the study is to compare and contrast the beneficial effects of task conditions on students' comprehension of multiple texts on corruption in Nigeria. Forty undergraduate students read three documents on the topic and answered comprehension questions on them. Argumentative essay on the causes of corruption in Nigeria for one group and summary writing on the same topic for the other group were used as instrument for the study. It was found that readers in the summary group performed higher than those in argument condition in terms of comprehension measured by deep and complex meta presentational use. The study suggested that teachers, curriculum developers as well as educational administrators can encourage students acquire deeper knowledge through reading multiple texts on a given topic. Both educational and theoretical implications of the findings were discussed.

Keywords: *summary, argument, meta presentation, multiple texts*



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TECHNOLOGY AND LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING



This research work emphasises on the impact of a pandemic like COVID-19 on learning and teaching and how this problem can be overcome by adopting an E-learning method to ensure the continuation of education under any circumstance. For instance, in troubled times like the pandemic of “Coronavirus” which is afflicting the world and hampering face to face teaching, online classes are like a redeeming grace, bridging the gap between the institutions, facilitators, instructors and students in language learning continued programs. This research throws light on how E-learning is effective in higher educational institutions in Oman and worldwide. Here we will see the three dimensions of online teaching starting with preparation, execution and verification leading to negative and positive results. These results are supported by real-life experiences and ideas shared by the stakeholders, instructors and the students who are a part of this method of teaching and learning. Here, we will also get detailed information on the various challenges and solutions involved in making this system more remunerative in an emergency. This study gives a clear background of the mechanism, dimensions and strategies of E-learning in a crisis.

Keywords: *COVID-19, online teaching, E-learning dimensions*



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**NEW PEDAGOGICAL ORIENTATIONS AND APPROACHES AND ESP CLASSROOM:
FOCUS ON INSTILLING THE SENSE OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**



New pedagogical orientations and approaches in English language teaching give special importance to the students' preparedness for the 21st century needs of employment and their empowerment with different crucial skills that enable them to relate key issues to their own lives. These skills also lay a solid foundation for the students in becoming accountable and responsible citizens in the future. This paper examines social action projects integrated into the English for Business and English for Science courses' curricula at Sultan Qaboos University as effective learning activities for Omani students. In the beginning, it engages the audience into a discussion of the contemporary English classroom and its recent trends that involve strategic teaching and learning associated with encouraging the development of student thinking as well as language content, outcomes, and learning activities (Boraie, 2013). Then, it examines the concept of social responsibility and the ways to integrate it into student social action projects, by looking at topics that suggest societal and individual obligation towards the benefit of society at large. Here, the particular focus is on projects' content that involves, for example, non-profit charity organizations that students develop while implementing solutions to social, cultural, or environmental issues and discovering more efficient ways and methods of English language learning and practice. It also discusses critical research considerations of projects-related teaching and learning strategies and methods, including collaborative, constructive and self-directed learning, that stimulate, develop and improve students' aptitudes and competencies, respond to their needs and further enhance their personal and academic growth, ethical and sensitive behavior, linguistic and socio-cultural advancement, and social responsibility. Some practical recommendations for constructing social action projects for tertiary education students in Oman are also provided.

Keywords: *social responsibility, ethical behavior, self-directed learning, social action, projects*

ESP



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INVESTIGATING COLLEGE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE ON CRITICAL MEDIA LITERACY



Despite the numerous benefits presented within Critical Media Literacy (CML) in understanding societies, cultures, and even our own values and identities at a global scale, the lack of teacher preparation in teaching (CML) skills remains noteworthy. Such an education could arm teachers with a sufficient media literacy competence to pass on to students' capabilities in democratic self-expression and social progress. English Language teachers are, of course, no exception. The research gap that exists therefore leads to this qualitative research study to explore how a group of (5) College EFL teachers, in a Middle Eastern institution, relate to critical media awareness as they deconstruct a US film entitled 'Freedom Writers' (2007) to discuss issues related to social injustice, prejudice, and violence in society. The method used to collect data was semi-structured interviews. The interview questions, guided by a semiotic Inquiry Graphics (IG) approach, aimed to capture those EFL teachers' interpretations, values and beliefs relevant to CML and their subsequent intentions to teach critical media education in their future classrooms. The findings suggest that although the teachers demonstrated positive attitudes and an increased awareness in CML having engaged in an CML exercise, they still lacked confidence in applying it and needed to further expand their perceptions of CML. This is since CML is being seen as helpful for students in its ability to develop their criticality and citizenship aligned with socially just values. However, the teachers stressed the harsh realities of a packed curriculum and restrictive program requirements that obstruct any comprehensive implementation of critical media literacy education at a university level, an issue that merits further consideration.

Keywords: *critical media literacy, EFL teachers, social justice, semiotics, inquiry graphics approach*



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GLOBALISATION AND ITS IMPACT ON HIGHER EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF COLLEGES OF TECHNOLOGY IN OMAN

In this paper the goal is to shed light on how globalization processes have impacted higher education institutions in the Sultanate of Oman in terms of using English as a foreign language and the concept of memorization. The paper will highlight some examples from local higher education institutions [Colleges of Technology] in Oman through the lens of the World Systems theory, dependency theory, and the process of globalization. This paper will define the concept of globalization, along with providing insight into its role in shaping higher education in Oman, along with the impact of institutional policies and culture. The World Systems Theory, and the notion of dependency, will be expounded upon to show their linkages to education in Oman within the global educational system. The conclusion will highlight these points to give further clarity to the scope of this paper.

Keywords: *globalization, education, dependency, culture*



Dr. Zahra Al Lawati and Dr. Mohammad Athar Khan

Sultan Qaboos University, Oman

**INVESTIGATING TEACHING OF 21ST CENTURY SKILLS IN EAP COURSES:
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY**



The 21st century demands an explicit integration of a variety of skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication. ESL/EFL schools provide students with practices and processes focused on acquiring, developing and mastering these skills. This study critically looks at the practices and approaches of teaching these 21st Century skills in EAP courses at CPS, SQU.

The paper shares the findings of a mixed method research study, which adopts both qualitative and quantitative approaches. In this study, the researchers critically analyse teaching materials through content analysis, carry out classroom observations, conduct an online survey for both students and teachers and finally interview some teachers.

The paper will summarize, very briefly, the secondary research in the area of 21st Century skills, their relations theoretically and empirically and the different frameworks of teaching these skills. In light of the secondary research, the presentation will discuss the findings of the study in terms of the amount of each skill taught; the kinds of activities used, and finally propose a working framework for teaching EAP skills in an EFL/ESL context. The findings, it is hoped, will help practitioners, policy planners and curriculum developers.

Keywords: *21st century skills, critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, teaching framework*



Muhammad Akram And Anser Mahmood

Govt Postgraduate College Burewala, Pakistan

The University Of Lahore

A CORRELATION STUDY OF ENGLISH TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DISCERNING AND THEIR CRITICAL THINKING



A great deal of research is done on teacher training and teacher education around the globe, but few studies appeared on teachers' professional discerning and particularly on teachers' critical thinking skills. Critical thinking, with regard to language teachers, has not been taken into consideration early on. This study explores the relationship between English teachers' professional discerning and their critical thinking. The participants (entirely volunteers) consisted of 127 English teachers teaching English at different universities in Pakistan. For the purpose of data collection, the researcher used a professional discerning (identity) research tool adopted from Sheybani & Miri (2019) and a critical thinking inventory (CTI) designed by the researcher himself. To analyze the relationship between professional discerning of teachers and their critical thinking, the data were analyzed by SPSS (XX). The results of analysis unfolded that the sub-constructs of professional discerning questionnaire tool are predicted by critical thinking. A positive and statistically significant correlation was found. The findings of the study highlight the pivotal role of critical thinking in shaping language teachers' professional discerning particularly in their teaching context. The study proves the inventive conduct of language teachers in the present era of knowledge and learning. The study would serve the purpose of pedagogical implication of inculcating critical thinking skills in learners to build up their aptitude and to expand their perspectives in learning English. The study will positively contribute to the field of language teaching and learning and would open up new vistas for syllabus designers and academia.

Keywords: *Teachers' professional identity, critical thinking, EFL teachers, correlation*



Arturo Palaming

Sur University College, Oman

**PROJECT BASED LEARNING (PBL): A PATHWAY TO DEVELOP READING
AND RESEARCH SKILLS OF STUDENTS**



Project Based Learning (PBL) is a teaching method in which students learn by actively engaging in real-world and personally meaningful projects. Students work on a project over an extended period of time – from a week up to a semester that engages them in solving a real-world problem or answering a complex question. They demonstrate their knowledge and skills by creating a product or presentation for a real audience. As a result, students develop deep content knowledge as well as critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication skills. Project Based Learning unleashes a contagious, creative energy among students and teachers. It is a teaching method in which students’ gains knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge. PBL is becoming widely used in teaching and other educational settings, with different varieties being practiced. Along with this line, the researcher study on the effect of PBL as a strategy to enhance the reading and research skills of the students. In this presentation, the researcher presents different patterns and models on how to conduct Project Based Learning to develop the Reading and Research skills of the students. This strategy is a vehicle for teaching the important knowledge and skills student need to learn. The study made used of experimental research to two groups of students. The students can create high-quality work, students need to do much more than remember information. They need to use higher order thinking skills and learn to work as a team.

Keywords: *Project-based Learning, teaching strategy, teaching and learning*



Saleh Abdo

Middle East College, Oman

CHALLENGES FACED BY LEVEL 2 FOUNDATION STUDENTS AT MIDDLE EAST COLLEGE IN ACQUIRING WRITING SKILLS

This action research aims to shed light on level 2 Foundation Program students at the Middle East College common difficulties in acquiring writing skill. According to the Middle East College, writing is a core module introduced in the Foundation Program. It is a three-semester, year-long course that prepares Foundation Program Students for academic English writing tasks.

Although, the objectives of the course seem to be specific and straightforward, there are some students who encounter serious challenges in acquiring the writing learning outcomes. The primary learning outcomes of this module are: writing different types of academic assignments. 30-40 hours of Classroom observation for level 2 students will be used by the researcher to collect data on what components are present, and what is their sequence of occurrence and study the displayed skills. These observations help the observer for planning and developing remedial activities. Then error analysis of students' written assignments which will reveal some therapeutic activities. These activities will be evaluated by enquiring into the nature of difficulties students face and identifying specific weaknesses of students to find what could be useful and suggest some remedial actions that could facilitate the process of acquiring such skills.

Twenty-five students' writings from level 2 Foundation Program at the (MEC) (Middle East College) will be studied and analyzed during the academic year 2020. The students are of the same level of achievement and had almost the same background. That is, they spent similar number years learning English in primary and secondary schools. In spite of this long period of learning the English language, their level of writing seems to be below the required standard to fulfil the course learning outcomes.

This study might provide useful information about the nature of difficulties that FND (Foundation) students face in acquiring writing skills. It is also hoping that instructors of FND students to use such information in preparing materials and tasks in advance to minimize the influence of those problems and come up with more effective teaching materials that meets the student needs and interests. The disturbance caused by Covid 19 and the online teaching are the possible research limitations that can affect my study.

Keywords: *writing skills, GFP context, challenges*



Asma Al-Aufi And Vikas Rao Naidu

Middle East College, Oman

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE USE OF LMS TO FACILITATE FLIPPED
LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN HEI CONTEXT:
A DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION**



Learning Management System (LMS) is becoming an integral part of education technology in every institution. Almost all the Higher Education Institutions (HEI) are using LMS to facilitate their majority of teaching and learning process, especially when it comes to sharing of learning materials and conduct of assessments. But it's very important to study the effectiveness of this and what is the basic perception of students on the usage of LMS and various plugins to support their learning process from time to time not only to ensure the quality but also to evaluate various strategies for its future enhancement. This study adopts a developmental evaluation framework to evaluate students' satisfaction and perception on the use of Learning Management System (LMS) in their experiential Flipped Learning (FL) of English language modules. The evaluation follows the pragmatic paradigm based on Dewey's theory to allow for mixed-method instruments to be employed for a better understanding of the online technological approach exploring its challenges and opportunities within the HEI context under-study. The small-scale evaluative study quantitatively surveyed 70 respondents and focus group interviewed 10 students about their FL experience in their perspective English modules. The depiction of this experience represented positive responses emphasizing how FL technology-enhanced individualized/experiential learning reinforced in life-long learning skills suitable for career practice. Recommendations are offered for LMS to facilitate enhanced flipped teaching implementation promoting the student-centred environment suitable for a wider practice of active learning in HEI contexts.

Keywords: *education technology, developmental evaluation, experiential learning, flipped learning in English modules, learning management system*



Mahmood Al-Raisi and Vikas Rao Naidu

Middle East College, Oman

ENHANCING ENGLISH VOCABULARY OF FOUNDATION STUDENTS BY MEANS OF AUGMENTED REALITY GAME WITH VOICE COMMANDS



In education, the best way to deliver the learning outcome clearly is to use it practically. In Computer Technologies, you practice what you learned and same is the case with languages; you must practice the language. But not everyone uses a non-native language daily. Most of the students of this technology-era play games and some of them even spend more time on games than their studies. There are many popular games which are being played by the students, that uses different languages. E.g. there are Japanese manga cartoon-based games which speak in Japanese language (spoken instructions), but the teens around the globe play them without any hurdle and in-fact they learn this new language. Studies revealed that many students learn a new language from simply playing games because they feel, they want to know what the foreign word means in order to advance in the game. Studies have shown that because of games teens are learning how to pronounce difficult words properly. This research paper is in favour of the development of such games where the student (player) uses voice interaction to interact with the game. In this way students will learn the proper pronunciation of some words also at the same time the student will continue to play the game in order to finish it. To support the studies, a survey is conducted on a sample size of 50 participants of an HEI in Oman which includes students and the faculty members of foundation studies. Analysis has shown that many students and faculty are much interested to adopt such teaching and learning methodologies in their language learning sessions. The authors would provide a detailed framework to design an effective game that improves pronunciations since practice makes the learning process easy and perfect. The proposed game would be developed by means of the latest multimedia technology which is Augmented Reality.

Keywords: *game-based learning, education technology, augmented reality, experiential learning, vocabulary games for language learning*



Lina Lafta Jassim

University of Thiqr, Iraq

**THE TYPES OF VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES USED BY IRAQI
EFL STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**



First, this study aims to indicate the strategies types that are employed by Iraqi EFL students to learn vocabulary. Second, it aims to study the influence of meta-cognitive methods instruction on the use of methods for learning English vocabulary. To achieve these aims, the author presents two questions: What kinds of strategies are used to learn vocabulary among Iraqi EFL students? and which strategies are used most repeatedly among Iraqi EFL students at Iraqi University of Technology? Tests of vocabulary(pre/post-test) were used in this research to get the aim of the experiment. The author used tests to indicate the influence of meta-cognitive methods on the process of learning English vocabulary. Therefore, Tests of vocabulary(pre/post-test) were used in order to achieve the purpose of the experiment. In this regard, tests were used to show the influence of meta-cognitive methods on the process of learning vocabulary. Tests of this study relied on Nation's multiple-choice test of vocabulary knowledge (1990) which was used in this study. The researcher asked thirty Iraqi EFL students from the University of Technology to be participants in the current study. Fifteen was the number of males and the same number was for female students. Those students were learning English in a foreign class. The findings indicated that the group was included in this study was better than the control group in the post-training vocabulary test.

Keywords: *learning methods, vocabulary, meta-cognition*



Ramesh Govindarajan

Nizwa College of Technology, Oman

**INCORPORATING ELECTRONIC GAMES AND ACTIVITIES IN ELT CLASS
FOR BETTER ENGAGEMENT OF STUDENTS**



Students' active engagement and participation in the learning process have always been considered as most desirable factors in ELT classes. In order to attain better engagement of students, educators in general opt for integration of technology which has a strong impact on all fields including education. The present generation of students, who are called 'digital natives', mostly welcome technology integrated teaching, especially when it is relevant to their learning outcomes. Interestingly, when gamification (the concept of adding game elements to a non-game situation) and interactive activities are incorporated with technology using the right platforms, students are highly motivated and they willingly take part in them. The web-based gamification and interactive activities are adaptable for both regular face-to-face classes and online synchronous and asynchronous classes. Similar to the carefulness needed in the choice of using right technology, teachers should also be rational in choosing and designing appropriate tasks/activities for gamification and interaction. Although teachers may face some issues in their attempt to use gamification and interactive activities, there are many possible solutions. This paper attempts to explore and discuss how gamification and interactive activities can be explored, designed and integrated in ELT classes to ensure better students' engagement.

Keywords: *electronic games, interactive tasks, gamification*



Abdulrahman Bajunid

King Saud Bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, Saudi Arabia

ACCOMMODATING MULTICULTURALISM THROUGH SAFETY AND INCLUSIVENESS: FOUR CULTURAL COMPONENTS TO ADDRESS IN OUR CLASSROOMS, CHALLENGES, AND SOLUTIONS

The present paper is about accommodating diversity in our educational settings. I indicate that the only way to address such an important aspect is by providing safety and inclusiveness; only then, our students will feel they are included and respected. I have my paper divided into three parts. In the first, I introduce what multiculturalism and safety are and how they are important. I also discuss the reasons why diversity became an inevitable description of all classrooms today in spite of the setting. I then illustrate on the advantages of having multiculturalism addressed in the classroom and what would happen if our educational settings lack it. I finish this part with emphasizing the role of educators in ensuring that their classrooms are safe for students. In the second part, I demonstrate that providing safety to the students, though might sound easy, will rely heavily on four cultural components: religion and beliefs, race and ethnicity, sexuality and gender, and language and accent. Without addressing all the four mentioned aspects, multiculturalism might never be attained, and students will not feel secured to learn. I discuss all of these aspects in details and explain why each is important. In the final part, I turn to discuss why accommodating diversity might be problematic and difficult to implement and what some of the suggested solutions are. Some of these challenges are having opposing beliefs among cultures that cannot be addressed in the classroom and the lack of teachers' awareness. Equally, some of the solutions are to raise the students' awareness about respecting each other's cultures and using non-discriminatory language in the classroom. I conclude that we, as educators, need to develop our knowledge in order to be more aware of the different cultures that our students possess and act upon that.

Keywords: *multiculturalism, safe houses and safety, inclusiveness, diversity*



Zahra Farajnezhad and Dr. Omid Tabatabaei

Isfahan, Iran

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND READING
COMPREHENSION ABILITY AND VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE OF
IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS IN TEHRAN AZAD UNIVERSITIES**

The purpose of the present study was to determine whether EQ, as an interpersonal skill and innate potential, had any relationship between reading comprehension and Vocabulary Knowledge of learners. To this end, 150 Iranian EFL learners studying at Islamic Azad University (IAU) took an Oxford Placement Test (OPT); 150 candidates (95 males and 55 females) who were at the intermediate level were selected as the participants of the study and hence took the self-report measure Emotional Intelligence Quotient Quiz. The validity and reliability of EQi were measured and the instrument was found to be valid and highly internally consistent. Correlation and regression analysis were performed to test the hypotheses. Results revealed that there was not a strong relationship between Emotional Intelligence and EFL learners' reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge.

Keywords: *emotional intelligence, reading comprehension, vocabulary knowledge*



Syeda Saima Ferheen Bukhari

ELI, University of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

EMPOWERING 21ST CENTURY ESL/EFL LEARNERS



21st Century learning demands certain global competencies to be developed in ESL learners in order to enable them to think outside the box and to deal effectively with the challenges of everyday life. It is crucial to prepare the learners to understand the world's complexities and how to cope with them. Effective strategies can enhance good thinking skills that can support the cognitive development. Memorizing data or facts does not empower brains with cognitive skills, which are imperative to think wise and evaluate a situation critically to analyze evidences, determine causes, avoid assumptions, and draw conclusions. Some systematic thinking patterns and prompts can help learners develop habits of mind. The session aims at familiarizing the audience with the process of assessing learners' readiness for learning, creating tasks according to the learners' level of variance, and applying conversation techniques to nurture the learners' cognitive competence. The session will have engaging activities and ideas for attendees to gain a fruitful experience

Keywords: *21st Century learning, global competence, cognitive development, systematic thinking patterns, learners' readiness, engaging tasks*



Saadia Mesti

**LANGUAGE READING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON LEARNERS'
PRONUNCIATION; A CASE STUDY FROM OMAN**



The practices of English language reading instructions at the Pakistani schools in Sultanate of Oman are based on whole word approach and apparently lack understanding of knowledge of phonetics. This paper is an attempt to conduct a phonetics and phonological analysis of a first grade learner (a case study) based on an evaluation of the pronunciation of the learner's reading of a text taken from an English language textbook and is compared with the performance of a native speaker's reading of the same text. The focus of the paper is on two main characteristics of pronunciation features; segmental and super-segmental, by using the International Phonetic Alphabets symbols to illustrate the sounds. The analysis demonstrates a significant variation in learner's speech sounds from a native speaker sound. The solutions can be as to train the teachers in linguistic education in order to sharpen skills in spoken English and structured reading instructions.

Keywords: *phonetics and phonology, segmental and super-segmental, IPA, Pakistani School, instructions, sounds, pronunciation*



Asma Al-Aufi, Amjed Ayyat

Middle East College, Oman

**ENHANCING LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS USING INTERACTIVE
ONLINE TOOLS IN THE HEIS CONTEXT**



Online learning has been the most prominent teaching method utilized by HEIs during the COVID 19 pandemic. There are abundant online learning websites to practice reading skills, writing skills, vocabulary, and grammar. However, there are very limited interactive websites for students to practice and develop their listening and speaking skills. Therefore, this study, which was conducted at a private HEI in Oman, examines English Foundation students' perspectives on the use of two distinctive websites *ESL-lab.com* and *Youglish.com* in enhancing their listening and speaking skills. The study employed a quantitative approach. An online survey was administered to 45 student participants enrolled in the General Foundation Programme (GFP) to explore their views on the chosen interactive websites. The main findings reveal positive feedback from the ESL students where they gained exposure to authentic conversational contexts which accustomed them to different English-speaking cultures and lifestyles. Overall, the two websites proved to be highly interactive and effective in enhancing the listening and speaking skills of students. The effectiveness of the use of the two websites in preparing students to undertake the tasks assigned to them in their disciplines are discussed.

Keywords: *Listening and speaking skills, GFP students, Technology and ESL, Innovative practice*



Conference Programme

8:00 - 8:30	Getting Online Join the session using this link	
8:30- 8:400	National Anthem Recitation of the Holy Quran	
8:40 - 8:50	Welcome Remarks	Dr. Kiran G R Conference Chair Dean, Middle East College
8:50 - 9:00	Introduction to the event and the first keynote speaker	Dr. Samia Naqvi Conference Secretary Head, Center for Foundation Studies, MEC
9:00 - 9:40	First KeynSpeech	Prof. Thomas Robb Professor Emeritus Kyoto Sangyo University
9:40-9:45	Break	
9:45 - 1:15	Parallel Sessions 9:45-10:10 Presentation 1 10:10-10:45 Presentation 2 10:45-11:10 Presentation 3 11:10 -11:35 Presentation 4 11:35 -12:00 Presentation 5 12:00-12:25 Presentation 6 12:25-12:50 Presentation 7 12:50-13:15 Presentation 8	4 parallel online sessions
13:15-13:50	Lunch Break	
13:50-13:55	Introduction to the afternoon programme and keynote speaker	Mr. Suleiman Rashid Said Al Adawi Assistant HoD and Programme Manager, Centre for Foundation Studies
13:55-14:35	Second Keynote Speech	Dr. Ali Al-Issa Associate professor Department of Curriculum and Instruction College of Education Sultan Qaboos University, Oman
14:35-14:40	Break	
14:40-16:55	Parallel Sessions 14:40-15:05 Presentation 1 15:05-15:30 Presentation 2 15:30-15:55 Presentation 3 15:55-16:20 Presentation 4 16:20- 16:45 Presentation 5	4 parallel online sessions
16:45- 16:50	Break	
16:50-16:55	Summary of Findings / Deliberations	Dr. Priya Mathew Head, Center for Academic Writing, MEC

2nd MEC TESOL Conference

28th October 2020

**Emerging Trends and Contemporary Issues in
Language Learning: The EFL Context**



16:55-17:00	Closing Remarks / Vote of Thanks	Dr. Ahmed Nawaz Conference Vice Chair, Associate Dean, MEC
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Schedule of Presentations

Morning Session I

Session 1 Theme: ELT during the Pandemic Chair: Dr. Asfiya Khan Join the session using this link	Session 2 Theme: 21st Century Language Classroom Chair: Mr. Sulaiman Al Adawi Join the session using this link	Session 3 Theme: English for Academic Purposes Chair: Mr. Mahdi Sulaiman Join the session using this link	Session 4 Theme: Innovative Pedagogies for Arab Learners Chair: Dr. Radhika Narayanan Join the session using this link
9:45- 10:10 am			
A Case Study of an Online Extensive Reading Program in the Sultanate of Oman Syerina Syahrin	Student-Directed Learning: Creating Autonomy by Student Involvement in Course Design and Peer Teaching Muhammad Rashid	Skill-based ESP classroom: Teaching for preserving and enhancing Oman's comparative advantages in an era of economic and digital transformation Peter Heckadon and Victoria Tuzlukova	The effectiveness of teacher electronic feedback in asynchronous teaching: a case study of foundation students at Sultan Qaboos University Tareq Al Damen
10:10-10:45 am			
Education Resilience in the Omani HEIs in Time of COVID-19 Basim Al Mushaifri, Faisal Al Saidi and Issa Al Hanai	Problem Based Learning: Engaging and Empowering Learners Moin Amena	Nurturing Entrepreneurship Skills, Creativity and Communication skills: An Exploratory Study on Arab EFL Learners Samia Naqvi	New pedagogical orientations and approaches and ESP classroom: Focus on instilling the sense of social responsibility Pooja Sancheti, Anfal Al Wahaibi and Zainab Al Belushi
10:45-11:10 am			
A Structural Approach to E-learning in a Pandemic Zeb Fatima	Empowering 21st Century ESL/EFL Learners Syeda Saima Ferheen Bukhari	Project Based Learning (PBL): A Pathway to Develop Reading and Research Skills of Students Arturo Palaming	Principled Eclecticism in the classroom Thomas Brett
11:10- 11:35 am			
Online Emergency Remote Teaching During COVID 19: Challenges and Innovative Practices Samia Naqvi and Insiya Zehra	<i>21st Century Language Classroom</i> Globalisation and its impact on higher education: A case study of Colleges of Technology in Oman Saud Albusaidi	The Incorporation of Soft Skills in the New Reform of the Moroccan Bachelor: Implementing Democratic and Social Integrity through Project-Based Learning Abdelaaziz El Bakkali	Investigating College Teachers' Perspective on Critical Media Literacy Asma Al Aafi



Morning Session II			
Session 1 Theme: Technology and Language Learning Chair: Dr. Nizar Al Bassam Join the session using this link	Session 2 Theme: Corpus Linguistics and Discourse Analysis Chair: Mr. Samir Mohand Cherif Join the session using this link	Session 3 Theme: Academic Writing Chair: Dr. Smitha Kumaran Nair Join the session using this link	Session 4 Theme: Flipped Learning /Technology and Language learning Chair: Dr. Vijaykumar Srinivasan Join the session using this link
11.35 am -12 pm			
Enhancing English Vocabulary of Foundation Students by Means of Augmented Reality Game with Voice Commands Mahmood Al-Raisi and Vikas Rao Naidu	Enhancing Writing Skills of ESL Students by Using COCA in the General Foundation Program Context Amjed Ayyat	English Language Learners' Experiences of Writing Courses at University of Technology and Applied Sciences-Rustaq Moza Al-Malki	
12 -12.25 pm			
Evaluation of Hypermedia tools in terms of Usability Heuristics for English Language Teaching, Vikas Rao Naidu, Shyamala Srinivas, Mahmood Al-Raisi and Vishal Dattana	A Small-Scale Exploratory Case Study on Students' Perceptions of Pragmatic Meaning Embedded in Memes Maher Al Rashidi	Teaching IELTS academic writing and exam strategies online to develop Omani students' writing proficiency Radhika S.N. and Priya Mathew	The Implementation of Flipped Classroom in ELT Contexts: A Review of Recent Literature Maryam Haghi
12.25-12.50 pm			
Unlocking Technology for Language Learning: Viability at the time of transition from traditional to online teaching and learning Reema Srivastava	Significance of Mother Tongue in EFL context: a Critical Discourse Analysis Shadma Iffat Rahmatullah	An Insight into Female Secondary Learners' Difficulties and Needs in Writing in the Saudi Context Maysa Qutob, Fatimah Al Zahrani and Eatedal Alghamdi	Students' Perception on the Use of LMS to Facilitate Flipped Learning Experience in HEI Context: A Developmental Evaluation Asma Al Aafi and Vikas Rao Naidu
12.50-1.15 pm			



Enhancing Listening and Speaking Skills Using Interactive Online Tools in the HEIs Context Amjed Ayyat and Asma Al-Aufi			A Comparative Analysis Of Traditional Flipping Versus Virtual Flipping Asiya Tabassum
Afternoon Session			
Session 1 Thme : Curriculum Design Chair: Mr. Mohammed Rashid Join the session using this link	Session 2 Theme: Assessment Chair: Dr. Mounir Dhibi Join the session using this link	Session 2 Theme: Technology and Language Learning Chair: Dr. Reema Srivastava Join the session using this link	Session 4 Theme: Vocabulary and Reading Chair: Ms. Dhivya Bino Join the session using this link
2.40 -3.05 pm			
Grammar Teaching: A Case Study of a Pakistani School in Sultanate of Oman Saadia Mesti	Test Piloting and Item Analysis: What, Why and How? Mohammad Athar Khan	Cloud Technology for teachers of English to speakers of other languages Anjum Zameer Bhat, Baldev Singh and Teba Fadhil	The Types of vocabulary learning strategies used by Iraqi EFL students at University of Technology Lina Lafta Jassim
3.05-3.30 pm			
A Correlation Study of English Teachers' Professional Discerning and Their Critical Thinking Muhammad Akram and Anser Mahmood	Multimodality and ESL: A case study of aligning assessment with digitized curriculum Ahlem Tabib	Innovative Approach for Learning Material Authoring by TESOL Professionals in Matroska Multimedia Container Format – A proposed Framework Vikas Rao Naidu and Baldev Singh	Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Reading Comprehension Ability and Vocabulary Knowledge of Iranian EFL Learners in Tehran Azad Universities Zahra Farajnezhad and Omid Tabatabaei
3.30-3.55 pm			



Language Policy and the Use of English as the Medium of Instruction in Pakistan Saadia Mesti	Investigating Teaching of 21 st Century Skills in EAP Courses: An Exploratory Study Zahra Al Lawati and Mohammad Athar Khan	PG Cert Student-faculty Perspectives on Online Collaborative Projects: A Case Study Samir Mohand Cherif	The Impact of Mobile Learning on the Acquisition of English Language Listening Skill: An Empirical Study Hussam Alzieni
3.55-4.20 pm			
Linear Or Lograthmic Measurement: A Dilemma? Mohammad Na'man Khan and Dr. Mohammad Athar Khan	Accommodating multiculturalism through safety and inclusiveness: Four cultural components to address in our classrooms, challenges, and solutions Abdulrahman Bajunid	Incorporating electronic games and activities in ELT class for better engagement of students Ramesh Govindarajan	Summary Versus Argument Task Conditions: Boosting Readers' Meta Presentational Capacity In Multiple Texts Comprehension Abdulwahab Badaru and Alti Kasim
4.20-4:45 pm			
The Role of Online Platforms to Elevate Learner's Understanding Zainab Al Ajmi	Error Analysis of Prepositions in the Writing of Intermediate Students at Government College Kot Momin, Pakistan Noureen Aslam and Ali Furqan Syed		Language Reading and Its Implications on Learners' Pronunciation; a Case Study from Oman Saadia Mesti

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Language Learning: The EFL Context



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