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Perceived Challenges in Applying Teacher Education Preparation to Classroom Instruction

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INTRODUCTION

Fourth year students at teacher education college in a Middle East country have completed seven semesters of study in current educational approaches and instructional methodology, as well as involvement in three short-term teaching practicum experiences. These students are being prepared for teaching upper primary students in Grades 1 – 6 (called Cycle 1 for Grades 1 -3 and Cycle 2 for Grades 4 - 6). In their final semester, they are required to apply their learning and skills through a supervised practicum experience in a government school. This paper summarizes a field study of a sample of graduating students that was conducted during their final teaching practicum to determine (1) their perceptions of their pre-service program and (2) the extent to which they applied their learning to teaching in authentic instructional settings.

Background – The Public Education System

The nation’s primary education is organized into a six year sequence of two three-year cycles for children 6-11 years old: Cycle 1 (Grades 1 – 3) and Cycle 2 (Grades 4 – 6). Cycle 1 consists of self-contained classes in which teachers provide instruction in core subject areas, while in Cycle 2, specialist teachers are responsible for each subject.

The educational system has operated under a prescriptive centralized curriculum at all levels. All schools are required to adhere strictly to the content of the established curriculum, completing all units according to an established time-table. The curriculum is a test and textbook-driven system that operates on a set schedule of unit completion with standardized examinations at the end of each semester.

However, the Ministry of Education is currently engaged in the process of education reform with the aim of providing a more flexible structure that provides teachers with more discretion and students with some choices (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013). As part of the reform program, the National Institute of Education in Singapore was contracted to develop the teacher education curriculum for the Teachers College, which was implemented in 2008. However, within the schools, the instructional approach continues to be centralized and employs a rigid approach to teaching and learning (Haslam, 2013).

The Role of the Teachers College in the Education Reform Agenda

The Teachers College was established in 2008 by the Ministry of Education (MOE) in line with the Educational Reform program mandated by the national Vision 2030 economic reform project. The college is a semi-autonomous college established as part of the national university with the directive to prepare teachers, educational administrators, and other education specialists. It is the sole provider of teacher education in the country. The MOE contracted the National Institute of Education (NIE) of Singapore to design and develop the teacher education curriculum for the college. This program places emphasis on the principles of purpose-driven programs, theory-practice link, reflective teachers, establishing instructional standards, and developing authentic and formative assessment procedures.

The college offers a four-year Bachelor of Education (BEd) in Primary Classroom Education that provides a cross-curriculum core to Cycles 1 and 2. In the context of the educational reform process, the purpose of the BEd program is to produce educators who demonstrate the essential professional knowledge, skills, values, and decision-making skills needed by teachers in government schools.

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The college’s students are prepared through a range of teaching-learning strategies such as lectures, tutorials, group work, role playing, interactive communication technology, project work, micro-teaching, behavioral analysis, field work, and self-reflection. Instruction is in both English and Arabic. Program and course assessment procedures include examination, research, oral and written reports, case study analysis, production of evidence (such as teaching-learning aids, unit and lesson plans, and student assessment rubrics), and an ePortfolio.

Expected Competencies

The stated mission of the Teachers College is to provide the best teacher education possible for public school educators and to empower them to contribute effectively to building quality education in the government schools. The college has identified nine competencies that BEd students are expected to master before graduation:

1. **Content Knowledge:** understanding the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline and ability to create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students.

2. **Student Development:** understanding how children learn and develop and how to provide learning opportunities that support a child’s intellectual, social, emotional, moral, and general personal development.

3. **Diverse Learners:** understanding how students differ in their approaches to learning and being able to create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.

4. **Instructional Strategies:** demonstrate ability to plan instruction based on knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals. Understanding and applying a variety of instructional strategies that encourage student development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.

5. **Learning Environment (Classroom Management):** applies understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

6. **Assessment:** understanding and applying formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the learner.

7. **Communication & Instructional Technology:** applying knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and multi-media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.

8. **School, Community, and Civic Engagement:** promoting relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students’ learning and well-being.

9. **Reflective Practice, Ethics and Professionalism:** continually evaluating the effects of instructional choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community) and actively seeking opportunities for professional growth.

THE STUDY

**Purpose**

The research project was designed to conduct a qualitative study using a sample of Year 4 Teacher Education students during their final teaching practicum to determine:

1. student perceptions of their preparation for classroom teaching.
   a. student perceptions of the BEd program’s effectiveness in preparing them to meet the nine competencies
b. student perceptions of the effectiveness of the required courses in preparing them for classroom teaching

2. the extent to which students applied their BEd learning in teaching in classes

Specifically, the aim of this study was to gather and analyze qualitative data on the instructional practices of students in their final semester during their teaching practicum experience to determine:

1. consistent instructional patterns in the students’ teaching
2. the extent of transfer of the students’ academic learning to their observable instructional behaviors.
3. student perceptions of the applicability of their instructional program to authentic classroom settings.
4. student perceptions of constraints they experience when trying to apply the educational approaches they have learned to authentic classroom teaching.

The BEd program emphasizes a decision-making student-centered approach to classroom instruction, which can be described as decision-making teaching that is responsive, collaborative, and problem-solving and in which students actively participate in learning processes (Dupin-Bryant, 2004). BEd courses provide students with background in planning and implementing instruction that is interactive, collaborative, and project-based. This approach is in contrast to the traditional teacher-centered approach that emphasizes formal instruction involving direct instruction based on a set schedule of completion, summative assessment, and passive learning.

The participants were first surveyed and interviewed to determine their perceptions of the BEd curriculum. Then all participants were observed teaching to determine if they behaved as decision-making professionals who used these specific student-centered approaches for teaching their classes, including:

1. Explicit planning of student-centered learning activities.
2. Specification of learning outcomes that emphasized collaborative and interactive instruction.
3. Planned student-teacher and student-student interaction activities.
4. Allowing students some choices in topics for class activities.
5. Progress to next unit determined by students’ performance rather than a set schedule of textbook unit completion.
6. Students given opportunities for independent use of learning.
7. Use of formative and embedded assessment during instruction.

As a result of the participants’ preparation in student-centered learning in the BEd program, the expectation was that their teaching approaches should involve:

1. Classes organized around the learning needs of students rather than completion of a given number of instructional units.
2. Adequate time allocated for essential learning related to both content and performance standards, and that this time is free from external interruptions.
3. Resources allocated to support the instructional program.
4. Students who experience problems in learning receiving extra time and support.
5. Classes are organized in ways that encouraged interactive learning.
Methodology

1. Data Collection: Six 4th Year students assigned to teaching practicum agreed to participate in the study. All participants were assigned to a government primary school to teach at the Cycle 2 level (Grades 4 – 6). Data were collected at a local girl’s upper-primary school over a 15 week period between March and June, 2015. During that period each participant was observed teaching, lesson plans were collected, and all participants returned surveys and joined in interview discussions. The data used for the project included:

   a. Documents – Relevant documents, including lesson plans, student journals, BEd course objectives, and MOE documents were reviewed to establish the context of the practicum experience. In addition, a report on the qualifications of teachers prepared by the college that was published in 2012 by the National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom (UK NARIC) was reviewed as an external support document.

   b. Observations – Four direct observations of each participant’s classroom teaching were conducted.

   c. Surveys – Participants completed two surveys on their perceptions of the quality of learning they experienced in the BEd program:

      (1) Participant perceptions of their achievement of the nine competencies.

      (2) Participant perceptions the effectiveness of the BEd curriculum in preparing them for classroom teaching.

   d. Open-ended interviews: The results of the above surveys were discussed with the participants.

2. Analysis of Data – The data were analyzed through:

   a. review of all data to categorize and organize into themes and patterns.

   b. identification and description of relevant patterns.

   c. interpretation of patterns.

3. Human subjects and ethics clearance:

   a. Participants were informed of the project and their permission secured before data were developed.

   b. All participants and the site remain confidential.

   c. The purpose of the study was described to all participants and they were assured that neither their participation nor non-participation would have any impact on their TP evaluations.
Site and Participants

For this study, the school used for the project will be called Al Maqtab Primary Girls School. The school is located in a middle class neighborhood in a suburb of the primary city. The school includes both Cycle 1 (Grades 1 – 3) and Cycle 2 (Grades 4 – 6). Cycle 2 class sizes run between 30 – 35 students. The school was evaluated by the National Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (NQAAET) in 2010 and received an overall rating of “Good,” with several categories rated as “Outstanding.”

Participants in the study were six 4th Year BEd students specializing as Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 English language teachers who were completing their final semester of full-time Teaching Practice at the Al Maqtab school. Each participant was supervised and guided by the regular classroom teacher. Teaching Practice requirements included observation of classes, peer observation, and complete responsibility for one class for a full semester. Each participant was observed teaching four times; the focus of the observations was to determine if the students were using the instructional methods and teaching strategies they had studied in their BEd courses.

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was not to evaluate the participants’ teaching performance during practicum but to (1) determine the participants’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching by the college and (2) observe the extent to which participants used classroom teaching methods they had learned in the BEd program.

1. Documents – External Reports

   a. National Institute of Education (Singapore) 2013 Review of the Teachers College

      A NIE Consulting Team reviewed the BEd program in October, 2012, and issued a final report in 2013. The report was positive over the delivery of the curriculum and commended the college in its ability to meet the Ministry of Education needs, including a theory-practice link through the teaching practicum program. The report also commended the college for preparing graduating students with the nine competencies. The report noted that the competencies were suitable for the level of teacher preparation provided by the college and provided the graduates with a clear understanding of their strengths and areas that need development in different stages of their teaching careers (National Institute of Education, 2013).

   b. UK NARIC Report on International Initial Teacher Education Programs

      As a further basis of external evaluation, the relevant results of the UK NARIC Report, An assessment of international teacher training systems: equivalence for England (The Regional Recognition Information Center for the United Kingdom, 2012) were reviewed to provide an external, independent opinion of the college’s BEd program. In 2011, the National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom (UK NARIC) conducted a comparative study of international initial teacher education programs in relation to the teacher education system in England. The results of the study ranked the initial teacher education program provided by the college overall as 5th in a field of 28 programs. In rankings based on minimum thresholds representing the minimum acceptable standards in England, the BEd program was ranked 3rd, meeting nine of the eleven indicators. The results of this study indicate that the BEd program meets international standards of quality in teacher preparation.

2. Survey – Participants’ Assessment of the Nine Competencies

The participants completed a survey in which they indicated their opinions of (1) how well the BEd program had prepared them for each of the nine competencies and (2) if they believed they were able to use these competencies as decision-makers during Teaching Practicum. Participants were given three possible evaluation choices:
1. Evaluation 1: The BEd program has effectively prepared me and I am able to use what I have learned: I fully understand the central concepts and methods of teaching English to young learners.

2. Evaluation 2: The BEd program has prepared me, but I cannot use what I have learned: I have some understanding of the central concepts and methods of teaching English to young learners.

3. Evaluation 3: The BEd program has not prepared me in this area: I have little or no understanding of the central concepts or methods of teaching English to young learners.

The participants were reminded that they were not evaluating on how well they believed they were actually performing in the teaching practice but on how well they believed the BEd program had prepared them and how much they believed they were using what they had learned. The results of the survey are presented in Table 1.

The data indicate that the participants believe that they had been generally well prepared in the nine competencies, particularly in assessment, reflective practice, student development, and needs of diverse learners but that they believed they would be unable to use several competencies in their teaching.

3. Survey – Participants’ Assessment of Courses in the BEd Program

The BEd degree requires 129 credit hours in forty-three courses in four areas of study:

1. Education Studies: General education courses, most of which are required in all specializations (19 courses).
2. Education Content and Theory Courses (10 courses).
3. Teaching Methods in Specialization (10 courses).
4. Teaching Practicum Assignments (1 attachment and 3 practicum assignments).

Participants were given a list of the 43 teacher education courses required in the BEd program and asked to assess each using an evaluation number that best indicated their opinion of how useful each course had been in preparing them to become teachers. They were reminded that they were evaluating how much they believed each course had been useful in preparing them for teaching and how much they believed they would use what they learned in each course, not on how well they believed they performed in the course.

Rating Scale for Evaluating BEd Courses

5 = The course was extremely useful and greatly helped me in my teaching practicum experience.
4 = The course was useful and often benefited me in my teaching practicum experience.
3 = The course had some useful benefits that I was able to use in my teaching practicum Experience.
2 = The course had hardly any useful benefits that I was able to apply to my teaching practicum experience.
1 = The course provided no useful benefits that I can recall or apply to my teaching practicum experience.

The participants identified sixteen courses (37%) as being extremely useful or useful and beneficial in the teaching practicum experience (Table 2). Six Education Studies classes, nine English Language Education specialization courses, five English Language Education content and theory classes, four
English Language Education methodology, and the final Year 4 Teaching Practicum were ranked as most useful.

Eight courses (19%) were considered to have some useful benefits that the participants believed they were able to use in their teaching practicum (Table 3), including one course in English Language Education content and theory, two courses in English Language Education methods, Teaching Practice for Years 1, 2, and 3, and two Education Studies courses.

Finally, nineteen courses (44%) were ranked by the participants to have little or no benefit that could be applied to their final teaching practicum (Table 4). These courses included ten Education Studies courses, five English Language Education content and theory courses, three English Language Education methods classes, and the Semester 1 Initial School Attachment.

4. Observations - Extent to Which Participants Observed to Apply Their BEd Learning During Teaching Practicum

Each participant was observed teaching a lesson four times between February and May. Observations focused on the participants’ teaching specifically to determine if they used these particular student-centered approaches for teaching English that are emphasized in the BEd program:

1. Planning for student-centered learning activities and student-teacher and student-student interaction activities

   a. Establishing learning outcomes that specify collaborative and interactive performance indicators for assessment

   For the most part, participants planned lessons as teacher-centered activities. Planning for daily lessons by all six participants was centered on the textbook and resources from as required by the MOE. All participants were required to use a standard MOE lesson plan template associated with the textbook units (see Appendices 1 and 2) and were required to complete all lessons and units within an established time frame.

   b. Organizing instruction around the learning needs of students rather than completion of instructional units

   All instruction was organized for completion of instructional units with little or no attention provided to student needs.

2. Students are provided opportunities for independent use of language

   The BEd English Language Education program emphasizes that young learners need opportunities for language production without excessive teacher correction to develop fluency, and encourages students in plan student-centered activities that promote linguistic interaction. Lesson plans and observations of classroom instruction showed that the participants occasionally planned interactive activities based on the textbook lessons within limited time provided for lessons.

3. Students were allowed some choice in topics for language activities

   Allowing students to suggest topics was not evident. The English language program is linked to completion of units of the prescribed textbook series, all of which must be completed within established time frames.

4. Deliberate use of formative and embedded assessment in instruction

   While the MOE policy on assessment and evaluation advises the use of formative evaluation, there was no evidence that the participants deliberately used either formative or embedded assessment methods to determine how well lesson or unit objectives had been fulfilled or to confirm that the students had mastered basic capabilities needed to move to the next unit. These decisions were determined by the instructional schedule that required completion of designated textbook units. Moreover, although assessment and evaluation have been ostensibly decentralized by MOE by assigning these responsibilities to the school and teachers (El Abdallah, 2000), the final two weeks of the semester were set aside entirely for preparing students for unified Ministry examinations.
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this project has been to conduct a qualitative study of a sample of graduating students in English Language Education during their final teaching practicum to determine their perceptions how well they had been prepared for teaching and to observe the extent to which they apply their learning in the English Language Education program to teaching in authentic instructional settings.

Discussion of participants’ assessment of Nine Competencies

The surveys and follow-up discussion demonstrated the participants believed that they had been generally well prepared in the nine competencies, particularly in the four competencies of assessment, reflective practice, student development, and needs of diverse learners, but that they believed they would not be able to relate some competencies to classroom teaching.

Five participants expressed concern over their content competence, in particular their English language abilities. All participants stated that the BEd program concentrated on learning theory and methodology, but that they regretted that they had not been provided developmental courses in English language, in particular with speaking and writing skills. The English language education program does offer one course in public speaking, one general course each in basic composition and English grammar, but no courses are provided that develop advanced composition skills or enhance reading comprehension.

Participants also expressed reservations on their understanding of instructional strategies. In discussion, they stated that they believed they understood the concepts and methods of strategic instruction in their class work, but had not had opportunities to apply or practice instructional strategies independently until the current Teaching Practicum. These participants believed that supervised micro-teaching opportunities within their courses would have given them more understanding and confidence in strategic instruction.

All six participants were concerned that their BEd program provided no significant coursework in using information technology (IT) to support classroom instruction. They all asserted that the sole IT course, which was offered in the first year of study, only covered content they had learned in high school, such as using MS Word. No instruction was provided on using Smart Board software applications as instructional resources, and as a result they used the Smart Boards in the classrooms solely for PowerPoint presentations.

The participants indicated that the BEd program had made them aware of diversity in classrooms and that felt they were prepared to meet challenges and they were positive over their coursework in student development. On the other hand, they expressed doubts about school, community, and civic engagement competency, asserting that this competency was not explicitly addressed in the BEd program; however, they also agreed that community engagement was not a factor in the school. The participants’ perception was that parental contact with the school is not encouraged and that parents show little interest in active involvement in their children’s schooling. The validity of this perception could not be confirmed in this study and could be a subject for future research.

The participants indicated they been well prepared for assessment by the program, but they believed their poorest preparation was with instructional planning and classroom management. They noted that the only management course in the BEd curriculum was delivered during their first year and all participants asserted that they recalled little or nothing from the course that was applicable to their TP assignment.

With class management, the participants followed the classroom routines instituted by the cooperating teachers (CT). In all of the observed classes, the CTS had establish effective, positive routines so that the participants experienced little, if any, serious issues in student behavior or management. However, this also means that the participants had no opportunities to develop their own independent management procedures that they would need after graduation.

The participants were positive on the competency of reflection and progressive growth and were especially pleased with the action research course that they had taken during the previous semester, yet they did not believe they had the opportunity to use the skills during their TP.
Discussion participants’ evaluation of courses in the BEd English Language Education Program

1. Discussion of courses rated by participants as irrelevant or not useful

Participants were asked to rate each course on a five point scale according to their perceptions of the course usefulness to their preparation for classroom instruction in classes. Nineteen courses were rated by participants as having little use or relevance to teaching with averages of 2.9 to 0 points. In group discussions, participants were asked their reasons for ranking ten Educational Studies courses as having little use or relevance to teaching. The participants were quite insistent that they believed that most Year 1 courses had little benefit and the group consensus was that some courses were “a waste of time.”

When pressed for details, participants acknowledged that in Year 1 they had been confused with adjusting to the college, had little interest in their courses, but were mostly interested in just completing the first year. They acknowledged that had been less than diligent with their study of Year 1 ES courses since at the time they did not perceive many of them as relevant to teaching. All the participants also asserted that they recalled little, if any, course content from Year 1 and what little they did remember was theoretical, not practical, and had no relevance to their teaching.

The participants were also asked their reasons for ranking eight English Language Education courses as having little use or relevance to their. The participants were less specific with their perceptions of these courses, but agreed that they believed the courses were excessively redundant and overlapping resulting in coverage of the same content in several different classes. Some courses were perceived as too theoretical, providing little information that was directly related to practical classroom teaching.

2. Discussion of courses rated by participants as very useful and relevant

Participants rated sixteen courses as very useful with averages of 5 – 4 points. The participants perceived the courses in educational psychology as particularly beneficial to their preparation for becoming classroom teachers.

Three English content/theory courses and five methods courses were ranked as highly useful by the participants, who commented that they believed the courses had helped develop deeper understanding of what they would teach and prepared them to integrate teaching skills.

Discussion of the extent to which participants were observed to apply their BEd learning to teaching during Teaching Practicum

The purpose of the BEd program is to produce decision-making teachers who demonstrate the essential professional knowledge, skills, and values and use student-centered approaches for teaching by:

1. Planning student-centered learning activities.
3. Planning for student-teacher and student-student interaction activities.
4. Encouraging student production of language without constant teacher correction that interferes with fluency.
5. Permitting students some choice in topics for language production.
6. Progressing to next unit determined by students’ performance rather than a set schedule of textbook unit completion.
7. Providing students with opportunities for independent use of language.
8. Using formative and embedded assessment.
The surveys and discussions show participant satisfaction with the BEd program’s effectiveness in preparing them to meet the nine competencies and general satisfaction with the effectiveness of the BEd curriculum in preparing them for classroom teaching.

Discussion of Participants Lesson Planning

Review of the lesson plans indicated the participants had little understanding of developing effective learning outcomes or performance indicators and relied on a lesson plan template provided by the school (see Appendices 1 – 3). Although this template was mandatory, none of the participants considered the option of developing separate, more effective plans independently. In the discussions, all participants stated that they understood developing lesson plans based on learning outcomes stated with Bloom verbs, but that they did not know how to apply this understanding to instructional planning.

Moreover, since they knew they were required to follow a set schedule of lessons and units, they saw no need for innovative lesson planning. However, in the discussions, all participants also agreed that they were dissatisfied with the prescriptive instructional approach and wished they had been given more explicit instruction in effective lesson planning and practice in creating relevant learning outcomes and performance indicators.

Feeling confined by the required MOE lesson plan format, participants planned lessons primarily as teacher-centered activities and largely filled in the components by migrating textbook unit features over to the mandated lesson plan form. The result was that lesson plans failed to identify what the students would know and what they would be able to do after a lesson, followed the prescribe sequence of textbook units with no procedures to monitor students’ understanding, and provided no authentic formative or embedded assessment that would determine each student’s progress or identify areas in which more instruction may have been needed. Also lacking in the plans were provisions for feedback to be given to students about their learning process.

Discussion of participants’ teaching

Observations of the participants’ teaching show little evidence of student-centered approaches. Discussions with the participants indicate that they were aware that they were not using student-centered approaches but that they believed that they were constrained by school and MOE requirements by being compelled to follow a prescriptive, text-based curriculum that allowed few opportunities for innovation. Because of the prescribed curriculum, participants believed they had little opportunity to make decisions on effective student-centered learning activities or to encourage independent production of language by students. In addition, because of time constraints, participants felt that had limited opportunities to assess student needs, provide support to students experiencing problems, or encourage student interaction. Their perceptions are supported by the MOE requirement for completion of all textbook and workbook lessons within the allotted 50 minute time frame following a set schedule. Furthermore, each class had 34 – 36 students, which further restricted planning for student-centered activities.

However, the participants indicated that their cooperative teachers were supportive of their trying innovative approaches, and some participants occasionally demonstrated decision-making by incorporating student-centered activities within the constraints of the textbook, allotted time, and class size. Two constraints that impacted these activities were (1) limited time within the class period restricted useful interactions, and (2) most students relied entirely on Arabic in the activities, with no observed attempts to practice with English.

In post-observation discussions, all the participants acknowledged the teacher-centered emphasis in their planning and stated that they preferred to plan student-centered lessons with interactive activities, but felt restricted by the necessity to cover textbook content within the required time limit allocated for each unit. Moreover, all participants expressed concern that students were learning little, but felt constrained by the large class size and the need to follow the instructional schedule within the time allocated for each unit to prepare students for MOE examinations. These perceived restrictions allowed
for little or no attention to providing additional support to students who experienced problems and limited opportunities for interactive learning.

While the participants indicated that they believed that they were well prepared and competent in the assessment, lesson plans of all participants indicated a general lack of understanding of assessment procedures, both summative and formative.

Finally, it is worth noting that, although the BEd program emphasizes interactive and collaborative learning, group work was limited to brief activities in which students usually completed workbook assignments within a 10 minute time frame. All participants stated that they believed the interactive activities were more useful than the direct teaching of content or routine coverage of textbook and workbook exercises, and would have like to have set up learning projects. However, the allotted time was too brief for them to introduce projects and still complete the required textbook units. In addition, they also acknowledged that the students usually relied on Arabic during activities, and that it was very difficult for them to monitor five or six small groups effectively.

CONCLUSIONS
This study addressed four questions on the Bachelor of Education program:

1. **How do graduating students perceive the effectiveness of the BEd program in preparing them for classroom teaching?**

The study showed that the participants were generally satisfied with the BEd program’s effectiveness in preparing them to meet the nine competencies, and believed that they had been well-prepared to meet the demands of classroom teaching with the exception of class management. Furthermore, reviews of two external reports on the college’s initial teacher education program were favorable in their conclusions of the quality of preparation provided.

2. **Are BEd students in their final TP experience applying their learning to their classroom teaching?**

Analysis of lesson plans and observations of teaching did not show the participants to be decision-makers who used student-centered approaches for teaching. Rather, the participants engaged primarily in teacher-centered direct instruction with the goal to complete units within an allocated time frame.

3. **If they are, are the methods effective?**

While some participants attempted to embed student-centered activities into their teaching, the effectiveness of the methods could not be ascertained.

4. **If they are not, why?**

In planning, the participants felt constrained by a mandated lesson plan template and showed little attention to formulating learning outcomes that specified collaborative and interactive student performance or to developing student-centered learning activities. During instruction, because of time limitations, class size, and the need to complete textbook units, little or no attention was given to encouraging student production of language to improve fluency nor were choices in selecting topics for language production given to students. Students were provided few, if any, opportunities for independent use of language. Planning and teaching were centered on progressing through each unit of the prescribed textbook on a set schedule for unit completion regardless of student achievement. Use of formative or embedded assessments to gauge student progress was not evident.

The participants acknowledged this mismatch between their BEd preparation and their teaching practice routines, but maintained that they were limited by constraints imposed by the school administrators and MOE conditions. Encouragingly, however, all acknowledged that their Cooperating Teachers were interested in innovative methods and encouraged them to incorporate their ideas into learning activities. This would suggest that the participants may have had more opportunity to conduct student-centered activities than they perceived.
Since this was a study that was limited to the activities of six participants, the findings cannot be generalized across all teaching practicum experiences; more systematic study is required. However, based on the perceptions and experiences of the participants, a few conclusions on the needs of the Year 4 BEd students can be suggested:

1. Preparation in classroom management relevant immediately prior to their TP placement.
2. Instruction and practice in developing lessons plans that include instructional purposes, learning outcomes, performance indicators, instructional methods, and intended assessment procedures.
3. Instruction and practice in using information technology in instruction
4. Microteaching activities that support incorporating student-centered activities required units and lessons before Teaching Practice.
REFERENCES


Table 1: Student evaluation of preparation for the nine competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eval 1</th>
<th>Eval 2</th>
<th>Eval 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BEd program has effectively prepared me and I am able to use what I have learned ____</td>
<td>BEd program has prepared me, but I cannot use what I have learned ____</td>
<td>BEd program has not prepared me in this area ____</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indicator: I fully understand the central concepts and methods of teaching English to young learners.

Indicator: I have some understanding of the central concepts and methods of teaching English to young learners.

Indicator: I have little or no understanding of the central concepts or methods of teaching English to young learners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Eval 1</th>
<th>Eval 2</th>
<th>Eval 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content knowledge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student development</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs of diverse learners</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Control of the learning environment</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appropriate assessment</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication and instructional technology</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School, community, and civic engagement</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective practice, ethics and professionalism</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Summary of High Student Ratings of BEd Courses Arranged by Assessment Ranking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Area of Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TCPB 321 Assessment for Learning</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Education Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCPB 326 Primary School Project Work in English</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Education Studies*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCPB 112 Child Development and Learning in the Primary Years</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Education Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCPB 211 Inclusive Classrooms</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Education Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCPB 411 Action Research for Reflective Practitioners</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Education Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCPB 123 Developing Thinking in Children</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Education Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC2EN 316 Grammar in Context</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>ELE Content/Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC2EN 317 Children’s Literature</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>ELE Content/Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC2EN 212 Genres of Writing</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>ELE Content/Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC2EN 328 Oral Skills</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>ELE Content/Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Rating</td>
<td>Area of Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC2ENT 328 Teaching Multiliteracies</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>ELE Content/Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC2ENT 327 Monitoring &amp; Assessing the 4 Language Skills</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>ELE Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC2ENT 316 Teaching Listening &amp; Viewing</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>ELE Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC2ENT 224 Teaching Speaking &amp; Representing</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>ELE Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC2ENT 419 Planning &amp; Organizing the English Language Programs</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>ELE Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCPB 426 Teaching Practice 4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Teaching Practicum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Taught in English Language Education only to English language specialists

Table 3: Summary of Medium Student Ratings of BEd Courses Arranged by Assessment Ranking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Area of Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TCPB 325 Planning &amp; Teaching Integrated Language Skills</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Education Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCPB 113 Psychology of Learning</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Education Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC2EN 224 Phonetics and Phonology</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>ELE Content/Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC2ENT 223 Teaching Reading 2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>ELE Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC2ENT 315 Teaching Grammar Based on Text Types</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>ELE Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCPB 316 Teaching Practicum 3 with Seminar</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Teaching Practicum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCPB 226 Teaching Practicum 2 with Seminar</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Teaching Practicum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCPB 126 Teaching Practicum 1 with Seminar</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Teaching Practicum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4: Summary of Low Student Ratings of BEd Courses Arranged by Assessment Ranking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Area of Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TCPB 121 Managing Learning</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Education Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCPB 127 Teaching &amp; Learning Civics and National Education</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Education Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCPB 124 Research for Educators</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Education Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCPB 111 Social Context of Schooling in Bahrain</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Education Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCPB 114 ICT to Enhance Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Education Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCPB 116 Arabic for Educators</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Education Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCPB 125 English for Educators</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Education Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCPB 413 Current Trends and Issues in Education</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Education Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCPB 311 History of Bahrain</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>Education Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC2EN 225 Principles &amp; Practices of English Language Teaching</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>ELE Content/Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC2EN 419 Varieties of English</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>ELE Content/Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC2EN 410 Current Trends &amp; Issues in English Language Education</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>ELE Content/Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCPB 114 ICT to Enhance Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Education Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC2EN 213 Introduction to Language Development</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>ELE Content/Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC2ENT 211 Teaching Reading 1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>ELE Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC2ENT 212 Teaching Writing</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>ELE Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC2ENT 410 Teaching English for Specific Purposes</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>ELE Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC2EN 211 The Reading Process</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>ELE Content/Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCPB 100 Initial School Attachment</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Teaching Practicum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 1

Lesson Plan Template Required of the Participants

### LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE:</th>
<th>SUBJECT:</th>
<th>CLASS:</th>
<th>UNIT:</th>
<th>LESSON:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bloom’s words for objectives</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Most</th>
<th>Some</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Define, label, list, name, order, classify, describe, discuss, explain</td>
<td>Apply, compare, demonstrate, analyze, choose, appraise</td>
<td>compose, construct, create, argue, assess, choose, defend, estimate, judge, predict</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage/Time</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Teacher Instructions</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Unit 5 song</td>
<td>To sing together</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Vocabulary:

Materials Needed:

Appendix 2

Lesson Plan Example 1

**DATE:** 18 March 2015  **SUBJECT:** English  **CLASS:** Grade 5  **UNIT:** Backpack 2, Unit 5  **LESSON:** Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bloom’s words for objectives</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Most</th>
<th>Some</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Define, label, list, name, order, classify, describe, discuss, explain</td>
<td>Apply, compare, demonstrate, analyze, choose, appraise</td>
<td>compose, construct, create, argue, assess, choose, defend, estimate, judge, predict</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage/Time</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Activities/Instructions</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning of Lesson</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>To sing together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Lesson Plan Example 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Teacher’s Instructions</th>
<th>Students Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-reading</td>
<td>3-5 minutes</td>
<td>Warm up activity: brainstorming</td>
<td>To present pictures and ask the students what they see and predict what the lesson is</td>
<td>Tell us what they see in the pictures Share their predications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While-reading</td>
<td>20-25 minutes</td>
<td>Activity 1: listening</td>
<td>Listening to a cassette while the book is closed (once).</td>
<td>Listen to the cassette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 2: reading and explaining</td>
<td>Ask the students to read after me one time and the second they read and stop for explanation</td>
<td>Read along with the teacher. random individual reading to explain the poem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-reading</td>
<td>Answer the questions</td>
<td>Comprehension activity page 23 from the workbook.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Answer the questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 minutes</td>
<td>Announcements</td>
<td>Call out the names of the super speller students and tell why they are getting the certificates.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students that’s names will be called will stand up and the rest will cheer.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Materials                          | Cash, I.D, Keys pictures, markers, certificates, gifts, white board and magnets, PowerPoint     |
Teachers' Use of Questioning in the ESL Classroom: Questioning as a Teaching Strategy

Husniah Sahamid, University of Malaysia, Pahang, Malaysia
Nor Ashikin Abdul Aziz, University of Malaysia, Pahang, Malaysia
Nurshyaheedah Muhammad Isa, University of Malaysia, Pahang, Malaysia

Abstract

The employment of questioning as an instructional tool has always been considered part of the teaching tradition, and has a long history. The focus on teacher questioning recently has been due to the opportunities that teacher questioning can provide for students to become actively engaged while also developing thinking skills. This paper describes an ongoing study of three teachers’ classroom questioning behavior in an ESL proficiency course in a public university in Malaysia. The study aims to investigate the types of questions teachers ask in class and the responses elicited from students. The study is conducted on a small scale and is in-depth in nature, using three instruments for triangulation to help to validate the findings. Data is collected using a questionnaire, a semi-structured interview protocol to determine teacher rationale for teacher questions used in the classroom, and video-taped classroom interactions between teacher and students. This paper presents the preliminary findings of the study based on data collected from the video recordings of the class sessions. This paper also recommends strategies to promote teacher questioning and student learning based on the preliminary findings.

Keywords: Classroom questioning, English as a Second Language (ESL), teaching tool, pedagogy

1.0 Introduction

According to the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013–2025, all students nationwide will be equipped with Higher Order Thinking (HOT) skills, to be imparted through classroom teaching and co-curricular activities. There are growing concerns among educators, employers, and public officials about the number of students entering the workforce lacking in critical thinking skills. This has resulted in a closer look at the way classes are conducted, including those in higher education.

Teacher questioning in ESL classrooms cover varying functions and aspects such as disciplinary (“Can you please be quiet?”), clarification (“Do you mean to say...?”), rhetorical (“That wasn’t so difficult, was it?”), and questions related to language learning itself. While the main objective of questioning in the ESL classroom is to produce language competence in students, other concerns, especially that of developing students’ critical thinking, are just as valid. Teacher’s use of questioning in the ESL classrooms provides excellent opportunities. During the questioning students are asked to express opinions and guided into giving supporting reasons and justifications for their opinions. Nevertheless, Long and Sato (1983) found that teachers asked a significantly larger number of display questions, that is questions for which teachers already know the answers. Paul and Elder (2001) state that thinking is primarily driven by questions; hence the right types of questions by teachers will produce the right type of ‘thinking’. Low order questioning should be followed by higher order questioning to lead students into elaboration of ideas, justification of claims, illustration of opinions, and the like. Classroom discourse, specifically teachers’ feedback and response to student answers also has an impact on students’ cognitive processes (Chin, 2006). In other words, the teachers’ follow up questions or feedback based on the initial student response is important since it can serve as scaffolding for student learning.
2.0 Classroom Questioning

Classroom questioning and its employment as an instructional tool, has been considered part of the teaching tradition for some time and has had a long history (Sanders, 1966, Nunan & Lamb, 1996). The volume of research on questioning as a teaching strategy is also reflective of how widely it is used (Gall, 1984).

Researchers have developed a general system for classifying questions for purposes of analysis but they are simply referred to as fact or lower order questions, and higher cognitive or higher order questions. Lower order questions require students to recall information previously learned and do not require students to do very much thinking. Higher order questions, however, require analysis and independent thinking in their responses (Gall, 1984) and is synonymous with critical thinking. The most common and much used method of questioning to promote learning in the classroom is low order teacher-questioning (Hickman, 2000) typically associated with the didactic method. Teachers spend most of their time in class asking low-level cognitive questions (Wilens, 1991); in its simplest form, questioning is used as a means for checking understanding and for recall of what has been taught. It does not involve active learning or active student participation and is teacher-centered. Questions are mostly low-level comprehension type questions with clear-cut answers. Educators have also used Bloom’s Taxonomy to categorize questioning and thinking into six levels leading to increasingly complex intellectual skills.

Long and Sato (1983) classified teacher questions in the ESL classrooms which included echoic (comprehension checks, clarification requests, and confirmation checks) and epistemic questions. The findings of the study indicated that the majority of the questions were epistemic. Furthermore, the most commonly used type questions were display questions, while the most commonly used under echoic questions, are confirmation checks. Long and Sato (1983) refer to the display questions as knowledge-checking questions. Display questions are those which the teacher as questioner knows the answer beforehand. Those to which the teacher does not know the answer to are categorized as referential questions; they require thinking, interpretation, and analysis on the part of the person responding to the questions. Display type of questions should not necessarily be viewed as of lower quality. Many subject areas, in fact, require students to grasp and remember the basics before negotiating more abstract and complex issues (Dean, 1986).

The concept that teacher questions in general help in student learning seem to be supported a study (Buck 1997) which found that random oral questioning during lectures and discussions not only promoted consistent preparation and active participation but also resulted in higher course achievement among undergraduate students compared to control subjects. Long and Sato (1983) and Brock (1986) investigated the role of questions in the ESL classroom and found that referential questions have the capability to encourage learner oral production. The level of questioning should be raised systematically and teachers have to plan accordingly to ensure appropriate use of questions (Dean, 1986). The important point is to move beyond recall or recitation of learningd.

Theoretical Background

Bandura proposes behaviors that are socially learned through observation and reinforcement. A students’ cognition, the environment, and behavior play important roles in the students learning of new knowledge and skills. In the classroom, both teachers and students thus collectively form the learning environment which students learn through observation, imitation, and role modeling, among others. According to Vygotsky (1978) learning does not occur in isolation but through interaction and dialogue with another person. In the context of the classroom, for instance, when a student is provided with the appropriate assistance by another who is more knowledgeable or capable, the student is better able to
achieve the task. Teacher questioning can be used effectively in scaffolding for students learning. When teachers ask appropriate questions, the teacher is capable of guiding students thinking through the responses elicited. One of the most important aspects of the ESL classroom is the teacher student interaction since this not only produces language, it affects student engagement and achievement (Kerry, 2002).

Statement of problem
A study on the employability of Malaysian university graduates found that English communication skills have significant effects on employability (Morshidi S, Rosni B, Lim H.E, Mohamed N.K. 2004). Universiti Malaysia Pahang offers a proficiency class for students who did not meet the minimum English requirement for entrance into public universities. These are students who failed to get a minimum score of Band 3 in MUET (Malaysian University Entrance Test). A common complaint of the teachers is that students are passive and there is very little interaction in the class despite teacher questioning. Hence, a study of teacher questioning at the university is crucial at this time due to the problem of the current poor student performance in an English proficiency course at the university. The objectives of the study are therefore to:

- investigate the type of teachers’ classroom question the ESL classroom
- determine teacher rationale for employing questions
- investigate students responses toward teacher questioning

Examining teacher questioning would give an insight into the types of questions teachers generally use in class to encourage interaction and better oral production. The study will hopefully improve teacher questioning and student speaking English proficiency.

3.0 Methodology
3.1. The Setting and Participants
Three teachers (Teacher A, B and C) were selected for the study based on random sampling. The teachers comprised one male and two females; all three teach at the same public university in Malaysia. Teacher A is male with 6 years teaching experience; Teacher B, has 2 years of teaching experience, while Teacher C, has 20 years of teaching experience. All three teach the same course, a basic ESL proficiency course. There were a total of 79 students (58% male, 42% female) participating in the study; all are students from various Engineering and Computer Science faculties. Students of Teachers A, B and C were undergraduates who had scored Band 3 or below in MUE, an area actually categorized as having low proficiency ESL students. The ESL course is compulsory for students who scored Band 3 or below in MUET. Students have to obtain a ‘Pass’ grade to be able to further their studies at the university.

This is a mixed method study; it is conducted on a small scale and is in-depth in nature, using the three instruments for triangulation which would help to validate the findings. The data sources were a student questionnaire, a semi-structured interview of teachers and video-taped sessions of teaching and learning during the ESL classroom sessions. The interview questions elicited each teacher’s rational and belief of their instructional strategies involving display and referential questions, factors affecting their decisions on what type of questions to use, and her experiences with the students’ responses to questions. Transcripts of the class sessions lessons were analyzed, with particular attention paid to interactions that involved questions. Transcripts of the teacher interviews were also analysed.

3.2 Data Analysis
Two different types of analysis were conducted for the transcriptions of teacher questioning and students’ responses, (i) a top-down manner of analysis of teachers’ questions where a predetermined coding scheme is used to quantify the open and closed-ended questions; (ii) a bottom-up approach for analysis of students’ responses where patterns in students’ responses were noted and identified. Since this is an on-going study and for purposes of this paper, only particular aspects of teacher questioning behavior and students responses to the different categories of questioning through video taping of the class sessions are analysed and reported.
4. Findings and Discussion
Table 1 indicates the total number of questions asked by the three teachers in the ESL classrooms in a two-hour class session.

Table 1. The total number of Display Questions and Referential Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>No of Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>649</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows the percentages of Display and Referential Questions asked in a two-hour class session for the three teachers involved in the study.

Table 2. Percentages of Display and Referential questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Display</th>
<th>Referential</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>37.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>53.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percentage of display questions for all three teachers is significantly higher than that of the referential questions. It was interesting to note that the rest of the questions came under other categories such as comprehension checks (“all right?”, “Do you understand?”) and confirmation (“Student: I no well”; Teacher: You mean you are not well?”).

Table 2 from the video recorded class sessions were closely studied and two excerpts of group interactions were randomly selected from the data obtained. These were analyzed for the duration of interaction (in minutes) which resulted from the teacher questions. These were then added up and a mean calculated for each type of question under Display Questions and Referential Questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Type</th>
<th>Number of Questions</th>
<th>Interaction mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Display</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referential</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was found that when the two means were compared, Referential Questions resulted in longer interaction with a mean of 2.24 minutes compared to display questions with a mean of 0.43 minutes. Teachers also had a tendency to use follow up questions or probing questions to scaffold and assist students in their responses when asking referential questions.

Teacher interviews
All teachers stated that their questions were spontaneous and were not planned beforehand. They teachers generally knew what are Display and Referential questions and the benefits to asking Referential questions but were unaware that their percentage of display questions were significantly higher than referential questions. Although all were aware of the benefits of wait time none of the teachers gave any significant wait time after each question. Teacher C, especially had a high tendency to self-answer the questions he posed. All teachers agreed that students’ weakness in English was a strong determinant of their teaching and questioning behaviour.
Conclusion

The study focused on teacher questioning, the interactions that resulted from questioning and also teacher behaviour and rationale for questioning. Several conclusions can be derived from the results of the study so far:

- A major function of teachers use of questions other than those investigated were comprehension check (“Understand? “All right?”) and confirmation (“Student: I no feel well; Teacher: You mean you don’t feel well?).
- The behaviour of teachers for questioning was shaped by the fact that students were from the low proficiency level and teachers felt that they had to constantly ensure that students were following and understood what was being taught.
- It was observed that the questions mostly asked were focused on content and students’ background knowledge. Responses elicited specific, predetermined answers and required very little thinking or analysis.
- Teachers failed to use the opportunity for encouraging participation and guiding students with turn-taking with refrential questions. This type of interaction should be encouraged as it is not only linked to language achievement but also soft skills; the main input was only from the teachers themselves.
- While teachers were aware of the significance of referential questions they failed to perceive its importance in relation to oral production and language acquisition.

Based on the conclusions several recommendations can be made particularly in the area of improvement of teacher questions and questioning techniques for those teaching basic proficiency English language course.

- Teachers should be taught how to design and plan questions before lessons to encourage student participation and elicitation and to guide a pattern of interaction in the classroom.
- Questioning should include the use of the different types of questions to elicit different types of student responses with emphasis on referential questions to lead to increased oral production.
- Create a warm and safe environment in the classroom so students will volunteer responses.
- Better use of non verbal behaviour such as nodding, good eye contact, smiling and use of gestures that encourage students response.
- Concerted efforts by teachers to extend wait time after questioning to improve students response.
- In service courses or workshops for teachers should be conducted to improve questioning skills.
References


Universal Secondary Education (USE) in Trinidad & Tobago: Educational Reform, Politics and Religion

Jeniffer Mohammed, The University of the West Indies, Trinidad & Tobago

Abstract
Trinidad & Tobago is a twin-island state in the southern Caribbean which gained independence from Britain in 1962. Oil and gas revenues have boosted efforts to ease access to secondary education for the masses and Universal Secondary Education was achieved in 2001. Educational reforms and massive school building initiatives have been on-going since the 1970s. This paper traces, through documentary evidence (policy papers and evaluation reports) the achievements and challenges that the secondary education system is still facing despite the spate of reforms in the recent past. It shows that quantitative expansion did not result in an increase in quality in the system. The challenge for the state with the achievement of USE lies in how it will go forward. The system of secondary education has been largely shaped by conflict between the state and denominational bodies – with two distinct paths: state schools and church schools. The gains made by denominational schools though are today being maintained by politics – a reluctance to tamper with the Concordat and the selection of students for secondary schools. Politics, too, seems to be the central factor in explaining why the alternative or state sector remains mired in underachievement and indiscipline. At this point it may not be politically-feasible to dismantle the structures which have increased divisiveness in the education system, and so the paper ends with possibilities to increase quality in the state-run secondary sector.

Introduction
Reform has been a constant factor in the education system of Trinidad and Tobago from Independence (1962) to now, reaching a high point in 2001 with the achievement of Universal Secondary Education (USE). However, the improvements in the system that were envisaged have not materialised, despite an enormous outlay of investment and effort. This paper argues that some of the answers to the failure of the reform lie in the historical relationship between not only education and the political system but also with religion.

The genesis of this education-politics-religion nexus is described in tracing the development of the education system in Trinidad & Tobago to the present time, paying particular attention to the lead-up to Universal Secondary Education (USE) and its aftermath. The main thesis of the paper is that the state has never provided a good enough alternative to denominational schools and its responses, vacillating between opposition and accommodation to denominational pressure, have thwarted its own project of providing quality secondary Education For All (EFA).

The Context
Trinidad & Tobago is a twin-island state in the southern Caribbean (Tobago was administratively joined to Trinidad in 1889 by the British). First settled by the Spanish in 1498, the island was so sparsely populated (mainly indigenous groups) that in 1783 the Spanish Governor issued a cedula of population inviting planters in other Caribbean islands to come and settle with their slaves and they would be given huge grants of land (Brereton, 1981). The French responded in large numbers, many were fleeing Royalists from the French Revolution and French planters in neighbouring islands fearing unrest. By the time the British obtained control of Trinidad (1797) it was governed by the Spaniards but had a distinct French culture (Bereton, 2002; Carew, 2010). There were relatively large numbers of African enslaved persons, a mixed or coloured group, and whites at the top of the socio-economic pyramid - Spanish, French Creoles and now, British. The main goal of the British colonial government then was to Anglicize the colony.
In the aftermath of emancipation (1834) other ethnic groups were brought to labour on the sugar plantations, notably Chinese, Madeirans, and, Indians. The latter proved more successful in adapting to the conditions of plantation life and an indentured labour scheme brought 144,000 Indians to Trinidad, by 1917 when the practice was abandoned (Samaroo, 1996). Today, the descendants of all these various groups make Trinidad into a multi-religious, multi-ethnic, plural society (Smith, 1974), Tobago less so. Issues that arise from time to time that call into question the role of religion in education – such as the right to wear the hijab at school or to have a Rastafarian hairstyle - have usually been settled by the state with the courts ruling it unconstitutional to prohibit a child at school from observing his or her religious practices (Allahar, 2004).

Historically, the Roman Catholic presence has been strong in education, but there are many other denominational boards today which run schools – Anglican, Presbyterian, Seventh Day Adventist, Methodist, Baptist, as well as several different Hindu and Muslim organizations. As will be seen later, most of these denominational schools are supported by the government (known as government-assisted schools), and the government also supports its own schools in the state-run sector. Therein lies the crux of the education-religion-politics scenario in Trinidad and Tobago.

Research Question

To what extent is educational reform in Trinidad & Tobago, such as Universal Secondary Education (USE), stymied by the past and present interactions between education, politics and religion, where religion has played, and continues to play, a dominant role?

Methodology

This paper uses document analysis as its major methodical tool. It examines several different types of documents such as books, articles, background papers, education reports and newspapers to identify pertinent aspects of the historical record that speak to the interactions between the social institutions of education, religion and politics in Trinidad & Tobago. Documents provide information and insight that can help a researcher to better understand the roots of a specific issue that is being experienced today. The documents were scanned to pinpoint relevant passages which were then read more thoroughly and through a process of content analysis the information was organized according to the central question of the research and meaningful passages identified and analyzed into major themes. Content analysis is a process of evaluating documents in such a way that empirical knowledge is produced and understanding is developed, while the researcher strives to maintain an objective stance (Bowen, 2009). This poses some difficulty as historical documents and interpretations of history are, for the most part, subjective accounts. One way to overcome this potential drawback is to comb through different documents for the same period authored by different persons and groups who would be likely to offer a variety of perspectives on an issue.

The Origins of the Education System: 1834-1950

A structured education system did not come into being until 1851 when the British Governor, Lord Harris, established a network of ‘ward schools’ (in each county) at the ‘elementary’ level, which were free. The curriculum was based on the English language, and British values, customs, stories and history. There was to be no religious instruction (London, 2002). The upkeep of these schools largely rested on the French planter class whose children went to church schools, so they were often in arrears, and the system lost momentum. Denominational elementary schools already existed (and a few high schools), and continued to be built. They were fee paying and their curriculum was heavily influenced by the French language, customs and the Roman Catholic religion. Even though free elementary schooling was being provided by the state, albeit only in some areas, the population continued to send their children to church schools if they afford it. So, from the very inception of state schooling in Trinidad, there was a very distinct boundary between state and denominational schools. To a large extent the interest of the British government waxed and waned where provision of education was concerned and into that void, religious bodies, continued to build schools (Stewart, 1981).
They were called ‘elementary’ because they were intended to only deliver ‘the elements’ to the masses of the population (black and coloured). The British and the hierarchy of the religious bodies (largely, French) were unanimous in this respect – needing to keep the majority of the population from accessing further education. In this way, the leaders of the colony sought to maintain social control and social order because further education, beyond a curriculum which only transmitted reading, writing, arithmetic and some geography (Campbell, 1996), would enable persons to access careers in the civil service or be eligible to enter universities. A colony, which by its very nature was based on keeping the mass of people in a subjugated state, and steeped in values making them loyal to a foreign power, could not exist for long if these very same persons were offered a free grammar school-type education. Thus, while the British were cognizant that the people should be taught basic literacy and numeracy, necessary for the full functioning of the colony, the status quo had to be maintained by all means. The British and French elites, while warring with each other, one wanting to anglicize the colony, the other wanting to maintain religious schools and French culture, were, however, united in this regard (Wood, 1986).

The status quo also meant that the ethnic divides would be maintained. The whites, first the Spanish then the French, and now the British were at the pinnacle of the social order. They were the leaders of the society and owned plantations and business interests. A buffer group, the coloureds and those of mixed race, were employed in a range of occupations such as shop keepers, journalists, writers, teachers, pharmacists, as well as various lowly posts in the civil service. They were supported to a large extent by their white relatives and because they were gainfully employed could afford the fees charged by the grammar schools, so that their children were among the privileged few who went beyond an ‘elementary education’. The black and, later the Indian population, remained at the lowest rung of the socio-economic ladder, shut out of a further education experience (Campbell, 1996).

The British did offer a few scholarships for the ‘brightest’ boys at elementary schools to continue to the college level (Campbell, 1996). Sometimes only four or less were offered and it varied from year to year. It was a mechanism by the political authorities to harness the most talented from the colony for further grooming into loyal British citizens. This opening, small as it was, galvanized teachers, principals, parents and academically-able boys to be coached and immersed in a course of study that was rigorous and regimented and did they not let up. It was an avenue for social mobility for the children of the lower social classes whose parents were labourers, estate workers, domestic servants and tradesmen (Campbell, 1997). There was intense competition among those chosen to sit the exam, the College Exhibitions (CE) and, this endured in later years when the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) became the norm and, even to the present day when Universal Secondary Education (USE) is the norm but the students sit the Secondary Assessment Exam (SEA) to determine their placement at a secondary school (Carew, 2010). The history of a high stakes examination (whatever it is called) at the end of primary controlling entrance to secondary schools has persisted and intensified even though reforms have changed the educational landscape significantly (Miller, 2009). As we will see below, this is directly related to the preference for the denominational secondary schools, popularly regarded as ‘good’ schools.

We now turn to the development of the secondary education sector. There was no concept of any other kind of progression in schooling to follow ‘elementary’, except for the winners of the CE and for the more affluent who could afford the fees to grammar schools. The latter were not yet known as ‘secondary’ (a natural progression from ‘primary), but as ‘high schools’ and ‘colleges’ (names they retain to this day). The Roman Catholic Church established a few colleges in the latter half of the 19th century – St. George’s College (not to be confused with the state-run school by the same name established in 1953, St. Mary’s and St. Joseph’s Convent). They were expensive to maintain so school building was restricted and thus access was restricted (Miller, 2009). They became the schools for the children of the elite and those who could afford the fees (the coloured and mixed groups). The Roman Catholic institutions continued to offer a curriculum steeped in the French language and French cultural values.

A challenge to the power of the denominational came in 1859 when the state decided to establish its own secondary school – Queen’s Royal College (QRC). This was a state-run college, offering a secular curriculum based on the classical disciplines of Latin, Greek, Mathematics, Sciences, Music, English
Literature, Religion and History. As with all grammar schools, fees had to be paid and so the poorer classes continued to be kept out. There was much furore in the society, spurred on by the Roman Catholic lobby, largely French, answering the call of an increasingly militant worldwide Roman Catholic Church in this era (Campbell, 1996). The outrage, prominent in newspapers of the day, focused on the notion that a revered institution of learning (a grammar school) could be based only on secular ideas and philosophies. It was widely dubbed ‘the Godless College’ and the Church forbade young Catholic boys to enroll (Campbell, 1996).

Religion, Education and Politics

The tight relationship between religion and education in Trinidad, characterized by the preference of the majority of the population for religious over state schools, was evident even in the immediate post-emancipation era. The country was predominantly Roman Catholic, whether poor and black or rich and white, and priests and clerics supported the inseparability of education and religion, underscoring the importance of having an education based on religious values. Later, there was even a stricture from the Vatican that Catholics should be educated in Catholic schools (Newsday, 2006) and critics of secular schooling felt that the government had no business running schools (Newsday, 2007). This was largely a French Creole-led opposition to the idea of a state secondary school. The British, on the other hand, did not have a keen interest in education other than to anglicize the colony and to rein in the power of the denominationalists and, quite interestingly, they too believed in the close link between education and religion (Carew, 2010). It was extremely expensive to build and maintain schools and much of the time it was the denominational bodies who were engaged in school building. Consequently, the state has had a long history of half-hearted and tardy initiatives in education and this has worked to strengthen the preference of the population for denominational schooling (Carew, 2010). This remains a durable feature of the education system today, though much has changed (Trinidad Express, 1973).

Reacting to reports of much controversy and sub-standard schooling in Trinidad, Sir Patrick Keenan, Chief Inspector of the Board of National Education in Ireland, was sent by the Colonial Office in 1869 to assess the state of education in the country. His major recommendations were adopted by the Education Ordnance of 1870 and a Dual System was established in principle. This meant that the state would support its own elementary schools as well as denominational schools and religious instruction was to be introduced in state schools according to the affiliation of students (Gordon, 1963). Keenan, himself a Roman Catholic, was strongly in favour of schooling with a religious foundation. His ruling therefore supported the French Creoles and the denominational bodies at the elementary level. However, at the secondary level an accommodation was made between the French and the British. The curriculum at St. Mary’s College became more like that at QRC and they were both now preparing eligible candidates for the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge through the Junior and Senior Cambridge examinations and later the Oxford and Cambridge Higher School examination (Campbell, 1996). To a large extent anglicization was complete.

By the beginning of the 20th century, at the primary level two competitive types of elementary schools were established, both funded by the state - state schools and denominational schools. The state paid teachers’ salaries and the fees for denominational schools were abolished. Denominational primary schools were much in demand and religious bodies continued to build schools. By 1950 the country was supplied with an adequate network of schools, though some were overcrowded. The press for secondary school education remained unabated however, as at that level provision and access were sorely limited.

Development of a National Education System: 1950-2016

In the 1950s and 1960s the country was increasingly influenced by the rhetoric of decolonization, the pan-African Movement and nationalist fervour. Independence from Britain came in 1962 and the political party which won the support of the people, by a narrow margin, the People’s National Movement (PNM) (Clarke, 1991), did so based on their campaign to expand access to secondary education and to modernize the curricula. Williams, the country’s first prime minister, felt that the churches had too much control of education and that the longer that continued the longer the nation
would have to wait for a more technically-oriented curriculum, suited to the needs of a newly independent country. He therefore sought to break the hold of the churches on schooling and to address….

... the gaping void in colonial education which had left the colonized subject/object disconnected from his/her past, and hence incapacitated as a potential citizen of the yet nonexistent new nation. Williams believed that relevant education would instil in the colonized the confidence they needed in order to build a nation (Rohlehr, 2013, p. 3).

Education then was central to Williams’ plan to catapult Trinidad & Tobago into becoming an industrialized country; and there were immense reserves of oil and gas to finance this venture. His focus was on school building, developing a curriculum in secondary schools to support technical and vocational education which could work as well to debunk the myths that a colonial education could bequeath (Harvey, 1966). His proposals indicated that denominational schools would be changed in radical ways. The society erupted in outrage on a scale similar to that observed in the 19th century when QRC was being established. There was open conflict between Williams and the denominational boards (Newsday, 2007) but it was not politically expedient for Williams to maintain this level of hostility towards powerful bodies such as the Roman Catholic Church and other religious boards (Hindu, Muslim and Christian) and, their supporters, who were both the elites and the common people. The kind of curriculum reform envisaged by Williams had a practical, technical and vocational orientation (James, 2013) designed to cater to the needs of an industrial economy. He expected that the social classes and groups previously obstructed from secondary education would immediately see how this could have benefitted them, but to a large extent they were not interested. “Efforts to create such schools did not destroy deeply engrained notions of “prestige” schools, which remained most people’s first choice at the secondary level of education” (Rohlehr, 2013. p.7).

The outcome of this period of confrontation was the Concordat of 1960 which resulted in a stronger position for the denominational bodies. They retained power over the management of their schools, which remained traditional grammar schools having an academic curriculum. The state was responsible for paying teachers’ salaries, and denominational schools also became known formally as ‘government assisted’ schools. Most importantly, they could choose 20% of their annual intake (whereas state secondary schools had to accept all the students sent to them by the Ministry of Education). The state had instituted the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) in 1960 at the end of primary school, allowing students to access free secondary education if they passed. Secondary education was opening up but still many thousands of students failed the exam, or it could be put differently, there were not enough school places for the whole cohort. The CEE was a high-stakes exam as parents, teachers, students and the whole population saw it as the gateway to accessing a ‘good’ school (a prestige, grammar school most of which were denominational) and a good job. Students with the highest marks earned a place at these high-demand schools (Carew, 2010). Government secondary schools were not valued as highly. The still controversial “20%” allowed priests, nuns and other religious persons who ran schools to accept the children of the elite who had passed the CE but not high enough to make the pass lists for these schools. The “20%” remains highly controversial today and is seen as a concession the state made to the elites while it brought denominational schools more closely into a national education system – the grammar schools had to accept 80% of their intake from the Ministry of Education which now had overarching control of all public schools. Since then to now the denominational and the state have been involved in ‘low-intensity conflict’ (Sunday Guardian, 2008) over any perceived threat by the state to exercise greater control.

The Alternative or New Sector

Since Williams was defeated in making radical changes to the education system as a whole, he resolved to continue reform efforts by developing an alternative sector in secondary education which would cater to the demands of a workforce in the later 20th century. A massive school building programme began fuelled by high oil prices and throughout the later 1970s to the 1980s junior secondaries, senior comprehensives and composites schools were built. These were very different to the traditional grammar school model and while they did offer some academic subjects, the curriculum was dominated
by pre-technician and industrial arts subjects. Such schools were outfitted with the latest technologies, workshops and laboratories whose upkeep were expensive. One senior comprehensive school could have as many as 100 teachers, about 40 support staff and 1,500 students.

However, since the most academically able students consistently chose grammar schools as placement choices in the Common Entrance Examination, the alternative sector received the lower ability students who did not perform as well. There were many more students in the alternative sector, but the country had still not achieved USE – the failures stayed on in primary schools for two more years or left to learn a trade. The dual system at the primary level – prestige, denominational schools and state schools of low or indifferent status – now became the norm at the secondary level, but much more intensified. The small prestige sector offering an academic type curriculum, mostly administered by denominational bodies were the high-demand schools; the schools where students won scholarships for further study. A survey of secondary schools found that 18% of students in these schools came from lower socio-economic groups but as much as 75% of students in junior secondary schools came from such groups (Newday, 2007). The achievement divide between the two sectors was reinforced by socio-economic status and within the context of Trinidad & Tobago which experienced plantation slavery and colonialism, this also means that there are ethnic differences in the student population.

The alternative sector has had some successes, mainly in culture and sports, but to a large extent these schools are characterized by spectacular underachievement and indiscipline (Fig.1) and, compared to the traditional sector where dropouts are minimal, there is an alarming exodus of early school leavers, particularly from Form 5 (Fig. 2). There are many reasons for this but chief among them was the lack of emphasis on teacher training; preparing teachers to deal with a special population of low achieving students with minimal literacy and numeracy skills. Perhaps of even greater importance was the prevailing view in the society (and parents, students and teachers affiliated with the alternative sector would be included here), that such schools were not the ‘real’ thing, that they were some sort of approximation that did not make the grade. If schools in the alternative sector had produced higher levels of academic success then such ideologies would have begun to change but no other successful model of schooling had been presented to the population.

The state had based their educational reform programme on human capital theory which by the 1980s was receiving tremendous criticism worldwide. Education had been mistakenly believed to be the key to jumpstart the economy but by offering secondary education with a technical bent to more and more students without doing anything to create jobs resulted in ‘the educated unemployed’ and in the case of Trinidad & Tobago, a massive number of school leavers without certification. In the 1990s philosophies of education based on the human development paradigm became influential and educational reforms now sought to build smaller secondary schools to ensure a more meaningful school experience and more manageable schools. Administrators were given training in educational leadership and teachers in the visual and performing arts and integrating technology into the curriculum. The loan agreement underwriting these reforms was known as the Secondary Education Modernization Project (SEMP) and the schools built finally brought Trinidad & Tobago to the level of USE.

Fig.1 Secondary Completion Rate 2004-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secondary Completion Rate (PCR) 2004-2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students Writing CSEC (&gt;5 Subjects Eng &amp; Math)</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
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<td>2006</td>
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<td>2007</td>
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<td>2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MOE, EPD Statistics Section
The Education System Today

The historical preference for religious schools, the inability of the state sector to manage their schools effectively, and the continued excellent performance from denominational schools bodies meant that, even as USE was being proclaimed (2001), it did not make a qualitative difference to students. USE was the culmination of a historical yearning on the part of the population for their children to access a secondary education that would equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to function in jobs of a technical and vocational nature was based on manpower planning and workforce development and an altogether different model from the classical results of the CEE in 2001 was for the most part a change in name only as the exam was still regarded as high stakes and the determinant of who would access a school in the higher achieving prestige sector and who would not. The placement exercise for students conducted by the state based on the results of the Secondary Education Assessment (SEA) which replaced the CEE in 2001 was for the most part a change in name only as the exam was still regarded as high stakes and the determinant of who would access a school in the higher achieving prestige sector and who would not. The placement exercise for students conducted by the state based on the results of the SEA follow long-established procedures which allocate high cut off points for the various denominational schools that parents have selected for their children. Once the traditional sector is allocated its quota of students, the rest (the low performers) are zoned based on where they live and who would not. The placement exercise for students conducted by the state based on the results of the SEA follow long-established procedures which allocate high cut off points for the various denominational schools that parents have selected for their children. Once the traditional sector is allocated its quota of students, the rest (the low performers) are zoned based on where they live and who would not. The placement exercise for students conducted by the state based on the results of the SEA follow long-established procedures which allocate high cut off points for the various denominational schools that parents have selected for their children. Once the traditional sector is allocated its quota of students, the rest (the low performers) are zoned based on where they live and who would not. The placement exercise for students conducted by the state based on the results of the SEA follow long-established procedures which allocate high cut off points for the various denominational schools that parents have selected for their children. Once the traditional sector is allocated its quota of students, the rest (the low performers) are zoned based on where they live and assigned to a school in the new sector.

That being said, the responsibilities of the state are far reaching and it is not entirely fair to compare the educational performance of state schools and denominational schools as if they were on par. The state is obliged to provide education for all its citizens – even the underachieving, who are totally left out of the halls of learning of denominational schools. The Secondary Education Assessment (SEA) which replaced the CEE in 2001 was for the most part a change in name only as the exam was still regarded as high stakes and the determinant of who would access a school in the higher achieving prestige sector and who would not. The placement exercise for students conducted by the state based on the results of the SEA follow long-established procedures which allocate high cut off points for the various denominational schools that parents have selected for their children. Once the traditional sector is allocated its quota of students, the rest (the lower performers) are zoned based on where they live and assigned to a school in the new sector.

Williams’ vision for an alternative route in secondary education that would equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to function in jobs of a technical and vocational nature was based on manpower planning and workforce development and an altogether different model from the classical...

Note: The population figures displayed are based on the projections of the Central Statistics Office

**TABLE 3.10A GOVERNMENT DROPOUTS BY FORM, AGE AND GENDER 2009/2010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>FORM I</th>
<th>FORM II</th>
<th>FORM III</th>
<th>FORM IV</th>
<th>FORM V</th>
<th>LOWER FORM VI</th>
<th>UPPER FORM VI</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
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<td>65</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>93</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Secondary School Annual Statistical Return

Fig. 2 Dropouts from the State Sector 2009-2010
academic curriculum still taught at grammar schools. His ideas had merit because the labour market would have needed workers at all levels and, if the more talented were already directed along another path, then there was scope for the alternative sector to fill the gap and provide viable livelihoods for students (who tended to be of a lower socio-economic class and with learning challenges, more often than not).

Reforms in secondary education for the most part were not directed at the traditional sector which continued as a well-defined and separate entity in secondary education. Efforts by the state to exert greater control of denominational schooling inevitably resulted in controversy and church-state conflict. The latter always ended with some accommodations towards the denominational even as the state succeeded in centralizing education under its authority. For the most part the state was prepared to accommodate the denominational based on political expediency – religion had the potential to play up differences and divisions between social groups and the combination of religion and education was regarded as almost sacred by citizens. The government preferred in instances of such conflict to appease and therefore continued to undermine its own project of providing quality Education For All.

The reform programme was directed mainly at the alternative sector to upgrade facilities, teacher training, curriculum development, provision of laptops and internet access, and to provide guidance counsellors and school social workers. The philosophies underlying EFA, SEMP and the human development paradigm all advocate the importance of constructivist ideas in teaching and learning, and inclusion and equity as hallmarks of any humane education system. The bases for the reforms were provided but there has been no discernible improvement in schools in the alternative sector, neither in achievement or behaviour, since USE.

Discussion

The historical record shows that in Trinidad & Tobago denominational schools had a foothold in the country even before the state had an interest in education. Schooling was a means to an end and the churches used their schools to proselytize and to teach moral values. The state saw their involvement in education as a means of developing social integration in a very diverse culture, of Anglicizing the colony, and of curbing the power of religious boards in education. Both systems existed alongside, quite independently until the Keenan Report when denominational elementary schools became eligible for funding from the state’s resources. This promoted a tremendous growth spurt in denominational elementary schools, usually at the expense of government elementary schools.

The state’s initial foray into secondary education, the establishing of QRC and the furore that resulted, led to it having more control of secondary education as both Catholic colleges and QRC were to have a similar curriculum and be entered for examinations set by Oxford and Cambridge. In the 20th century the state was concerned with developing a more national system of education and repeatedly tried to wrest power from the denominational in order to centralize the system and create a bureaucratic organization overseeing both ‘government assisted’ schools and government schools. Although the Concordat of 1960 and the Education Act of 1966 confirmed that the state would undertake the burden of assisting denominational schools with repairs and equipment, would pay teachers’ salaries and, that the colleges would have discretion over 20% of their intake at the Form One level, the state did make considerable inroads in centralizing the system. In order to make good on their promises they required detailed information from the denominational and put administrative rules and procedures in place to which all schools had to conform. In order to get the funding, denominational had to cease acting like an independent body.

However, the ideologies regarding religion and education remained robust. Unwittingly, Williams’ decision to structure an alternative path in schooling to circumvent the opposition of the denominational, provided more scope for these ideologies to be deepened and strengthened. Despite the spate of reforms which brought the alternative sector into being at tremendous cost, despite the signal achievement for a small developing country in attaining USE, the alternative sector has never demonstrated to the public that it is a viable option for educating their children. True it houses the majority of secondary students, but they were largely assigned there because of lower scores on the
SEA. It is also true that the non-traditional curriculum offered is attractive to those students who are not interested in a path to professional careers and who want to enter the labour market as soon as possible. The alternative sector works for such students if they can improve in basic numeracy and literacy. However, they are in the minority. The sector is plagued by massive underachievement and indiscipline which reach the media all too often.

Various factors thus converge to widen the gulf between the two sectors in secondary education. The practice of assigning the most gifted and able students to the prestige schools, based on demand at the time of SEA, sabotages the entire education reform project of the government. Williams had envisaged a dismantling of the traditional grammar schools and conjured up a less academic-centred curriculum widely available to all. He failed and thus brought the whole idea of an alternative system into being. The fact that it is an ‘alternative’ means that the preferred path has been denied. While that may not make a difference to some, it casts a pall on these schools which are constantly called upon to prove, in the public’s eye, their reason for being. They have not been able to do so constantly affirming by default the historic superiority of the prestige sector, which is dominated by schools run by different dominations.

The scales were weighted against these new schools from the start. But, the education reforms that have been implemented from the 1970s to now were designed to address shortcomings in teaching and learning, in the students themselves and in the administration and management of schools. These reforms have culminated in USE and yet the alternative sector has not moved forward in terms of addressing students’ needs in ways that can be clearly demonstrated. While the factors that have played out in the history of the education system have cemented the position of denominational schools to the extent that the prospect of tampering with them further is blatantly avoided (in the lead up to the National Consultation on Education in 2016 the Minister of Education said bluntly that the Concordat was not going to be tampered with), and ideologies about a good education do constantly invoke the religion and schools model, the fact remains that an alternative system has been established for more than three decades now and should be made to work.

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the state may be adept at mandating and introducing reforms but notoriously inept at meaningful implementation. The alternative system is large and diverse and so are the needs of students. The most recently-built, most modern schools, are characterized by apathetic teachers and uninterested students amidst all the latest learning technologies. It is also difficult to escape the conclusion that politics, not religion today, may be the reason why this sector is in such disarray. Redeeming the sector calls for patient in-house attention to the problems and issues of each school, not for highly-publicized programmes that are “rolled out” from the headquarters of the Ministry of Education. Any measures that school personnel (with the help of experts) would want to try will have to be customized to their needs and their contexts, but with willing support from the Ministry. Politics does not operate like that – usually the directive comes from on high and everyone obeys. This paradigm shift will ask of bureaucrats and their political leaders to listen to school personnel and support their needs.

The urge to get political mileage out of any reforms in education is almost irresistible and so the reforms themselves - how they are implemented, whether careful attention should be paid to time needed for plans to be nurtured and gestate, and developing lines of communication between the school and the Ministry for assistance and open discussion about changes to the plan - receive almost no attention. In a way the government has always shot itself in the foot – for political expediency we have seen the government maintain a placement exercise (for the CE and now the SEA) which privileges the denominational schools and puts the alternative sector at a disadvantage; and, today we see much effort and expense undertaken to bring us to USE but nothing meaningful being done about helping schools in the alternative sector to rise above their problems. The sad reality is that to turn around these schools a long term commitment is needed and politicians operate on a 5-year maximum basis. Education itself takes a backseat to political purpose.
Conclusion

Education reform in Trinidad & Tobago at the secondary level has been on-going from independence up to now. Much of it has targeted improvements in the alternative sector without discernibly raising levels of achievement. Throughout the evolution of the system the government sought to establish state schools to house those children who could not be accommodated in church schools either because they could not pay fees or lived in under-served areas because it is the remit of governments to ensure equity as far as possible. However, the struggles between church and the state resolved mainly through politically expedient measures have come together to create an education system characterized by inequity. The state has won control of most aspects of denominational schooling but the practice that maintains those schools as centres of excellence – the placement of students based on SEA results - has not been touched. The state then has colluded in creating the low-achieving alternative sector and must find the synergies to overcome the problems in this sector. Religion was a major factor in shaping education to what it is today but politics maintains a system mired in inequity.
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Development of Code-Switching: A Case Study on a Turkish/English/Arabic Multilingual Child

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to investigate the early code switching patterns of a simultaneous multilingual subject (Aris) in accordance with Muysken’s (2000) code switching typology: insertion and alternation. Firstly, the records of naturalistic spontaneous conversations were obtained from the parents via e-mail, phone calls and researcher’s interval observation sessions. After a detailed revision of the records, code switching samples were categorized into two groups: insertion and alternation. Then, the code switching samples performed by the subject were ordered chronologically. It was found that the insertion type of code switching occurs at the earlier stages of multilingual development whereas the alternation type of code switching comes out later. This case indicated that the form of code switching gets more complex and intentional as linguistic competence and awareness enhance. The results as consistent with the explanations of MacSwan (2000) and Koike (1987) who emphasized that code switching develops in parallel with linguistic ability, and it should not be assumed as a deficit in the early simultaneous multilingual development. The study is a considerable case analysis in terms of including Turkish, English, and Arabic in a multilingual context.

Keywords: code switching, insertion, alternation, multilingual, Turkish, English, Arabic
Introduction

English, which is accepted as “the international” language, has gained importance steadily over the last few decades, driven by the changes in the political, technological and economical fields. Sports, science, the internet, news or education etc.; countless reasons have brought people together to communicate, and there is now no doubt that English has won the followers to serve this function as the international language. As this is the case globally, educational reforms have been renovated accordingly to include more extended and detailed language involvement into school programs. Moreover, some bilingual parents have started to speak two or more languages intentionally following the birth to grow their children up to be bilingual by adopting various approaches such as one-person-one-language, the home immersion strategy or what is called the “mixed strategy” (Weatherford, 2002).

Growing children up bilingual has been a salient trend for bilingual parents since knowing more than one language has many advantages over being monolingual. Whereas growing up bilingual may occur naturally in some multicultural environments or migration circumstances, some bilingual parents try to grow children up bilingual purposefully. Cognitive and linguistic developments of such children have been investigated via many researches, but there is still a huge gap in the literature as to various aspects of bilingual development, one of which is certainly code-switching.

Code-switching, as defined by Poplack (1980), is the alternation between two languages within a single discourse or constituent. Although code-switching has been investigated in language classes or bicultural contexts very commonly, only some case studies, which are usually small-scale regional studies such as English/Italian or English/ Japanese bilinguals, have focused on code-switching. Even in such studies, there have been different assumptions regarding the leading causes of blending two or more languages in the process of cognitive and linguistic development.

Purpose of the Study

The leading question behind this research is whether proficiency level in two or more languages affects code-switching, as claimed by Macswan (2000) who stated that code-switching is a prestigious indicator of language talent. Hence, the purpose of this study is to investigate the code-switching patterns of a Turkish/English/Arabic multilingual subject, Aris, depending on reports provided by the parents. More specifically, the motive behind conducting this research is to explain how code-switching is associated with language proficiency in bilingual development. In this sense, the main tendency of the subject to different switching patterns is explained according to Muysken’s (2000) code-switching typology.

Review of Literature

Code-switching is described as “the ability to alternate between languages in an unchanged setting” by Bullock and Toribio (2009, p.2). As noted in Hoffman (1991), there is a distinction between code switching and code mixing, which is based on the assumption that code mixing occurs as intra-sentential whereas code switching is performed as inter-sentential. Also, in some studies code switching has been used to cover both cases, and the term “code-mixing” has been ignored since it has a negative association (Taura, 1996). Nevertheless, Poplack’s (2001) description of code switching as “mixing, by bilinguals, two or more languages in discourse without changing topic or interlocutor” (p. 1) is more comprehensive than the earlier descriptions.

Code Switching Patterns

According to Muysken’s (2000) bilingual speech typology, there are three kinds of code switching, which are insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization respectively. Insertion includes incorporation of lexical items of whole units from one language into a structure of another language (Moyer, 2002). This type of switching might rank from a single switch from a noun to an entire noun phrases or full determiner phrases. Both borrowing and nonce-borrowing proposed by Poplack (2001) are included in the insertion type of switching, and as Muysken (2000) stated, there is no need for
Poplack’s distinction between borrowing and nonce-borrowing since both of the terms can be considered as examples of insertion (Moyer, 2002). Insertion can be exemplified as:

“Yo anduve in a state of shock por dos dias.” (Muysken, 2000)

“I walked in a state of shock for two days.” (Muysken, 2000)

A second typology of code switching suggested by Muysken (2000) is “alternation” which refers to the switching between structures from separate languages. The structures would be a clause, a discourse marker or tag form. In alternation, the elements of separate languages keep their own grammatical structures autonomous and independent; that is, two different structures are used according to their own language rules although one might be more dominant than the other. As explained by Moyer (2002), alternation corresponds with the term “inter-sentential code switching” which refers to the case where a bilingual speaker say one sentence in a language and another sentence in other language to the same interlocutor. Bakaeva (2009) cited an example of alternation as:

“Oni ne zamechayut, I don’t know if I will feel the same.”

“They do not notice that, I don’t know if I will feel the same.” (Muysken, 2000)

The third typology of code switching according to Muysken (2000) is “congruent lexicalization”. In this type of switching, lexical items from different languages are combined within a shared grammatical structure. Indeed, congruent lexicalization is observed only if the languages share similar grammatical and lexical structures, which gives the impression that congruent lexicalization requires languages from the same language families like English/ Dutch or Spanish/ Italian. In this research, the multilingual subject has acquired Turkish, English, and Arabic, all of which are from different language families; therefore, congruent lexicalization was not taken into consideration.

**Attitude towards Code Switching**

Code switching has drawn the attention of researchers since 1950s, and attitudes toward it have evolved dramatically. The early perception of code switching was rather negative, and it was believed to occur due to the insufficient proficiency in either language (Martin-Jones & Romaine, 1986). However, the perception of code switching has evolved with more recent studies. For instance, MacSwan (2000) noted that code switching might be perceived as a prestigious indicator of linguistic ability in many cultures. Moreover, some studies have regarded code switching as a strategy for establishing a social relationship. Koike (1987), for instance, mentioned that code switching is a personal communication device to enrich discourse. To sum up, the general attitude toward code switching has changed in accordance with new research which showed that, contrary to previous claims, code switching is a communication strategy used by bilinguals to increase the quality of discourse.

**Methodology**

The main purpose of this research has been to investigate early code switching samples of a simultaneous multilingual subject by associating the findings with Muysken’s (2000) code switching typology. Accordingly, the core question of this research is whether code switching patterns performed by bilingual children change as they grow and acquire two or more languages simultaneously. Since the research is framed on one multilingual child in a restricted time period, the study is designed as a case study.

**Description of the Subject and the Parents**

The subject in this research was born in 2010 in Turkey, and has been exposed to three different languages since birth. The subject’s father has a high proficiency in English since he lived and had a PhD diploma in Canada on preschool linguistic development. The father and mother are also Arabic/Turkish bilinguals. They planned that the mother would speak only Arabic whereas the father would communicate only in English with the subject, which is actually similar to the one-person-one-language approach. The subject has been exposed to Turkish from his caretaker and other relatives when the parents are at work.
At home, the subject speaks both English and Arabic with his parents, but he has more opportunity to speak Turkish outside of the house. To increase the quantity of contact in all three languages, the parents have maintained various activities in and out of the house. As the father stated, “We have been doing our best to provide as many facilities as we can to make him keep the three languages balanced.” Recently, the subject has indeed acquired three languages simultaneously and has a positive attitude towards switching languages depending on the context and interlocutor.

Data Collection

The research is mainly based on the data recorded by the parents. The father purposefully recorded the naturalistic spontaneous conversations to investigate his son’s linguistic development since he is an expert on preschool linguistic development. The first words in different languages, dialogues in various contexts, private tape recordings, daily and weekly diaries have been kept regularly in order to trace the linguistic development of the child. The father has also noted specific dialogues which involved examples of code switching, language attitude and language awareness.

Parent observers are sometimes criticized for over-interpreting their children’s utterances (Deuchar & Quay, 2001). However, parent observers would be the ones who can interpret the early utterance of their child much better than an outer observer might do. For this reason, their deeper insight into the child’s true linguistic development should be appreciated (Weatherford, 2002). Naturally, a child is more accessible for the parents than an investigator who has restricted opportunities to visit and observe the subject in natural contexts. Furthermore, parent observers eliminate the issue of observer’s paradox (the case in which the observed subject does not behave naturally due to the presence of the observer), for the parents already share the natural context with their own children.

Findings

All the data in this research was obtained from the father via e-mail and phone calls. The dialogues and code switching patterns included the samples which were recorded from the time period when the subject was one year and ten months (1; 10) old to two years and nine months (2; 9) old. Thus, the dialogues used in this research were recorded over an 11 month period from when the subject started to utter his first basic sentences. The recordings were scanned and two sets of data were listed according to Muysken’s (2000) code switching typology: insertion (intra-sentential) and alternation (inter-sentential).

Samples of Insertion (intra-sentential) Code Switching

The results obtained through scanning the written dialogues indicated that switching samples at early telegraphic stage merely consisted of insertion. For instance, the first switching was performed when the subject was one year and ten months (1; 10) old, and it was like:

(1) When he names the objects:
Father: Aris, what is this?
Subject: This is Mayy. (Mayy (Ar): water)
(Aris, 09.12.2011) (1;10)

The shifts at this age were not specific to any language and occurred in all three languages. For instance, when the subject wanted to show and name something, he used the pattern “X over there”, and X could be a subject in all three languages (Arabic, Turkish, and English). Similarly, when he asked for something from his mother, he used the pattern “Şiyli X” (Şiyli: ‘give’ in Arabic), and again, X can be an object in all languages that he speaks. Some of insertions recorded with the exact occurrence dates are given below to provide more examples.

(2) When he wants to repeat something
Subject: Baba, again çorba. (baba (Tr): father, çorba (Tr): soup)
(Aris, 17.12.2011) (1;10)

(3) When he points at something
Subject: Honi ball. Burada ball. (Honi (Ar): Here; burada (Tr): here)
(Aris, 25.01.2012) (1;11)
Samples of Alteration (inter-sentential) Code Switching

There were not a huge number of alterations performed by the subject in this 11 months because the observation period mostly coincided with the early telegraphic speech. However, there were still examples which are worth mentioning. Considering that this research included the data from 11 months, the subject could perform alternation only after 8 months. Namely, the first alternation occurred when the subject was two years and six months (2; 6) old. The first alternation took place in a conversation with his mother.

(5) When he was showing a toy cow to his mother
   Subject: Şuuf heyi annem, it is a cow. (şuuf heyi (Ar): look at this, annem (Tr): my mummy)
   (Aris, 18.08.2012) (2;6)

In this type of code switching, the subject used two languages by keeping their own grammatical structures autonomous independent. In the example (5), both Arabic and English sentences were used according to their own grammatical and syntactic rules without mixing any items. Another example of alternation was performed along with insertion when the subject was showing a toy cow to his father. It was one of a few rare examples when the subject used insertion and alternation in the same context.

(6) When he imitates animal sounds
   Subject: Dady, look! Cow moo moo yapıyor. (yap-iyor (Tr): make- pre.cont.)
   (Aris, 25.08.2012) (2;6)

In the example (6), the sentence started in English (Daddy, look), and went on with English words which were uttered in Turkish syntax and finished with a Turkish verb. He preferred “Cow moo moo yapıyor” instead of “cow is making moo moo”.

Another alternation occurred when the subject wanted to state his hunger and asked for something to eat. This time, the first sentence was in Arabic, and then, shifted into Turkish.

(7) When he is hungry
   Subject: Bedduy yekol nemmuş, acıktım. (Bedduy (Ar): I want, yekol (Ar): eat, Nemmuş (Ar): a kind of Arabic food, acıktım (Tr): I got hungry”
   (Aris, 14.11.2012) (2;9)

Discussion and Conclusion

In this research, the findings were categorized according to Muysken’s (2000) code switching typology. The categorization clearly indicated that the subject changed code switching patterns as he gets older and has a higher linguistic awareness. When he was at the telegraphic sentence stage, he could only perform insertion by mixing intra-sentential components. However, through the end of the observation period, the subject started to perform alternation by shifting language at inter-sentential level. Namely, the subject changed the code switching pattern as he developed greater linguistic competence, which implies the that code switching is an indicator of linguistic ability. In this vein, it seems reasonable to assume that code switching is associated with the level of linguistic competence in bilingual cases.

On the one hand, the results of this research contradict the early description of code switching proposed by Martin-Jones & Romaine (1986), which was rather negative and believed to occur due to the lack of proficiency in either language.

On the other hand, the findings of the research are consistent with the description of code switching proposed by Macswan (2000). According to Macswan (2000), code switching is a certain indicator of linguistic ability and can be used as a strategy for establishing social relationships. Similarly, Koike (1987) cited code switching as a personal communication device to enrich discourse. In the light of the results obtained from the present research, it can be suggested that code switching indeed develops in parallel with linguistic ability, and it should not be assumed as a deficit in the early simultaneous multilingual development.
Limitations of the Research

In this research, code switching patterns of a multilingual child were analyzed and categorized according to Muysken’s (2000) code switching typology. Due to the time constraint, the research focused on only code switching development. This might not reveal all the facts of a subject’s linguistic development. Another factor which is worth mentioning is that the data used in this research was recorded and saved by the parents, and that their impressions were supportive but when at variance with the larger picture had no effects on the results.

References

Abstract

Today, it is very important to research the most effective and easy ways of teaching and learning languages. The recent scientific works in this field discovered that psychotherapy should be taken into consideration in language studies. Psychotherapy allows us to prepare an effective method of language teaching by considering each individual’s mind, his/her psychology, unsuccessful experiences in learning languages, and level of perception. Cognitive psychotherapy is a set of tools that is used for modification of dysfunctional beliefs and curing defection of information processing (Beck, 1993). The beginning of cognitive therapy is related to Kelly’s research (Ch. L. Doyle, 1987). He was one of the first psychotherapists who tried to directly change human thought. Based on this method, the scientist Aaron Beck founded a new direction called cognitive psychotherapy, and he then popularized it. According to his theory, human thought determines feelings, emotions shapes behavior, and behavior forms our environment. Therefore, it can be the reason why students learn the Kazakh language. By evaluating all collected data, I will be able to give practical recommendations to improve second language acquisition and learning in Kazakhstan and beyond. Since the psychotherapy approach is not widely used in teaching Kazakh language yet, I aim to thoroughly research this topic based on international experiences and apply the psychotherapy approaches in teaching language at Nazarbayev University.

Key words: Kazakh language, language teaching, psychotherapy, cognitive psychotherapy, approaches, methods

Today in the age of vast technological development, remaining limited to just one language is not enough. Globalization and increasing international cooperation have raised studying new languages to a necessity. There much evidence which proves that the human brain is capable of learning several languages. For example, there is a myth that the famous philosopher from Middle Ages Al-Farabi spoke more than seventy languages\(^1\). Knowing a foreign language opens the door for new world of opportunities. As a result, the demand for international languages is increasing. On the other hand, interest in languages that are used by small populations is declining. For these reasons, it is important to improve the status of those languages and increase their number of users, which can be done by investigating new methods of teaching. This essay discusses the importance of implementing psychotherapy approaches in teaching the Kazakh language and shows that this method will increase efficiency of language learning. Firstly, the paper will analyze problems related to Kazakh language and methodologies. Then the paper will demonstrate the importance of psychotherapy in linguistics by examining results of the survey conducted at Nazarbayev University.

To begin with, the Kazakh language (KL) is the native language of the Kazakh people. In Kazakhstan, due to historical and social histories more than half of the population does not speak Kazakh very well. As a result, our country practices a bilingual system. Therefore, improving conditions for the Kazakh language is one of the priorities of Kazakh government. Teaching Kazakh language as a second language has been an ongoing process since the independence of the country. Within this period, problems of teaching KL, different practical methods, and effective approaches were widely investigated by Kazakh scientists. There are several specific challenges of learning Kazakh language. To illustrate, this language belongs to the class of agglutinative languages, there is a wide variety in the

\(^1\) Al-Farabi (n.d.)
lexicon, and a limited number of people speak in Kazakh. These characteristics of the Kazakh language cause problems for language learners and hinder them from quick learning.

In the way of solving such problems, linguists researched effective language teaching methods based on specific features of the Kazakh language and international experience. The advanced methods of language teaching, particularly, the psychological basics of teaching language, and the methodology and theory of linguistic communication were thoroughly studied by F. Orazbayeva, A. Abilkayev, A. Issabayev and others².

Similarly to teaching other languages, in teaching the Kazakh language traditional communicative and grammar-translation methods are being widely used. The methods mentioned and other ways of teaching have importance, but they are not always enough. For this reason, new, more effective methods are being investigated and it is crucial to improve efficacy of teaching language. So, how can the new methods can be found? We can find answers for this question by researching learners’ problems. There was a survey conducted on Kazakh language learning at Nazarbayev University. The results show that psychological problems of language learners and their attitude affect their skill in learning new languages. For example, more than ninety percent of respondents mentioned that compulsory language classes negatively influence their desire to study. The boring learning materials, repetitive grammar, the atmosphere of the classes, and even some topics decrease students’ interest in language learning. In order to solve such issues it is very important to thoroughly investigate learners’ background in language learning, preferences, perception features, and increase students’ self-assessment. This is a psychotherapeutic approach. The word psychotherapy is derived from Ancient Greek psyche ψυχή meaning “soul” and therapeia θεραπεία “healing”, in other words it is a system of affecting the human mind and human medical therapy of the body through the mind³. Psychotherapy plays an important role in solving emotional, personal, social and, other problems. This means that we can apply psychotherapy in linguistics as well. More specifically, application of gestalt therapy often demonstrates the relationship between psychotherapy and language learning. To illustrate, the results of the survey show that students who speaks three and more languages are more interested in learning languages and more skillful in studying than people who can speak only one language. If an individual speaks three or more languages, learning one more foreign language becomes easier. In addition, it is noted that as students’ age increases, his/her skill to learn language improves. This is do to the way that the brain generates neurons that are responsible for linguistic abilities⁴. Therefore, it can be deduced that gestalt psychology for the human mind facilitates challenges in language learning.

To sum up, this paper aimed to demonstrate opportunities of using psychotherapeutic approach in learning Kazakh language. The idea was brought after the analysis of the results of the survey that had been taken in Nazarbayev University. This essay argued that the psychotherapeutic approach may be a useful tactic in learning a new language, particularly Kazakh language in this case. Possible weakness might be that the sample is not representative enough, because one cannot consider the NU community as the best representative of the population of Kazakhstan; however it seems enough for the purposes of this small essay. Further studies should consider taking larger and more representative samples to increase the quality of data; in addition, different sampling techniques might be used as well. If the results are similar, it can be more robustly claimed that the psychotherapeutic approach in learning language is a suitable solution of new method in field.

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² Orazaliyeva (2000)
³ Wikipedia, Psychotherapy
⁴ Nussbaum (n.d.)
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