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Preface

The Department of English Language and Literature, Sultan Qaboos University, is proud to present the fourth edition of Exposition, a collection of research articles by students of Arts and Education Majors.

This diverse collection addresses issues in literature, education, linguistics as well as issues which impact Omani society. As such, it is topical in content and interest while focusing on broad areas of both, immediate as well as long standing relevance. As such, the collection is eclectic in range and interest while being firmly rooted within an Omani context. This is important as research within and about Oman is nascent and the efforts of students to identify core areas of concern voice their varying interests. Areas included in this collection include those with a broad literary focus as the perception of literature among English (Majors) students, the challenges of translating Omani poetry and a textual analysis of villainy in Harry Potter. It also addresses educational concerns as the impact of electronic tablets on learning among young children as well as strategies used by middle school teachers to retain student attention. To showcase students’ interest in Omani society, the collection includes articles which address social concerns as Omani’s perception of colours and the impact of popular media on body image. Adding a different aspect to the selection is an article which explores Omani’s awareness of history, seen specifically through Language and Literature connection with Zanzibar. As a whole, the research papers in this edition represent the diverse range of interests which concern students as they engage with the world around them in ways that reflect their own academic interests while adding to existing and growing work on Oman. It is hoped that these papers will encourage readers to further investigate some of the areas which have been explored here.

The Exposition team would like to thank the faculty and students of the Department of English for their cooperation and enthusiastic response to the production of this journal. It would also like to specially thank the Head of Department as well as the Dean and the Assistant Deans of the College of Arts and Social Sciences for their support and encouragement in this student endeavour.

Dr. Sandhya Rao Mehta
(Faculty Editor)
Content

Chapter 1 | Azzah Ali Al Mamari 08
How Far do some Characters of the Harry Potter Book Series Represent Good and Evil?

Chapter 2 | Aisha Omair Al Balushi 18
Translators’ Problems in Translating Omani Poetry

Chapter 3 | Humoud Saleh Al Aamri 28
Perceptions of English (Major) Students in Sultan Qaboos University on the Relevance of Literature Courses

Chapter 4 | Shaima Said Al Rashdi 34
What Led to the Breakup of the Omani Empire in East Africa, and How Aware are Omanis about this Part of their History?

Chapter 5 | Areej Ahmed Al Jamaei 44
What Associations do Omanis have with Colours?

Chapter 6 | Ibtihal Said Al Gharibi 50
In What Ways do Electronic Tablets Influence Children’s Behaviour, Health and Education?

Chapter 7 | Molook Said Al Ghafri 58
To what Extent does the Body Image of Actresses and Female Fashion Models cause Depression among Young Women who Seek to Imitate Them?

Chapter 8 | Noor Musallam Al Mahri 68
What are the Strategies that English Language Teachers use to Keep Students Attentive?
Chapter 1
How far do some Characters of the *Harry Potter* Book Series Represent Good and Evil?

Azzah Ali Al Mamari

Abstract

This research paper investigates how far some characters in the series *Harry Potter* represent good and evil. The literature review of the paper includes areas of representation for the analysis of the characters as well as an analysis of the characters, Macbeth, Jean Valjean, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. These characters are analysed to see how they represent good or evil, or both. The research then analyses and discusses how far Harry Potter, Lord Voldemort, Draco Malfoy, and Severus Snape match the criteria of good and evil. The analysis and discussion is based on the data obtained from specific chapters of the *Harry Potter* novels. It has revealed some interesting results and showed that there is an absence of data for the analysis of the characters. The main findings of the paper compares and contrasts the chosen *Harry Potter* characters with the characters of the literature review. The research paper then concludes with an answer to the research question. It also provides the limitations of the research and suggests further topics for future study.

Key words: *Harry Potter*, Voldemort, Snape, Draco, J.K. Rowling, good, evil

1 Introduction

Wizards, and witches, and magic! Oh, my! It is crazy to think that the boy from the cupboard under the stairs has managed to affect the lives of millions of readers across the globe. That same boy whose thrilling yet touching journey was taken not only by him, but also by all of his devoted fans who have been with him from the start. That boy is named Harry Potter. The *Harry Potter* book series by the English writer J.K. Rowling is one the most successful book franchise in the world. The books have been so popular that 2.6 million copies of the seventh and last installment of the franchise, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* were sold in the first 24 hours of its release in the UK alone while 8.3 million copies were sold in the US (Warwick-Ching, 2007). Despite it being a children's book series, the Harry Potter novels have garnered readers of all ages from children to adults as well as readers from various cultures as Rowling has successfully managed to unite them all under one roof with her spell-binding books.

The *Harry Potter* book series teaches its readers a vital lesson - to distinguish between good and evil. The theme of good and evil is a theme that recurs several times throughout the whole book series. Ionoaia claims the central moral of *Harry Potter* is to avoid evil. She explains that “Thomas Hobbes’s concept of summum malum (greatest evil)” (Ionoaia, 2009, p. 49) is in fact embodied by Voldemort; therefore, Harry must do his absolute best to destroy that kind of evil. Moreover, because Harry Potter brings out the theme of good and evil very often, I think it is a theme worth examining. The books have such an impact on the readers, especially children that it is bound to teach them the importance of distinguishing what is good and what is evil. After all, the Harry Potter novels have a large fan base and most of them have a deep involvement with the books. The fact that *Harry Potter* portrays good and evil quite realistically suggests that these children
can grow up having a deeper understanding of what is good and what is evil, which they can then apply in the real world as well (Ionoaia, 2009). The way people, particularly children, recognize and understand the concept of good and evil plays a vital role in bringing up a person. For example, if a person is taught that evil is restricted to specific behaviors, that person may end up hurting somebody because their perception of evil is different from others. The lessons that a person is taught when they are younger can shape the way they live their lives, and the *Harry Potter* novels are no exception as they instill the idea of what is good and evil in the children. Therefore, the purpose of this research paper is to try to answer the question: *How far do some characters in the Harry Potter book series represent good and evil?*

2 The Representation of Good and Evil in Literature

Have you ever wondered how people are defined as good or evil? Or what it takes for a person to be called good or to be called evil? Defining someone as either good or evil is never easy; in fact it is very intricate and complex. In this chapter, I will examine and analyze different characters in literature to try and see how each of the characters are portrayed as embodying good, evil, or a mixture of both. The characters that are investigated are Macbeth's Macbeth, *Les Misérable*’s Jean Valjean, and *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*’s Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

2.1 Areas of representation

In the following section, different characters in literature are analyzed in attempt to see how they are characterized as good, evil, or a combination of the two. In order to come to the conclusion about whether the character is good, evil, or both, various areas of representation are discussed, such as the physical appearance, associated imagery, language, relationship with other characters, inner thoughts, and behavior or actions.

a. Good and evil characters

Macbeth, Jean Valjean, and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are characters in literature with their own individual personalities. By looking at the different areas of representation, I have managed to pinpoint how good or evil can be recognized in literature. How far it takes to be an evil character or a good character is illustrated through the analysis of these various characters, which are summarized in this table:

Table 2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traits of a good character</th>
<th>Physical appearance</th>
<th>Associated imagery</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Relationship with other characters</th>
<th>Inner thoughts</th>
<th>Behavior and actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>Slang</td>
<td></td>
<td>Loving relationship with others</td>
<td>Feel the need to constantly protect others</td>
<td>Scarifying self to save others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traits of an evil character</th>
<th>Physical appearance</th>
<th>Associated imagery</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Relationship with other characters</th>
<th>Inner thoughts</th>
<th>Behavior and actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Unsuitable clothing</td>
<td>-Blood</td>
<td>-Aggressive</td>
<td></td>
<td>Treat people with cruelty.</td>
<td>Feeling justified for wrong actions</td>
<td>Inflicting pain to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Nonhuman appearance</td>
<td>-Darkness</td>
<td>-Ambiguous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Violence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on an analysis of selected characters in literature, Macbeth demonstrates the true representation of an evil character. He is and always will be the definition of evil in my opinion. Valjean, on the other hand, is a man of integrity, virtue, and kindness, which is why he represents a good character in literature. For Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Hyde is obviously evil, while defining Dr. Jekyll, however, is not as simple. Nevertheless, I have come to the conclusion that Jekyll is a representation of a character stuck in a thin line between what is good and what is evil.

3 The Representation of Good and Evil in Harry Potter

Having examined the characters of Macbeth, Jean Valjean, and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, the characters of Harry Potter are examined based on the areas of representation from the previous chapter. In this section, I will see how far the interesting characters of *Harry Potter* match the criteria of good or evil, or both.

The characters that are analyzed are Harry Potter, Lord Voldemort, Draco Malfoy, and Severus Snape. Harry is a regular boy who discovers that he is a wizard. Voldemort is a dark wizard who wants to take over the wizarding world. Draco is Harry’s nemesis at Hogwarts while Snape is Harry’s strict Potions professor.

3.1 Samples

To analyze the characters of *Harry Potter* and see how far they match the criteria of good or evil, or both, I have chosen specific chapters from the *Harry Potter* books for the analysis. For each character, I used three chapters from different books. I have chosen these chapters as representatives for the whole book series since these chapters provide enough information to illustrate whether the representation of good or evil is constant for these characters as they grow and develop throughout the whole series. For example, for Voldemort, there is a sense of evil in his eyes even when he was merely a student at Hogwarts as Book 6 shows. This section, therefore, includes the character’s first appearance to where they stand during the middle and end of the series. The chapters are used to demonstrate how far the characters match the criteria of good or evil, or a combination of both.

The Data Collection Instrument

The areas of representation I will focus on when it comes to analyzing the chosen *Harry Potter* characters are:

1) Physical appearance in description of character
2) Facial expressions in description of character when uttering
3) Narrator’s description of the character
4) Speech Function
5) Tone of language
6) Behavior and actions

Results

After examining the samples, this section provides some of the results obtained from the data.
Physical appearance

Table 3.1 does not show much about the characters’ representation of good or evil; however, the fact that Voldemort has scarlet red eyes and is lipless and bony does reveal a lot about his scary, non-human appearance.

Table 3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Physical appearance in description of character</th>
<th>Harry Potter</th>
<th>Lord Voldemort</th>
<th>Draco Malfoy</th>
<th>Severus Snape</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hair colour</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Bald</td>
<td>White-blond</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nose</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Hooked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lips</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Lipless</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Thin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Eyes</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Scarlet red</td>
<td>Grey</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Body figure</td>
<td>Skinny</td>
<td>Bony</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Skin tone</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Pale</td>
<td>Pale</td>
<td>Sallow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Language

Table 3.2 (displayed below) shows the goodness of Harry as item 29 reveals that his speech is usually comforting and cheering more than the other functions. Draco is demonstrated as an evil character since out of his total 30 utterances, 18 consist of offending, swearing, threatening, and challenging words (item 27, 30-32). Voldemort’s speech, on the hand, includes offending, which adds up to a total of 9, and challenging, which adds up to a total of 10, as revealed in items 27 and 32. The absence of data does not show that Voldemort is an evil character as he is assumed to be. Snape, however, is the one who resorts the most to offending and mocking people as item 27 reveals an alarming total of 18 of those speech functions in just two chapters, making him more offensive and demanding than Voldemort.

Table 3.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Speech Function</th>
<th>Harry Potter</th>
<th>Lord Voldemort</th>
<th>Draco Malfoy</th>
<th>Severus Snape</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bk 1, Ch 2</td>
<td>Bk 6, Ch 24</td>
<td>Bk 7, Ch 31</td>
<td>Bk 4, Ch 33</td>
<td>Bk 6, Ch 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bk 6, Ch 23</td>
<td>Bk 7, Ch 1</td>
<td>Bk 4, Ch 5</td>
<td>Bk 6, Ch 6</td>
<td>Bk 7, Ch 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Number of utterances</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Behavior and actions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Apologizing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Sympathizing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Pleading</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Ordering</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Offending</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Requesting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Comforting</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Swearing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Threatening</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Confronting</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Praising</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3 (displayed below) illustrates the Snape is the character whose actions consists of the most shouting and bashing with a total of 7 as revealed in item 53 while Voldemort’s total screams and shouts are shockingly only 2. While he may not shout often, Voldemort is the only one who inflicts pain and even kills people as shown in item 56 with a sum of 5. This of course demonstrates the evil nature of Voldemort; however, the amount is still not enough to regard Voldemort as such an evil character. Harry’s actions, on the other hand, reveal many things about him. The majority of his actions seem to show he is a good character as the amount of helping add up to 4 shown in item 55, and total of defending sums up to 3 displayed in item 57.
### Table 3.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Behavior and actions</th>
<th>Harry Potter</th>
<th>Lord Voldemort</th>
<th>Draco Malfoy</th>
<th>Severus Snape</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bk 1, Ch 2</td>
<td>Bk 4, Ch 33</td>
<td>Bk 1, Ch 5</td>
<td>Bk 1, Ch 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bk 6, Ch 24</td>
<td>Bk 6, Ch 23</td>
<td>Bk 6, Ch 6</td>
<td>Bk 5, Ch 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bk 7, Ch 31</td>
<td>Bk 7, Ch 23</td>
<td>Bk 7, Ch 23</td>
<td>Bk 7, Ch 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Screaming, Shouting, Bashing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Shaking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Helping, Assisting, Guiding</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Hitting, Inflicting pain, Fighting, Killing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Defending, Attacking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Following</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Laughing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Lying</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Whispering</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Pushing, Shoving</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4 Findings

The characters of Chapter 2 are compared and contrasted with Chapter 3’s characters in this section:
4.1 Mr. Hyde and Voldemort’s physical appearance

There are similarities in the physical appearance of Mr. Hyde and Voldemort. They both appear more like animals than humans. While Hyde has an ape-like figure, Voldemort looks more like a snake. This indicates that evil characters are shown having a nonhuman appearance to illustrate that their evil-like behaviors are more traits of animals than humans as they disregard humanity.

4.2 Language difference between Macbeth and Voldemort

For the most part, both Macbeth and Voldemort appear as evil characters; however, there are some differences between them. Macbeth is seen to have a highly violent language. He uses language to insult and offend people. Voldemort, on the other hand, does not use such an aggressive language that often. His tone is more composed and quiet unlike Macbeth. It seems that Macbeth uses both his language and behaviour to hurt people while Voldemort hurts people mostly with his cruel actions only.

5 Conclusion

Diving into the world of Harry Potter has been an amazing journey for me when reading J.K. Rowling’s famous book series as a child, but analyzing the characters of Harry Potter as an adult has been equally fascinating. The aim of this research is to see how far Harry Potter, Lord Voldemort, Draco Malfoy, and Severus Snape match the criteria of good and evil, which required a literary analysis on a deeper level. Of course, the purpose of the paper is quite significant as the novels have garnered many young fans that follow the series almost religiously. Because the Harry Potter books are of huge impact on these children’s lives, the series has a direct relation to these children; therefore, it can teach them the many morals that the books represent. One of the major lessons that these books can teach its readers is to distinguish between what is good and what is evil, which is why this research is of such importance.

After reviewing the analysis and discussion, I have come to a conclusion to the answer of this research question. Even though the amount of data regarding Harry’s good qualities is insufficient, he is still the only one who has the most positive characteristics, so I think it is safe to say that Harry is an overall good character. Moreover, there is also an absence of data for the analysis of Voldemort. Nonetheless, most of the aspects point toward his evil nature as revealed through his physical appearance and actions, which show that he is by far evil. For Draco, most of his traits are of a negative nature; however, it seems that he can also show some tenderness for those who are in grave danger. Therefore, I think it is unfair to just regard him as evil. Since the goodness of his heart rarely shows up, Draco seems to be a character who is both good and evil. Lastly, what I have gathered for Snape is that he appears to be mostly evil since all the features have showed attributes of an evil character. However, all the aspects of Book 7 Chapter 33 have showed a different side of Snape. I think Snape’s sacrificial act outweighs all his negative characteristics as he puts his own protection and happiness aside for the sake of Harry’s safety, and for that I consider him a good character.

Although I have managed to provide an answer to the research question, there are, however, some limitations in the research. The main limitation of the research is that the samples do not cover all the Harry Potter book series. After all, I have only taken 12 chapters out of all the seven books. Therefore, the results I have found might not be the same for each chapter of the series. The chapters I used as samples are merely representatives of the novels.
After analyzing the characters of *Harry Potter*, I realized that there are other topics related to my research that are worth further research. I think it would be interesting to see how far some characters represent good and evil in other book franchises such as *Twilight*. Since the *Twilight* book series is also highly popular and have millions of readers, I think it would be fascinating to see if the representations of good and evil are similar to those in Harry Potter. The research can demonstrate whether *Twilight* plays an important role in impacting the views of its young readers through the representations of their characters.

**References**


Chapter 2
Translators’ Problems in Translating Omani Poetry

Aisha Omair Al Balushi

Abstract

The current paper investigates various problems that translators face in translating Omani poetry. This paper aims to determine the main problems that many translators encounter in translating Omani poetry. As a first step, the study reviews how linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic problems lead to difficulties in translating poetry. To this effect, an interview has been made with an Omani translator and a questionnaire has been designed and distributed to 35 Translation (Major) students (10 males and 25 females) at SQU in order to identify the main problems related to translating Omani poetry with some possible solutions. The findings show that linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic problems are the main obstacles of translating Omani poetry. The study also reveals another problem in translating Omani poetry related to religious aspects. The paper concludes with some suggestions that help translators to deal with the problems of translating Omani poetry, such as providing a course in poetic translation, using adaptation in the target texts in translating religious terms, and using footnotes to explain unclear and difficult phrases or terms.

Key words: Omani poetry, linguistic problems, cultural problems, aesthetic problems, poetic translation

1. Introduction

Throughout history, translation has played a key role in transferring messages from one language to another through many languages and cultural difficulties. The processes of translation are characterized by difficulty and complexity which are based on the type of the texts that makes the translation either less or more complex. When the literary texts are considered, the issue of translation becomes significant since literary works like novels, fiction, and poetry contain various stylistic and literary devices. According to Hariyanto (n.d), literary translation is the most difficult task that translators face, but translating poetry is more complicated than other genres of literature since the form and the meaning of a poem have to be taken into consideration. Hence, the issue of translating poetry has been a subject of dispute among many researchers and scholars, and a torrent of studies have discussed whether translating poetry is possible or not. In fact, there are many problems in translating poetry which can be put under three main categories: linguistic, socio-cultural, and aesthetic (Jafari & Karimnia, 2015; Hariyanto, n.d; Tisgam, 2014). In recent years, there has been an increased interest in translating Omani poetry into English among many scholars and writers who are specialized in the field of translation. Due to the importance and the need of translating Omani poems into other different languages in order to introduce Omani poetry to the rest of the world, it is important to create good translations. It is a great opportunity for foreign readers who are interested to know more about Omani culture and literature through these literary translated works. The present paper is an attempt to address three main concerns in translating Omani poetry: (1) different views on poetic translation (2) different aspects of the problems regarding poetic translation (3) solutions and strategies to solve the issue of translating poetry.
1.2. Views on Poetic Translation

The issue of translating poetry has been a debatable subject among many scholars and researchers for a long time. Different views and perceptions are stated in a torrent of studies one of which is whether translators prefer to transfer the form or the meaning of a poem. In fact, both the form and the meaning are paid a great deal of attention by translators while they translate poems. As stated by Dervishi (n.d), the difficulty of translating poetry is related to two orientations which are duplicating the meaning alone or retaining the rhythm or rhyme which reflects the beauty of a poem. The conflict between the form and the content of poems in translation may result in an unsuccessful translation due to the loss of one of these aspects (Ben Zid, 2014).

Another controversial issue in poetic translation is the translatability or untranslatability of poetry. Nida points out that few researchers argue that poetry is translatable since anything which is written in one language can be transferred into another language (as cited by Tisgam, 2014). According to Jafari and Karminia (1985), it is possible to translate poetry as evidenced by the number of successfully translated poems. In order to achieve a successful translation, both the form and the content must be translated. However, due to the special features and values that literary texts have in general and poetry in particular, many researchers argue that translating poetry is impossible. Some scholars believe that poetry will be lost in translation, and Robert Forst (as cited by Tisgam, 2014) says that it is difficult to transmit the quality and characteristics of a poem in translation. In addition, translating poetry is particularly associated with certain problems, such as linguistic and cultural issues (Arberry, 1957; Catford, 1965 as cited by Tisgam, 2014). Similarly, Khalifa (2015) believes that translating Arabic poetry to English is very complicated since these two languages are totally different. In brief, many researchers contend that translating poetry is very difficult, if not impossible.

1.3. Problems of Translating Poetry

Translating poetry is not an easy task, and translators usually encounter many problems while translating poetry. The three main problems of translating poetry are linguistic, aesthetic, and cultural issues.

1.3.1 Linguistic Problems

No two languages share the same features or terms (Tisgam, 2014 & Bassnett, 2005). This is especially true in the case of Arabic and English which are totally different in terms of syntax (Khalifa, 2015). According to Hariyanto (n.d), two aspects of language must be taken into account, which are collocation and syntactical structure. Based on Hariyanto’s idea, translators should use equivalent collocations, and they should use syntactic structures in the target text which are similar or close to the structures of the source text. Thus, finding similar structures and equivalents is very complicated, particularly if two languages are different. In fact, no two languages share the same syntactical structures (Tisgam, 2014). Due to the differences between languages and their ways of ordering words, translators find obstacles to translate a poem by using the same order of words. As a result, this may result in the loss of meaning of the poem in translation since sometimes the meaning depends on the word order. Not only do the syntactical structures and the word order lead to problems of translating poetry, but capitalized letters or words is also another difficulty in poetic translation. In the article, “Translating Poetry: Possibility or Impossibility”, Tisgam (2014) argues that “the importance of the capitalized words in SL are completely lost in the TL one” (p.521). In addition, it is known that poetic language relies on deviation and breaking rules.
Accordingly, Shafii emphasizes that “linguistic deviation should be considered important because in some cases a literary work may gain its influence and importance from linguistic deviation” (as cited in Jafari & Kirmnia, 2015, p.57).

1.3.2. Aesthetic Problems

The second issue that translators face in poetic translation is aesthetic problems. It is a well-known fact that the language of literature is unique and different and poetry is one of the genres of literature with special literary features and values including imagery, sound, rhythm, and rhyme.

Literary or aesthetic issues are one of the problematic aspects of translating poetry. Indeed, translators have to take into consideration the aesthetic values, such as word choice, rhyme, and sounds during translation due to the importance of these values in poetry. Sometimes translators face difficulty to preserve these elements in the target texts. As a result, the beauty and the form of the original poem will be destroyed (Hariyanto, n.d; Tisham, 2014). Moreover, at the aesthetic level, many translators encounter another difficult task while translating poetry which is conveying the feeling and the hidden message of a poem as explained by Tisgam (2014).

Another essential point is the aesthetic problems which make the process of translating poetry hard and difficult. In his article, “Problems in Translating Poetry”, Hariyanto (n.d) highlights three important factors at the literary level which are poetic structure, metaphorical expression, and sound. The first factor is poetic structure which means the shape of a poem and the structure of each line in a poem. He goes on to state that translators need to keep the original structure of each sentence of a poem in the target text. This may lead to sacrificing other factors or elements. Furthermore, Hariyanto (n.d) asks “how far a translator can modify the author’s metaphorical expressions” since these metaphorical words have hidden meanings (p.5). The less important factor as Hariyanto (n.d) explains is sound which is related to the rhyme, rhythm, and onomatopoeia in a poem. In this case, translators have to retain them in the target text in order to preserve the beauty of a poem.

1.3.3 Cultural Problems

The last difficulty which translators face in translating poetry are cultural. Lerson states that both culture and language are integral parts of each other since the meaning cannot be transferred without taking into consideration the cultural aspects of words (as cited in Tisgam, 2014). According to the relationship between language and culture, translators have to combine two languages and two cultures together to reflect the cultural concepts in the target texts during the translation process (Lado, as cited in Tisgam, 2014). It seems that each language differs from another due to its specific and special cultural and linguistic characteristics.

Due to the huge gap between some cultures, the translation of literary texts, including poetry will be more difficult and challenging (Tisgam, 2014 & Almasaeid, 2013). Thus translators face difficulty in finding proper equivalents of words or phrases that convey the cultural aspects of the source texts into the target texts (Jafari & Karminia, 2015). Additionally, translators of poetry encounter obstacles when they attempt to translate “words or expressions that contain culturally-bound words” (Hariyanto, n.d, p.7). Furthermore, Almasaeidi (2013) and Tisgam (2014) highlight another problem that many translators face at the cultural level which is lack of knowledge about a particular culture during the translation. In this case, translators have to understand and experience the culture into which they translate. However, the case will be different if the two cultures have
similar concepts and aspects. In short, translating cultural expressions that exist in poetry is a serious and challenging work for translators because of the gap between cultures.

1.4. Solutions to Face the Poetic Translation Problems

By suggesting different approaches to the problems that translators encounter when they translate poetry, researchers and scholars have developed relevant strategies and methods to face them. As indicated by Dervishi (n.d) and Tisgam (2014), Lafevere’s suggestion of methods which can be adopted in translating poetry are useful if one of the sources is English. Some of Lavevere’s methods concern the form of a poem like the literal, rhymed, and metrical translation while the other four strategies are concerned with conveying the exact meaning of a poem. Thus, translators have the choice to use the strategy that suits their intentions regarding the form or meaning when they translate poems (Dervishi, n.d).

Besides Lefevere’s seven famous strategies, many other ways of solving the issue of poetic translation have been suggested. As different problems arise while translating poetry, other researchers like Hariyanto (n.d), suggests ways to deal with each problematic aspect of translation of poetry. For instance, Hariyanto (n.d) proposes that understanding the deep structure of a poem and examining the structure of each phrase and clause are the basic steps to deal with the linguistic issues. In the case of the aesthetic problems, Hariyanro (n.d) suggests that in order to give readers a chance to understand the meaning of certain cultural words in poems, “the translator has to supply the cultural equivalent in the target text” (p.8). Dervishi (n.d) states that translators must be able to distinguish between reference meaning and poetic meaning and “translators of poetry must reproduce the original metaphor scrupulously” (n.d, p.304). Additionally, Dervishi and Dryden state that translators should be poets in order to achieve a precise poetic translation (as cited in Tisgam, 2014).

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, many studies and research have been conducted on this particular topic in recent years. Due to the difficulties that translators may face while translating poetry, most of the researchers have stressed the idea that translating poetry is challenging and may be impossible. Some studies have shed light on the problems of poetic translation from three different aspects which are the linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic issues. However, these studies pay little or no attention to the specific problematic aspects of Omani poetry translation. Researchers also do not give enough attention to solutions in order to face the issues of translating poetry with respect to its meaning and form. Accordingly, there is a great need for conducting further studies and research to identify the major problems that translators encounter while translating Omani poems, and to reveal possible solutions and strategies to solve the issue. To this effect, a questionnaire will be conducted and distributed to SQU Translation Major students to figure out significant findings. Besides that, an interview was also conducted with an Omani translator to identify the real problems of translating Omani poems to other languages.

2. Methodology

Since the main objective of this study is to shed more light on problems that translators face while translating Omani poetry, the main concern of the questionnaire and interview was to raise other questions for further ideas and recommendations:
1. What are the main problems that translators encounter in translating Omani poetry?
2. What is the most dramatic problem in translating Omani poetry?
3. What are possible solutions or strategies to solve the issue of translating Omani poetry?

2.1. Participants:

This study involved SQU Translation Major students in order to collect the required data that would serve the aim of the study. The questionnaires were distributed to 35 students. The respondents were of both genders and from different academic years. It included 10 males and 25 females to get various views. They are also ranged from first year to fifth year students. However, most of respondents were from fourth year. The following table shows the number of the participants according to their academic year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>%0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>%0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>%14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>%60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>%26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table I: The number of participants according to their academic year

2.2. Results and Analysis:

Views on Poetic Translation:

The participants were asked whether or not they found translating poetry difficult. As it is obvious, the majority of students, approximately about 86% of students believe that translating poetry is difficult, and only 14% believe it is not difficult to translate poetry. The difficulty of poetic translation might be related to linguistic, aesthetic, and cultural problems. However, the interviewee believes that translating poetry is not difficult but it needs special set of skills and sensitivity to poetic language.

Figure I: Views on Poetic Translation
B. Form and Meaning:

In terms of the form or content in poetic translation, it appears through the following charts that most of the students’ responses were that they take into account the form of a poem in translation. In another question about the same point, students point out that they primarily convey the meaning in translating poetry. It seems that respondents find difficulty in balancing between the form and meaning in their translation. Thus, one can come up with the idea that they prefer to convey both aspects in the process of translating poetry. Accordingly, it can be said that the issue of balancing between form and meaning in poetic translation causes difficulty in the process of the translation of poems.

![Figure II: Form and Meaning in Poetic Translation](image)

C. Problems of poetic translation:

Then the questionnaire moved to focus on problems of translating poetry, and there were three questions which focused on different problematic aspects of poetic translation including linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic problems. From the following charts, it has been found that the majority of students agree that linguistic and aesthetic aspects of Omani poetry cause difficulties in translation. Obviously, the percentages are very close on whether language and aesthetic features of Omani poems cause any difficulties. However, in terms of the cultural issue, most of the students (about 57%) agree that it does not cause any obstacles for translators while they translate Omani poetry. This can be explained by the fact that translators are usually aware that there are some cultural differences since it is a process of conveying a text from a language and culture to another. Accordingly, as translators, they should get enough knowledge about the target texts before starting translating poems to avoid any misunderstanding of specific cultural concepts. For a clearer picture of participants’ response, the figures below illustrate them in detail:
Regarding to problems that translators encounter in translating Omani poetry, the interviewee, Dr. Khalid Al Balushi declares that the problems are challenging when it comes to poetic translation. He reveals some problems of translating Omani poetry by addressing the issue of conveying aesthetic values in poetic translation. Additionally, he stated that the cultural problems in translating Omani poetry are based on his experience in poetic translation and added that Omani poems generally include many cultural terms and phrases. As a result, it would be difficult for translators to transfer the cultural and social concepts into the target texts, particularly if translators do not have enough knowledge about Omani culture. Not only do translators face aesthetic and cultural problems, but they also face religious problems. Al Balushi states that there are some religious terminology in Omani poems which discuss religious issues. Thus, it is a serious problem to find equivalents or even to translate religious terms due to the differences between religions. Based on the questionnaire and interview results, it has been found that determining which one of the above obstacles is more problematic is difficult and all these difficulties are major problems that any translator faces in translating Omani poetry.

Findings and Discussion

This study shows that the major problems translators encounter in translating Omani poetry are linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic. However, in terms of cultural problems, respondents identified more difficulties specific to Omani poetry and culture. They claim that Omani culture is implied in most of Omani poetry, unlike other poems which sometimes include cultural concepts. As such, the lack of knowledge about Omani culture may lead to misunderstanding the cultural aspects of some poems. Participants also suggested aesthetic problems like the style and the form of Omani poems which are different, and at the same time these two aspects are difficult to be conveyed and shown in the target texts. Moreover, the interviewee, Dr. Khalid Al Balushi points out that the
language of poetry itself is unique and complex, so understanding the language of Omani poems takes time, particularly if translators are not Omani. In addition, Dr. Al Balushi mentions that there are many specific Omani terms and idiomatic expressions for which it is difficult to find proper equivalents. Al Balushi also claims problems of using religious terminology in translating Omani poetry.

Based on the data obtained from the questionnaires and interview, the linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic concerns are the three major problems that translators face in translating Omani poetry. It seems that it is difficult to determine that one of them is more problematic than the other. Apparently, the percentages of participants ranking poetic translation problems according to the most dramatic problem are very close. This result corresponds to Haryianto (n.d) who states that linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic issues are all major concerns in translating poetry.

Another important point addressed in this study is whether translating Omani poetry is possible or impossible. According to the argument of translatability or untranslatability of poetry that is presented in the literature review, translating poetry is difficult and impossible due to the huge differences between languages and cultures, and poems will lose their meaning in translation (Tisgam, 2014; Khalifa, 2015). However, it has been found that the majority of students believe that translating Omani poetry is possible like any other texts, even though translators face some linguistic and cultural obstacles. Al Balushi also asserts that Omani poetry can be translated as he has made an attempt in translating a collection of Omani poetry. He adds that poetic translation needs skillful and professional translators in order to render a successful translation.

Another controversial issue is raised by many researchers is related to the form and the meaning of poems in translation. Ben Zid (2014) and Dervishi (n.d) point out that difficulty of translating poetry is related to the conflict between the form and meaning of poems since it is difficult to transfer both aspects in translated poems. They also state that losing one approach leads to an unsuccessful translation. Similarly, based on the interview data, translators should be able to balance between the form and meaning in the target texts. However, this process is not an easy task and it needs effort and skill. Additionally, it has been revealed from the data collected from the questionnaires that students found difficulty in balancing the form and the meaning in their translation. Thus, students are more concerned about the meaning rather than the form in translating poetry. One may conclude that the most difficult thing in translating Omani poetry is how to convey both form and meaning in the target texts.

In short, several solutions have been suggested to face difficulties and problems of translating Omani poetry by respondents and interviewee. For example, some of these solution are: being familiar with Omani culture, being familiar with Omani poetry, providing notes that explain unclear terms and phrases, using adaptation, contacting poets for better understanding of poems before translation, reading and practicing Omani poems frequently, looking for available translated Omani poetry, and having courses on poetic translation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The present study has investigated the main problems that translators face in translating Omani poetry. It has demonstrated that problems of translating Omani poetry can be put under three major categories: linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic. Indeed, this study has found that none of these difficulties is more problematic than the other difficulties. The findings of this study reveal more specific problems of translating Omani poetry as far as cultural and aesthetic aspects are
concerned. It has been found that Omani poems include many cultural phrases and concepts, and in general, translators do not have enough knowledge about Omani poetry and culture. Broadly speaking, the language of poetry is different and special than other types of texts. Another problem of Omani poetic translation has been revealed in this study which is the use of religious terminology. In other words, the extensive use of religious terms in some Omani poems leads to difficulty in translating them.

Besides, this paper has suggested several solutions in order to help translators to overcome the obstacles of translating Omani poetry. First of all, translators should be aware of Omani poetry and culture by reading and practicing a lot of translated Omani poems. Secondly, translators should look for available translated poems before starting translation to get an idea about poetic translation. Moreover, translators should take into account the form and the meaning while they translate Omani poetry to achieve a successful translation. Equally important, it would be better to recommend literary institutions in Oman to hold symposiums, discuss the issue of translating Omani poetry, and show to what extent Omani poetic translation is important. Furthermore, educational institutions should provide a course on translation of Omani poetry in order to benefit future translators. It is also recommended that there should be particular institutions for literary translation.

References


Chapter 3
Perceptions of English (Major) Students in Sultan Qaboos University on the Relevance of Literature Courses

Humoud Saleh Al Aamri

Abstract

While much has been written about the benefits and positive impact of literature courses on the lives of Western students, little or no attention has been given to its effects on Arab learners. Thus, this paper strives to shed more light on the major advantages and drawbacks of literature courses for Arab students in general and for Sultan Qaboos University students in particular. This study first reviews the myriad benefits of literature including the social, linguistic and personal benefits that can be obtained from studying literature. Secondly, the paper examines the negative social and linguistic impacts of literature on SQU students. To this effect, a questionnaire was conducted with 25 SQU English major students (10 males and 15 females) including translation, Arts and English Education students. The study has revealed that language competence is the most dominant benefit that can be obtained from studying literature and that restricting students to literary texts in which they are not interested represents a prominent disadvantage of literature courses. The study recommends the promotion of literature courses among high school students and the creation of new literature circles to activate the role of literature at large and sensitize students to the importance of literature in our lives.

Keywords: Literature, impacts, benefits, drawbacks, social, linguistic, personal.

Introduction

No one can deny the importance of literature in our lives as it has been a significant part of education and civilization for a long time, according to Kantor (2008). Literature is a mirror that reflects and shapes any society in the world and it is,"made out of the lore of life," as Shah (2013, p. 18) puts it. Literature has brought about a lot of changes socially, economically, educationally and politically in different societies (Shah, 2013). If there was no literature, no changes would be made to any society at any level. This leads us to the idea that literature has a huge impact on our lives either positively or negatively in one way or another. In recent years, many literature scholars and experts have suggested different views and perspectives on the positive and the negative effects of literature. The positive effects can be classified as social, personal and language learning benefits and the negative effects can be categorized into learning and social impacts as well. The central focus of this literature review is to shed light on the advantages and the disadvantages of studying literature and to examine how different scholars view literature and its various impacts on students.

Literature review

Using related studies and articles, I will consider the social, personal, and the educational benefits for studying literature.
The advantages of studying literature:

Literature, by its nature, has a lot of social benefits on the individual and on society as a whole. Many articles and studies have found that literature has a lot of social benefits. For instance, Shah (2013) maintains that studying literature can help students to benefit socially and understand the struggle and the suffering of humankind. Similarly, Judith Caesar, English professor at the American University of Sharjah states, through reading narratives, students can sympathize and understand people’s pain and suffering. Caesar adds that literature leads us to raise questions and provides us with a profound understanding of different issues and matters in life.

Shah (2013) also argues that literature is a means through which several social issues and matters can be addressed and criticized in an attempt to bring about some changes in any society. He further states that, “Literature has had a major impact on the development of society; It has shaped civilizations, changed political systems and exposed injustice,”(Shah, 2013, 20). In a similar vein, Roe & Ross (2010) also comment on the social benefits of literature and argue that it is a sort of pleasure for the reader as it helps him or her to escape from everyday conflicts and troubles and entertains and fills his free time. Roe and Ross (2010) also add that literature can help children enlarge their horizons through various exciting experiences. In other words, literature, according to Roe and Ross helps children to, “visit new places, gain new experiences, and meet new people; learn about the past as well as the present and learn about a variety of cultures, including their own.” (2010, p. 33). Raymond Mar, a psychologist at York university in Canada and Keith Oatley, a professor of cognitive psychology state in a report published in 2006 and 2009 that students who read works of fiction are more able to understand other people, sympathize with them and see the world from their eyes.

Roe and Ross (2010) also share Shah’s view on the social benefits of literature. Through literature, Roe and Ross (2010) maintain, children will have the chance to read about people’s problems and troubles; which will in return help them to reflect on and solve their own problems. Literature is also considered as a, “cultural enrichment” according to an article written by Sell (2005), entitled, “Why teach literature in the foreign language classroom,” in which he comments that literature helps to promote a better understanding of other cultures and offers a closer access to the heritage and the culture of a society. In his article, “Teaching English through literature”, Hismanoglu (2005) also considers literature as cultural enrichment like Sell (2005). Hismanoglu (2005) argues that literary works with their different genres can help to obtain a better understanding and a colourful picture of the social and the regional background of any particular society. This can be achieved through the different characters and their thoughts, ideas and their actions according to Hismanoglu (2005). Al-Khader (2005) also adopts a similar posture toward the social benefits of literature. In his article, “The role of literature in promoting university students’ self-reliance”, he states that literature helps students to adapt to cultural differences and remove any possible bias and prejudice toward other cultures. In brief, the resources mentioned above verify that literature has a considerable number of social benefits.

Literature also has a lot of learning benefits which can be viewed as common advantages obtained through the study of literature. Indeed, Literature is a very useful source if a student wishes to improve his/her language. Many related studies and research about the learning benefits of literature have been conducted in the last few years. In his article, “The role of literature and culture in English language teaching,” Cruz (2010) states that literature is a rich authentic source for it exposes students to how the language is used and how is it spoken. Cruz (2010) further maintains that through literature, students can obtain a wide range of vocabulary and various
sentence structures which in turn will help them to improve their language greatly. Cruz (2010) adds that, “a literary text provides students with a much clearer idea about the syntactic structure of a written text and to what extent written language differs from spoken language, thus they will get used to the formation and function of sentences,” (Cruz, 2010, p. 4).

Adedoja (2010) adopts the same point of view regarding the learning benefits of literature. In his article, “Social relevance of African literature to the promotion of social values”, he argues that literature helps students to acquire language and become proficient. In addition to that, Adedoja (2010) also demonstrates that literature helps students to build up a bank of vocabulary and improve their reading skills through an exposure to a variety of texts. Kulkarni’s ideas in “The importance of literature”, (2013) also mesh with Adedoja’s assumption that reading literary works provides the reader with a wide perspective on anything in life and improves skills and abilities. Kulkarni (2013) concludes that literature increases one’s knowledge and makes readers aware of the various aspects of life.

Similarly, Sell (2005) also places much emphasis on the learning benefits of literature and argues that literary works are a better training for the brain than any other discipline. Through literature, Sell (2005) goes on that students can realize the sense of logic and questioning, refuting any random view. Literature is also regarded as a good, “Linguistic Model” in so far as it demonstrates to students how the language is used and is written appropriately and how various situations are expressed (Sell, 2005). Roe and Ross (2010) also assume that “literature exposes children to correct sentence patterns, standard story structures, and varied word usage."(33). In addition to that, literature also helps to improve the language, gain new terms and vocabulary and enhances thinking skills through reasoning exercises as Roe and Ross (2010) state. To sum up, it appears from the various studies discussed above that literature has myriad learning benefits.

Many scholars and experts also believe that literature helps students to gain a lot of personal benefits beside the social and the learning benefits. For instance, in an article entitled, “the role of literature in promoting university students’ self-reliance,” Al-Khader (2005) maintains that literature makes students write and speak independently as well as helps them to express their thoughts freely and confidently. Al-Khader (2005) also points out that literature, by its nature, makes students impose their personal views freely and independently unlike other fields of knowledge because it grabs attention rather than relying on views imposed by others. Al-Khader (2005) further argues that students should be taught to accept random answers and not to become easy victims of “twin polarities of correct and incorrect answers,” (Al-Khader, 2005, p. 1) through literature.

Al-Khader (2005) also claims that literature” contributes in developing a new self with a fresh outlook towards others and it enriches students’ experiences and adds to their repertoire of knowledge” (Al-Khader, 2005, p. 4). He continues saying that literature builds the individuality of students and it stimulates students to express their opinions in a creative manner whenever they deal with any literary text. In addition to that, literature also helps students to be more open and recognize the fact that there is more than one possible option and more than one possible way in life. Clark and Rubmold (2006) agree with Al-Khader (2005) that literature has many personal benefits and that it increases student’s self-confidence All in all, it is clear from the articles above that literature has not only social and learning benefits but also personal benefits which can be reflected and seen in any individual.
The disadvantages of studying literature

Having discussed the positive effects of literature above, it is of equal importance to consider the negative effects of literature through an examination of relevant studies and articles.

One of the drawbacks of literature is the relevance and usefulness of a degree to the job market. This leads us to the fact that the possibility of getting a job in the field of humanities and literature is relatively low. Michael Berube (2013), professor and director of the institute for the Arts and Humanities at Pennsylvania State University, writes in CNN news that it is true that literature as part of humanities assists students to gain a lot of written and spoken skills and abilities which can be of great use in the workplace; however, what on earth can a student do with a certificate in this field?. This worry comes from anxious parents, relative or colleagues as Berube (2013) points out. It is just a waste of time and effort to spend years studying literature and then a person cannot find a job, according to Berube (2013). He further states that literature “serves no practical purposes in the real world” (Berube, 2013, CNN News) which consolidates the idea that students specialized in literature are only wasting their time and money studying literary materials which are of no use in the workplace.

The other disadvantage of literature is the fact that students turn to be bookworms when they read literary works. Esperanza (2012) writes in an article entitled “The cons of English literature students being bookworms” that students are sometimes conditioned to read particular texts which could be boring and of no interest to them. Esperanza (2012) further gives an example that one of the doctors had spilled everything about a novel entitled Jane Eyre which was desired by one of the students as they did not want to read the novel. For this reason, students should not be forced to read novels or stories they are not interested in because they will learn nothing out of that (Esperanza, 2012). Thus, instructors must take into consideration the most suitable and interesting novels or any literary genre that will be liked by his students according to Esperanza (2012).

Findings and Conclusion:

This research has investigated the negative and the positive impacts of literature courses on SQU prospective English majors. Conducting this study has proved that literature courses have myriad social, linguistic and personal advantages, but the linguistic benefits are the most dominant compared to the social and the personal benefits. In addition to that, this study has revealed that literature courses have several disadvantages as well. One of the most prominent drawbacks is limiting or restricting students to particular texts which they are not interested it, be it poetry, be it drama, be it novels or any kind of literary genres. Although the project was limited in several ways, this study will help students to identify with some of the major advantages and disadvantages of studying literature. In addition to that, this topic needs further investigation, and thus further studies are recommended to discover more benefits and drawbacks of studying literature. This study also recommends integrating some literature classes into the school curriculum in order to introduce students to some of the major literary works and to make them sensitive with what they read. It is also recommended that there must be some literary circles that are concerned with reading and recitation in order to promote the place of literature in society.
References


Chapter 4
What Led to the Breakup of the Omani Empire in East Africa, and How Aware are Omanis about this Part of History?

Shaima Said Al Rashdi

Abstract

Documenting history is very important to preserve the nation’s heritage, culture, values and beliefs which contribute to build and characterize people’s identity to make them distinctive and different from other nations. From this perspective, this study investigates the reasons that led to the breakup of the Omani Empire in East Africa and to what extent Omanis are aware of it. The paper starts by reviewing the history of the Omani Empire in East Africa, its creation, development and fall. It then investigates Omanis’ awareness of this history using a questionnaire and interview by comparing the views of respondents taking history as a major, with other respondents. The results show that history (Majors) respondents are more aware of this history. The reason for this is that this part of the history is not included in school curriculum, while history majors study it at university. However, other Omanis are not excluded from knowing this history because it is part of their history and it can provide them with a better and clearer understanding of the world around them. Therefore, recording this history and spreading awareness about it should be taken into consideration.

Key words  Omani Empire, East Africa, Zanzibar, history, breakup, Sayyid Said bin Sultan, Oman, Omanis.

Introduction

Throughout history, many empires have been established by one state which was stronger than its neighboring states and it kept expanding its influence on the other states until they became part of it. However, those empires broke up when they clashed with stronger neighboring states or when it had some internal problems which caused instability, and it became hard to gather the empire one more time. The Greek Empire, Roman Empire, Russian Empire, British Empire, and Ottoman Empire all are names of empires that do not exist today.

Oman was also once a big Empire that extended from Asia to East Africa due to its strategic position that has been a key factor which made it a central point for different cultural contact with many nations. The Omanis’ expertise in trading and sailing with good manners of sincerity and honesty, and the tolerance and kindness that they have with different cultures and religions made it possible for them to expand their Empire to East Africa. In 1832, Sayyid Said bin Sultan adopted Zanzibar as the second capital of Oman and he led that region to unprecedented prosperity. This step pushed the economic power and the political influence of the Omani Empire forward, and it extended from Persia and Baluchistan to Mozambique.

However, that great empire was lost and those parts of the world do not belong to Oman anymore. Although the history of the relationships between Oman and Zanzibar has been taught in schools, the reasons for the loss of the empire were ignored. Most Omanis know that the Omani Empire
extended to East Africa and that Zanzibar was part of Oman, but they might not be aware of how exactly the loss of that empire happened. Therefore, this research aims to find reliable answers to the main questions: What led to the breakup of the Omani Empire in East Africa, and how aware are the Omanis about this part of the history?

**The Omani Empire in East Africa from the Creation to the Breakup**

1. **The Creation of the Omani Empire**

The relationships between Oman and East Africa started from the 7th century when Said and Suleiman, the kings of Oman, fled to East Africa after losing their rebellion against the Umayyad Caliphate (Al Rashdi, 2014). After that, the Omanis continued travelling to East Africa carrying merchandise, like dates, mangoes, frankincense, eggplants and other things. In 1832, Sayyid Said bin Sultan adopted Zanzibar as the second capital of Oman for many reasons, such as its big harbour and central position, its sweet water, its fertile soil, and its pleasant climate (Marsh & Kingsnorth, 1957). Sayyid Said transformed Zanzibar from a small town consisting of small huts to a fine city of Arabian houses (Sheriff, 1987). Also, spices, slaves and ivory were the items that brought wealth to the island. As a result, the news of Zanzibar’s prosperity spread to Europe, and the Europeans came for trade and adventure. To enhance the trade, Sayyid Said signed many treaties with different countries, such as America in 1833, Great Britain in 1839, and France in 1844 (Marsh & Kingsnorth, 1957). In 1956, when he was sailing from Muscat to Zanzibar, he suffered from a sickness which led to his death in the same year. After his death, the Empire was divided into two countries, Oman and Zanzibar (Silva, 1989).

2. **The Causes of the Breakup of the Omani Empire**

a. **The death of Sayyid Said and the ensuing conflicts**

There are many complicated and related factors leading to the breakup of the Omani Empire in East Africa. The causes started after the death of Sayyid Said when his sons were unable to find a satisfactory solution for their conflict over the authority. Therefore, the Sultanate was divided into two separate countries ruled by his sons: Zanzibar was ruled by Sayyid Majed and Oman was ruled by Sayyid Thuwaini. This separation led to many conflicts between the brothers, and they were not satisfied by that division. Therefore, the British government, as it played the role of the defender and the protector of the Sultan, decided to interfere in solving the political and economic problems between the Sultans which made them ascend over all aspects of policy (Bhacker, 1991). Al Riyami (2012) explains that Great Britain and Germany were against the unity of the empire (Oman and Zanzibar), because it would have clashed with their own interests in Zanzibar. Besides, they considered the unity as a waste of Zanzibar’s resources and they did not want to lose Zanzibar’s wealth.

One example of the foreign intervention, as Bhacker (1991) claims, was when Thuwaini sent his envoy to take the annual gift from Zanzibar to Oman in 1859, which was “40,000MT$”. Majed referred to the British Consul, Rigby, to determine whether to send the money or not, and Rigby advised him not to (p. 275). Another example was when Sayyid Turki bin Said, the Sultan of Oman and Muscat in 1880, wanted to cede the thorn of Muscat and Oman to his brother Sayyid Barghash, the Sultan of Zanzibar, in order to reunite the two portions (Oman and Zanzibar). This attempt was also ruined by Britain’s influence over the Sultan of Zanzibar, otherwise he would not have refused such an opportunity (Al Riyami, 2012).
b. Slavery abolition
Furthermore, Britain was anxious about the economic and political dominance of the Omanis, because they had many plantations and they were using the slaves as labour, so they forced the Sultans of Zanzibar to abolish slavery (Clayton, 1981). This was done not out of British humanity or morality, but as Al Riyami (2012) claims, they wanted the slaves to work in the British factories in East Africa. Also, they wanted to win the sympathy of a large population of British who supported the slavery abolition. Moreover, they wanted to deport the Omanis and the other European powers from East Africa because it has a strategic position. Indeed, after the abolition of slavery, Omanis started to face problems with labour supply and, as Hwang (2009) emphasizes, “they became heavily indebted to money lenders”, so some of them started to sell their plantations to those whom they were indebted with (p. 24). As a result, Omanis lost their economic power which allowed the British to easily ascend “over all areas of state policy” (p.25).

c. Racism
Racism was another issue that created internal division and instability in East Africa where the Europeans used different ways of discrimination. Al Riyami (2012) states that in Zanzibar, the only form of racism was that the Europeans had been receiving higher salaries than the Asians and Africans, regardless of their qualifications. This kind of treatment was very dangerous, because it created hatred, anger and instability within one society (Al Riyami, 2012). As a result, the nature of the relationships between the different ethnic groups changed, after they had been living together in peace and sharing a common religion, language and history for centuries.

d. Zanzibar’s Awakening (Social and Political Changes)
Another reason for the breakup of the Omani Empire is the political and social changes that came as a result of the racial practices which led to apparent rifts between the different communities. Al Riyami (2012) explains that people’s awareness about the political issues had increased after the publishing of a newspaper in Swahili language in 1930, which encouraged people to ask for their rights and independence from the British government. As a result, two political parties were founded. The first was the Zanzibar National Party (ZNP) which was formed against the British colonial rule and it supported the rule of the Sultans (Clayton, 198). This group consisted of Arabs and Africans, but it was seen as an Arab party, so the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP) was founded as an opposite party. Hettiger (2000) defines the ASP as, “a union between the Africans and Shirazi Association on the island and [we could say that they] were highly racialized” (p.12). The conflict between the two parties did not stop until the 1964 bloody revolution which ended the Omani rule in Zanzibar. In this revolution, many Omanis were killed and buried in mass graves which were prepared before the revolution. Also, their houses were destroyed and burned, and their properties were taken from them. Because of this terrifying violence and the insecurity, some Omanis fled to Oman and some survived and still living there (Al Riyami, 2012).

The relationships between Oman and Zanzibar today
Despite the separation of the two countries, the relationship between them has remained until today. Omani features are everywhere in Zanzibar, and many Omanis have continued living there until today. On public occasions, for example, Omani costumes appear clearly in the Omani dishdasha, turban, khanjar and stick. Also, coffee and Omani Halwa (sweet) are served in the traditional Omani way. In the buildings, the typical Omani houses, with their Islamic decorated doors and small windows, survive. These are witnesses of the deep relationship between the Omanis and Zanzibaris (Al Rashdi, 2014). On the other hand, the Omani Zanzibaris, who fled to Oman after the 1964 revolution, were welcomed to Oman and they have participated effectively
in the development of Oman since the beginning of the Renaissance in 1970. Compared to the other Omanis, they were well educated, well skilled and they spoke English fluently (Peterson, 2004).

Zanzibar today is part of Tanzania and the relationships between Oman and Tanzania could be described as “warm” considering the common history and blood relations that the two countries have shared. According to the Tanzanian Embassy website, the two countries have been exchanging visits and cooperating with each other in different areas, and that is obvious from the recent official visits in 2013 of HE Yusuf bin Alawi, the Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs, and HE Rawiyah Al Busaidi, the Minister of Higher Education. On the other hand, Verne & Mahn (2013) find that the relationship between the Omani Zanzibari and some Zanzibaris differ from one person to another. For some people, Zanzibar is the place that they belong to and they have positive feelings towards. Yet others have completely negative feelings towards Zanzibar which have come from the painful experience that they lived through in the 1964 revolution. Despite this, they are still exchanging visits and supporting their relatives in Zanzibar financially and even if they deny their emotions to Zanzibar, they could not conceal their eagerness to know Zanzibar’s news from their relatives and friends. As an Arab poet says:

My homeland is dear even if it aggrieves me
My countrymen are generous even if they are mean to me

This means that the person cannot cut himself off completely from his home land.

Methodology

After answering the first part of the research question which is: What led to the breakup of the Omani Empire in East Africa? The methodology aims to answer the second part of the research question which is: How aware are Omanis about this part of the history? The data was collected by using questionnaire and two interviews. The participants of the questionnaire were twenty three people from history (majors) and seventy two people from other majors. The two interviews were made with two Omani people who were born in Zanzibar and who experienced living there for some years. The first participant was a 57 year old female. She lived in Zanzibar for 16 years and she came to Oman in 1977. The second participant is a 65 year old male. He lived in Zanzibar for 18 years. He came to Oman in 1972.

Findings and discussions

The results of the questionnaire showed that history (Majors) participants were more aware about this history than other majors’ participants. The questionnaire’s statements and questions focuses on the general knowledge and specific knowledge of the participants as well as their perceptions and attitudes.
I know why the Omanis immigrated to Zanzibar in the 18th century.

I know how the breakup of the Omani Empire happened.

Great Britain and Germany were against reuniting Oman and Zanzibar as one country.

The 1964 revolution was the main reason that the Omani Zanzibaris came back to Oman.

The bar charts show the results of the general and specific knowledge parts of the questionnaire for the participants of history (Majors) and other majors. By comparing the results, it seems that almost all the history major participants, except one person, were capable of answering the questions. The percentage of the participants of history major who achieved good and excellent performance (95.6%) is higher than the other majors’ performance (77.5%). This indicates that the participants of history major are more aware of the history of the breakup of the Omani Empire than the other majors’ participants. We can assume that other majors’ participants achieved less because they did not study this part of the history at schools and they did not develop their knowledge about it later in the universities stages or working fields.

The table below shows some of the statements of the attitudes and perceptions:

Table 3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of people</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>38</td>
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<td>50</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The bar charts show the results of 23 participants of history (Majors) and 72 participants of other majors. The majority of history (Majors) respondents appeared to be more confident of
their knowledge about the Omani Empire in East Africa and the breakup compared to the other majors’ participants which is predictable. This suggests that the awareness of the participants of other majors is weak compared to history participants, which means that it needs to be developed through introducing it in curriculums at schools and universities, and through mass media.

It is worth mentioning that the interviewees who lived in Zanzibar and experienced the racial division, the violent events and the political conflicts, had different perceptions about breakup from the participants of the questionnaire. The interviewees were more realistic when they had said that it is better that Zanzibar no longer belongs to Oman while the other participants had a rather romantic view and they disagreed with this perception. However, this does not mean that these interviewees do not have any emotions towards Zanzibar and that they do not encourage having connection with it. It is part of their history, they had spent their childhood and had received their education there, and they had lived there for more than a decade. In fact, they with the other participants encouraged spreading the awareness about this part of the history and they gave some suggestions to develop the relations between the two countries.

The information that I found in the literature review included many new, surprising and unexpected facts. Most of the information that I read was completely new to me and some of it was a surprise. One of the facts that I did not know before is regarding the 1964 revolution. It was a painful shock. I did not know anything about this bloody event before, and I did not imagine that this was the reason that made the Omani-Zanzibaris return to Oman. In fact, I realised that sometimes we need to ask and question the things around us, and not to follow and accept everything blindly. However, now it is very clear to me and I can understand better why some of them do not like to talk about their life there and why some of them are not proud of it. Another surprising finding was that the interviewees did not agree that slavery abolition had affected the Omanis’ economic status, as Hwang (2015) claims, and that the Omanis themselves were with the slavery abolition. Also, they emphasized that indeed the British were taxing the export of ivory and cloves which might have affected Omanis’ economic status. Further studies might investigate this point.

Comparing the participants of other majors with history (Majors) was a helpful way to see different people’s awareness about this part of history. However, this study was limited because I wanted to focus on other demographical information such as the age and the region, to know if people’s awareness is affected by these factors. Unfortunately, I could not do that because the number of the old people was few and it was hard to reach a large number of them. One of the reasons that made me think that knowing this information would be beneficial, is when I asked my relatives, who lived in Muscat about the revolution and what made the Omani-Zanzibaris return to Oman, they were aware of it because they know some Omani-Zanzibaris and they told them about their experiences. Therefore, further studies might take this point into consideration to get better results. Another limitation with the data collection was that the some participants left some items empty, especially the open question where only 52 out of 95 participants had answered the question. I think if all the participants answered all the questions completely, the results would be more accurate. Many challenges also faced me with the interviews. First, finding Omani-Zanzibaris who are willing to do the interview was difficult, because many of them refused. Second, I did three interviews, but I used only two of them for the analysis because the third one was living in Tanzania. He did not experience the results of the breakup, and he did not answer most of my questions completely. Also, one of the interviewees was speaking Swahili, which I do not speak, and she was not a very fluent speaker in Arabic or in English and sometimes she did not understand my questions well and I spent long time explaining to her.
Conclusion and Recommendations

To sum up, many linked factors led to the breakup of the Omani Empire and ended Omani rule in East Africa. It was clear that the conflict between Sayyid Said’s sons over authority gave a chance for the foreigners to interfere between them and to create new systems and politics which created instability and insecurity in the region. For many Omanis, it might be considered sad to lose such achievements and a great empire, but despite the separation of Oman and Zanzibar, the blood relations and the common history that they share cannot be denied.

From the literature review, I found that there were complex factors leading to the breakup of the Omani Empire in East Africa. The strife between the Sultan’s sons over authority was a key factor that opened the door for a series of problems to appear such as the foreign intervention, the racial division and the conflict of the political parties. This study was very complex because it was based on many historical facts that were complicated and had many branches. The breakup of the Omani Empire in East Africa might have had other factors that I did not cover in this study, because I focused only on Zanzibar while the Omanis were involved in other regions in the East African coast such as Pemba and Mombasa. Therefore, further studies might look at the breakup from other angles.

As I benefited from reading in this history, every Omani will benefit too. Therefore, I hope that this part of the history will be introduced in the schools and universities’ curriculum as well as in the museums and mass media, so at least every Omani will be aware of it. Introducing this history will raise people’s awareness about their history which will make them understand many things around them. Everybody should know that history does not always tell about glory and greatness, but it also tells about defeat and loss. Also, as the participants suggested, the relationships between Oman and Zanzibar could be developed by cooperation in education, agriculture, tourism, exportation and facilitating travels and intermarriage between the Omanis in Oman and Zanzibar. Also, there are many genres of literature written by the Omanis who migrated to East Africa which can be introduced to the Arts student as part of Omani literature.

Further studies could be done by investigating people’s awareness through focusing on their ages and the regions that they live in. This could be done by distributing equal number of the questionnaires for people from different regions and ages. Also, further studies could investigate the breakup on other regions in East Africa like Pemba and Mombasa where Omanis were involved with other European powers.

References


Chapter 5
What Associations do Omanis have with Colours?

Areej Ahmed Al Jamaei

Introduction

This chapter deals with the research question is “what associations do Omanis have with colours?” More specifically it is about how Omanis perceive colours, the basis of their choices, and what relations they have with colours. The paper is based on the shopping habits of young Omanis to determine the choices they make regarding the objects they buy, including clothes and other personal items. This research indicates that we often buy things based on the colour without giving it much thought. Thus, it is important to understand the association we have with colours. Yet, there are unconscious reasons for the choices which are made. These choices are often based on culture and religious associations.

Key words colours, Omanis’ perceptions, cultural associations

Introduction

Humans are surrounded by different objects that bear different colours. The sky and the sea are blue, the mountains are in different shades of browns, the flowers are red, pink, white, and even yellow, and the fruits and vegetables are in various colours. Colours are similar to oxygen for they both exist everywhere. The former, however, could be seen, unlike the latter.

Colour is not a new property, nor is it an invention of mankind. It is a quality that has existed since the world was first created. Colours were first discovered by Sir Isaac Newton when he found in 1966 that the passing of a pure white light through a prism causes it to separate into the visible colour (Gow, 2014). One precise definition of colours, suggested by Meerwein, G., Rodeck, B., and Mahnke, F. H (2007) is that colour is “a specific visual sensation produced by visible radiation, or ‘colour stimulus’” (p. 43).

My research question for this paper is: what associations do Omanis have with colours? More specifically it is about how Omanis perceive colours, the basis of their choices, and what relations they have with colours. This research is important because all the objects we see or buy are in different colours and we often buy things based on the colour they bear without giving it much thought. Thus, it is important to understand the association we have with colours.

Literature Review:

People have derived the symbols of colours from the different objects they perceive in nature. Additionally, associations of colours are attributed to their symbolism.

Despite the variation of responses towards colours, there are universal reactions to them since nature is the main source of colour associations. For example, red is associated with violence and love. Moreover, black stands for depression, death, power, sophistication and ominous forces (Morton, 1997). Nevertheless, recent studies have shown that the experience of an individual influences his or her reaction towards certain associations made toward specific colours (Meerwein, Rodeck, & Mahnke, 2007). For instance, if a person has experienced an accident, he
would associate red with blood more than love. In addition, there are other associations based on the context of one’s life.

**Religious Association:**
One of the aspects that formulates these universal responses to colours is religion. Meerwein, Rodeck, and Mahnke (2007) have noted that, a group of people who share the same religion and culture would have the same impression of certain colours (p. 28). In Islam and in most desert cultures, for instance, green is known to be a sacred colour since it is the colour of paradise and reflects spirituality.

**Cultural Association:**
Culture plays a significant role in creating these symbols since most of the cultural events are marked by specific colours. People in most of the Western cultures and Eastern world wear black in funerals to express their mourning. On the other hand, white in a Christian culture is associated to the angels as they are commonly seen in churches, especially during christenings and weddings. In addition, red is associated with love because of the red roses and hearts on Valentine’s Day (Clarke and Costall, 2007).

**Psychological Association:**
Colours have psychological associations as well. Psychology is the science that is concerned with everything people have experienced and with the conscious and unconscious thoughts, emotions, and dreams (Meerwein, Rodeck, & Mahnke, 2007). Psychologically, the way people perceive colour depends on the role it has played in a specific experience of an individual (Meerwein, Rodeck, & Mahnke, 2007). For instance, the blue colour’s stimulus can evoke thoughts about a voyage. The person may continue thinking about the voyage until he reaches to a memory which is no longer related to the original one.

**Physiological Association:**
Science has proved that colour effects human minds and has the ability to activate hormones (Meerwein, Rodeck, & Mahnke, 2007). Each colour transmits physical waves. Our eyes record these waves as stimulus. The stimuli, then, are transferred to the interbrain and pituitary gland, which regulates the other hormones from the other glands, through the energetic visual pathway and the body responses to them (p. 23-24). For example, it has been proved that red stimulus increases heart pulse which leads to increasing the blood pressure while the blue stimulus works conversely. However, these physical reactions are temporary (Meerwein, Rodeck, & Mahnke, 2007).

**Gendered-Clothing:**
In the 1940s, children of both genders in America, according to Paoletti (2012), wore only white clothing. The gendered-clothing began in the middle of the 19th century. Even at that time, however, pink was the colour of the two genders alternately. Paoletti has noted that the beginning of the gendered-clothing in America was the result of the finding that strong contrasts attract babies’ attention. Additionally, she has observed that pink was the colour worn by women during Women’s Liberation movement in the West in the early part of the twentieth century; therefore, it is referred to as a feminine colour.

Given the variety of reasons through which colour can be seen to be associated differently by different people in the world, it is interesting to examine what the views of Omani’s are toward certain colours. This was done using a variety of research techniques.
Data Collection:

Two types of instruments were used to collect the data. The first one is a questionnaire, whereas the second one is an interview. The former was distributed to 50 Omani students, 25 males and 25 females, while the latter was an interview with Arwa Abduallah Al Aamri, the youngest Omani fashion designer.

The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions: (9 questions) about the psychological association, (1 question) about the religious association, (7 questions) about the cultural association, and (4 questions) about the aesthetics association.

The interview consisted of 6 questions, all of which are about colour and fashion.

Results of the Questionnaire and the Interview

1. The majority of males and females link certain colours with particular personal experiences.
2. Colours such as white, black, red, and purple are widely associated with their universal abstract conceptions which are “purity”, “sadness and death”, “passion”, and “magic”.
3. Colour is the most important common criterion for the two genders when they buy their clothes.
4. Because black is commonly worn on different occasions in Omani culture, the majority of the respondents do not know that black is sign of sophistication.
5. The respondents of the two genders do not widely consider that women should wear black in funerals to show their mourning because of the complex attitudes to black as women are expected to wear black Abayas in public places.
6. The majority of the two genders think that a male wearing pink is an odd person.
7. The majority of the males associate red with violence, while the majority of the females associate it with love and romance.
8. The minority of the informants do not know that green is associated with Islam.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you think of when you look at green color?</th>
<th>Islam</th>
<th>Nature</th>
<th>Hope</th>
<th>Others (peace)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total percentage</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More females than males think that most of the black cats are wizards and witches because they stay more with old women who usually like to tell these stories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11</th>
<th>Most of the black cats are not more than wizards and witches?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total percentage</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

Colour is a very significant characteristic of objects that can lead to an understanding of specific human nature. Since humans deal with these coloured objects for different purposes, they have developed some associations with colours. This research has investigated the associations that Omanis have with colours through a questionnaire and an interview.

Based on the results, Omanis have psychological, religious, cultural, and aesthetics associations with colours. Colours evoke certain emotions in people due to the fact that they remind them of some special experiences. Furthermore, green is known to be a sacred colour among Muslim cultures but only a minority associated green with Islam while the majority associated it with nature. In the cultural dimension, Omanis do not have a negative connotation of black because it is not only worn in funerals, but also it is worn on a daily basis by women in public. From the aesthetics perspective, however, colour is the most important criterion for Omanis when they buy their clothes. Additionally, they like bright colours and the combinations of green and red and green and gold, and they prefer to wear white and bright colours in weddings because it reflects positivity.

This paper has not collected data concerning the physiological association with colours since investigating this dimension needs special instruments and experts to analyze the physiological reactions of people when they are exposed to certain colours. Thus, this research paper recommends future researchers to investigate how humans’ bodies are affected by colours and what changes colours potentially make in their bodies. This would lead to interesting results regarding the role of colour in the lives of human beings.

References


Chapter 6
In What Ways do Electronic Tablets Influence Children’s behaviour, Health and Education?

Ibtihal Said Al Gharibi

Abstract

This paper discusses the influence of electronic tablets on young children’s physical health, behavior and education. A questionnaire was distributed to fifty parents to collect information about their views, the rules and guidelines that they follow, and to identify the benefits and problems associated with the use of electronic tablets. Interviews were conducted with six female teachers to get their views on integrating tablets in the educational process in Oman’s pre-schools and kindergartens. Tablets are multi-tools and they serve different purposes. They can motivate children and they can enhance their learning. Children also learn new vocabulary and acquire the basic skills of literacy. However, overuse of tablets can cause headaches and affect children's eye sight. Results show that overuse of these devices can make children isolated and they may refuse to be engaged with other activities. In addition, children who spend a lot of time with these devices cannot pay enough attention to their teachers during class time. Children are less likely to suffer from the negative influence of tablet use if their parents have rules and guidelines around their use. This paper provides useful information for parents and educators that would help them to maximize the positive influence of tablets use with young children.

Key words: tablets, early literacy, influences, behaviour, health, children, Parents, teachers

Introduction: Tablets and Children

Technology is now a part of our life. It is in our homes, at work, and it has even become a part of the educational process. It makes our life, and learning, communication and work easier. People can do their work from their homes, communicate with their relatives who live in different parts of the world, read, look for information and easily learn what is going around the world. Tablets are now one of most popular IT products in the market. The Apple Company revealed that it had sold 10,931 million iPads in one year (Allsopp, 2015, para. 24). Because of their flexibility and portability, they are replacing the traditional ways of teaching, reading, and learning, playing and working.

Parents have been eager to see the potential uses of tablets and many provide them to their children as a gift for their hardwork and achievement in their schools. Children may also be provided with such devices in the early stages of their development because they can use them for games. According to Khoo, Merry and Nguyen (2014) children are keen and enthusiastic to use the iPad. They are happy to have one and share their experience with their parents (p.26). Children can learn at home without joining kindergartens or being taught by a private teacher because tablets can be supplied with different educational apps which are designed to help and guide them to learn the basics easily, like numeracy and the alphabet. Moreover, children can watch videos, download sounds or even games to learn different things like the names of things they deal with in their daily life.
Tablets are popular in Oman too; however, studies conducted in this field are scarce. It is commonly known that children use tablets for gaming. In fact, there are a number of parents who are concerned about the value of tablets and their effectiveness in learning. While some parents may control their children’s use of electronic tablets and may only download educational apps in their children’s devices, others probably do not control children’s use of these devices because they are not aware of the consequences of such behaviour. Further investigations are needed to find out parents’ and teachers’ views around the use of tablets and their influences in Omani children’s health, behavior, and education.

Opinions on whether it is a good idea to provide children with tablets or to include them in learning are diverse. Some people will say that life has changed and it has become necessary to provide their children with tablets. Others may argue that children in their early stages of development should not be provided with tablets. This paper aims to find out an answer for the main research question which is: In what ways do tablets influence children’s behavior, health and education?

A Review of Literature

A wide range of research literature investigates the role of tablets in children’s life. In this chapter, four different areas related to the topic are discussed including the popularity of tablets, features and benefits of tablets, arguments around tablets’ use and adoption, and advice and guidelines for parents to work with.

Reasons that Motivate Parents to Provide Tablets for their Children

Parents work to provide tablets for their children thinking that their children, like anyone else in their age, have to know how to use these devices. According to Khoo and Nguyen (2013), parents believe that the skills which children gain through the use of an iPad are the same as those they gain through traditional teaching and they are both connected (p. 35). Parents also think that it will be better if their children are trained from now to use technology so that they will become competent and successful in their learning. (Khoo and Nguyen, 2013, p. 35). They are aware that their children will definitely need these skills later on in their future whether for educational or social purposes.

Parents’ Beliefs and Attitudes towards the Use of Tablets

Most parents view tablets as a life requirement. They believe that it is not a good idea to prevent their children from experience with technology and use its different forms. In addition, they feel that it is necessary to assist their children while they are using their devices, especially at the beginning, so that they can keep using it effectively. Khoo and Nguyen (2013) indicate that parents view iPads as any other source in the learning process and that it is an effective way to educate young children (p.6).

Reasons and Extent of the Use of Electronic Tablets

Kindergarten and preschools are the institutions where children acquire the basic literacy skills and where their spoken and written language is formed. In the classes where new forms of technology are used, students do not only receive information but also participate and discuss what their teacher has said. Ostashwski (2009) and Churchill (2012) claimed that iPad is an ideal tool due to its features like screen size, multimedia support, light weight and battery life which are able to
support education aim (Dhir et al, 2013, p.707). However, it has also been noted that tablets are just a tool to assist learning, and cannot do the whole work of teaching. Teachers have to guide and assist their students too.

**Tablets and Learning Theories**

It is important to understand how people learn so that it will be easy to integrate tablets and determine their role in education properly. Dewey (1916) suggested that education is “a constant recognizing and reconstructing of experience” (cited in Ord, 2012, p. 62). If a child has been taught a concept like big and small and the he has been asked to differentiate two shapes for a circle, for example, and to say which one is big and which one is small, he will be able to differentiate between them. Being able to differentiate some features means that the child has gained the required knowledge and is able to apply this knowledge in his or her life. According to Smith, (1980) if a student experiences something, he will perform better and that it is the individual responsibility to determine the value of certain things according to his experience (cited in Ord, 2012, p. 55). He adds that the more freedom the individual has, the more he or she learns. Tablets as a learning resource offering a wide range of applications in addition to websites; it is an individual’s responsibility to select suitable things to him according to traditions, religion and the values of the society.

**Teachers’ Role and Views around Integrating Tablets in Education**

Teachers play an important role in making students experience tablets successfully. Deursen (n.d) found that teachers who have the desire to improve their IT skills are able to enrich student’s knowledge with the help of tablets (p.10). He added that teachers agree that tablets contribute positively to learning because they encourage teamwork and provide opportunity for children to discover technology (p.6). Teachers must be trained before integrating tablets within the curriculum, as otherwise, integrating them will be useless.

**Society’s Views and Misconceptions**

Society’s views play an important role in the adoption of technology. Smorti (1999) confirmed that the culture or society in which people live influences how technology evolves and they can determine how suitable technology is for children’s curriculum. Churchill (2012) stated that tablets are described as “a waste of time” and “entertainment tool with almost no role in learning” (cited in Dhir et al,, 2013, p.711).People also say that the learning can be poor even after the integration of technology.

**The Impact of Technology on Children’s Learning and Play**

People are concerned about the effects of tablets on their children; therefore, a number of researchers have started to compare between the effects of conventional play and text-books and its replacement, tablets. Isenberg and Quisenbory (2002) asserted that play is the thing that children most enjoy to do in the early stages of their lives (cited in Verenikina& Kervin, n.d, p. 5). Educational games are an example of digital games offered by tablets. Mutes (2011) mentioned a number of advantages of educational games including enhancing their learning, encouraging team working skills and developing cognitive thinking (cited in Dhir et al, 2013, p.711). On the other hand, Fleer (2010) wrote that conventional play is the source where children gain the foundations of self-reflection and abstract thinking, develop complex communication and meta-
People are arguing that text-books are better iBook. Dhir et al (2013) mentioned that the iPad gives children similar experiences of using text books as using paper and pen (p.715). Kucirkova (2103) mentioned one special feature of the iBook is that, although it is not available as a text book, it represents material “in three modes: sound, text, and image” (p.1). Children can see the images, read the text and at the same time they can listen to it. In addition, iBook enhances creativity, cooperation, and self-revision (Kucirkova, 2103, p.2). The “iPad storybook” and “book-making apps” are examples of ready-made book Apps which are offered by tablets which enable children to create their own story book or to make changes on ready-make books (Kucirkova, 2103, p.1). Children enjoy using these apps and share their stories with others.

Implications to Maximize the Positive Effects of Tablets

Parents should be aware of the impact of allowing children to spend too much time playing or watching videos using tablets. In addition to providing tablets for their children, parents need to control the time their child spend with his device. One of the parents who participated in a study conducted by Strasburge and Hogan (2013) emphasized that they specified 20 minutes for their child and when it over, they stopped him; he eventually got used to stopping himself after 20 minutes (p. 959). Parents believed that they should balance between the time their children spend in outdoor and indoor activities (Khoo & Nguyen, 2013, p.33). Parents argued that tablets can be only used for educational purposes whereas others think that is only one of the educational resources that can be used to educate children (Khoo & Nguyen, 2013, p.33; Strasburge & Hogan, 2013, p.595). Children are not aware of what the consequences of their behavior are; therefore, parents must direct them to the correct way of using tables.

Aims of this study

The aim of this research was to investigate the effects of electronic tablets on children’s behavior, health, and education. In addition it aimed to get an idea if parents are aware of both positive and negative effects of such devices.

Specifically, the study aims to find out the role of tablets in Oman, in addition to parents and educators’ view to shed light on how acceptable technology is. Therefore, this research investigates the role of tablets on the education system in Oman’s schools. It also wanted to find the effect of tablets on Omani children’s behavior and health.

Participants

Parents and teachers were the participants of my study. The participants of the questionnaire were selected randomly after preliminary discussion. Fifty questionnaires were distributed to parents who had provided tablets for their children. Interviews were conducted with six female teachers who are teaching in pre-school and Kindergarten to get their views around tablets use.
Data analysis

a. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed to parents. The first part of it dealt with personal information. The participants were asked to state their age, to identify their gender, and level of education.

Such information was important because the higher level of education people reached, the more aware they could be. How aware parents were about technology was an important piece of information. The more experienced with technology parents were, the fewer chances there could be for their children to suffer from the negative effects of tablets use. The number of years a child had spent with his or her device was a good piece of information for this study. If the child had used the device more than three years and did not suffer from any problems, this could mean that the parents had rules around tablets’ use and the child was under some kind of control.

The next section dealt with the problems and benefits associated with tablets use and parents’ views around tablets’ use. The respondents believed that tablets are a good tool to teach young children numeracy, alphabets and new words. This indicated that tablets were a suitable learning resource. However, there are a number of problems associated with the use of these electronic tablets. According to respondents, overuse of tablets could affect a child’s eye-sight and could cause headaches. The respondents (82.2%) also asserted that the use of tablets can make the child isolated while 11% of them indicated the opposite. The majority (55.5%) of the participants agreed that video games could make the child violent. However, the minority (10%) of the respondents indicated that their children were not affected by playing video games.

Surprisingly, most of the participants (44%) considered the use of tablets “a waste of time”. They thought that text-book were better than iBooks. However, they asserted that new forms of literacy offered by technology are more effective to educate young children than traditional ways of teaching.

The items of the second table were ranked from “always” to “never”. It consisted of a number of rules and guidelines to see if parents were aware that control and rules were needed to minimize the negative influences of tablets on their children. Most of the participants had rules for the use of tablets and they were aware of the importance of guiding their children and provided advice to them. In addition, they were aware that balancing indoor and outdoor activities was required and 46.7% of them thought that their children needed to play with their peers.

The last section of the questionnaire was an open-ended question, “Do you think that handheld digital devices are helpful or harmful for children’s future?” The participants mentioned a number of benefits that they associated with tablet’s use including that it helps to instill values and principles to the child, improves his linguistic level, enhances their understanding, encourages thinking, teaches math, communication with other people and acquiring the IT skills which are required in the job market. However, overuse of tablets effected the relationship between the children and their peers and it can cause mental and psychological illnesses like autism and mental retardation. They also thought that control and direction were needed and it is the parents’ responsibility to set time limits to their child and choose the suitable applications to download in their device.
b. The Analysis of the Interviews

The interviews conducted were important to find out teachers’ views around integrating tablets in the educational process, the obstacles they might face and how beneficial it would be for young children. The teachers whom I interviewed did not use tablets in their lessons, yet they provided me with their views around its use.

In general, students were motivated, easily engaged and concentrated whenever technology was used. One of the teachers stated that the shorter the video is, the better it will be for young children. She added that it is hard to keep a child in one place doing a certain activity for a long period of time because they feel bored and they move to another place to do something else. Two of the interviewees said that they are able to know if their students overused their devices because these children were not able to concentrate and they did not pay enough attention to their teachers.

The interviewees welcomed technology and thought that it would be a good idea to integrate tablets in learning. However, all of the interviewees believed that teachers must be trained to use these devices in their lessons; otherwise, they would not achieve the goals that they should achieve by the end of the semester. One of the challenges they think they might face is managing class time. They suggested establishing a specified time to use these devices saying that it is true that e-sources and applications have become a part of the educational process but it cannot do the whole job of teaching. Teachers argued that children in this stage might not be a benefactor of such devices. Children who enrolled in kindergarten had no basics at all; therefore, kindergarten is the place where they acquired the basic skills, like numeracy, and names of things which surrounded them. They asserted that in this stage of their life, children learn better by doing and experiencing things and that the system of the kindergarten balanced between indoor and outdoor activities. Another obstacle they might face is that books were reliable sources while not all websites and sources offered online were reliable.

Tablets and Omani Children

Although a number of studies have been conducted to explore the effects of tablets on young children, most of them focused on their impact on children’s learning. However, this study focused on certain aspects that other researchers have not focused on like their influences on children's health and behavior. Furthermore, it investigated parents’ attitude to the use of electronic tablets and aimed to know whether they have rules and control their child’s use of the device or not. It also included teachers’ views about integrating tablets in the educational process.

The questionnaire which was distributed to the parents revealed that parents viewed the use of tablets as “a waste of time”. Parents indicated that overuse of tablets can cause headaches for young children and they can have an effect children’s eye-sight. They also agreed that iPads made their children isolated. In general, children are less likely to suffer from the negative influences of tablets if their parents have rules and guidelines around the use of these devices. Indeed, the role of the parents is not only to provide these devices to their children but also to direct and advise them on how to use their devices.

Teachers thought that tablets are one of the tools that could be used to educate young children but it could not replace the traditional ways of teaching. Text-books, shapes, and other materials are still needed especially in kindergartens because children in this stage, age 3-6 years-old, learn
better by experiencing things. Being accustomed to use tablets to play, children will refuse to be engaged with conventional plays or toys that might offer to them. In general, parents and teachers believed that iPads can be used as an educational tool and children can gain basic literacy skills through the use of tablets.

Parents, teachers and other authorities as well can find the results of this study useful, especially if they are planning to integrate tablets in the educational process. In fact, it is their responsibility to make children’s experience with tablets a good one because children in their early stages of development do not have the ability to think critically and to choose what is good and suitable for them. Indeed, parents should be aware of every website their children visit and they should know the videos and applications that their children download in their devices to avoid any negative influence of these devices upon them, both physically as well as emotionally.

Further research is needed to explore the potential benefits and problems of tablets on learning in addition to examining their influence on children’s behavior other than those influences which have been discussed in this study.

References


Chapter 7
To What Extent Does the Body Image of Actresses and Female Fashion Models Affect the Young Women who Seek to Imitate Them?

Molook Said Al Ghafri

Abstract

This paper investigates the factors that make young women in Oman dissatisfied about their body image and seek to imitate the actresses and fashion models, resulting in causing them depression. It first reviews the literature on the topic, and shows definition, causes and types of depression, the role of society and body image in causing depression, body dissatisfaction in women and adolescents and their concern about body image. The paper then analyses the data got from the questionnaires with young women (15-25) years old and interviews with 3 mothers, a counselor and a psychologist. The findings show that, in the Omani context, factors such as social, cultural and the nature of the women themselves can cause depression among women. Moreover, the results show that more women experience depression than men. The paper concludes that young Omani women look at the fashion models and actresses’ body image as an ideal body and they seek to imitate them, which causes them to be depressed. In addition, this paper recommends that women should have confidence about their body image and not feel dissatisfied with what they have.

Key words  depression, body image, young women, body dissatisfaction, eating disorders.

Introduction

Depression is one of the most complicated issues faced by people nowadays. Societies suffer from depression due to many causes, including unemployment, poverty and stress. Different types of depression are clarified according to their developmental stages. Everybody experiences the sense of sadness that makes a person feel down and depressed. However women experience depression more than men. Hussain (2010) explains in his study about women and depression that one factor which leads women to be at risk of depression is the change in the hormones during childbirth which affects her psychological and behavioral situation. He also mentions that having unrealistic role models in women can also cause depression among women (Hussain, 2010). There are also some cognitive factors that are associated with gender differences. For example, women have a tendency to follow examples from society and being effected by the media, at times causing clinical depression (Ingram & Atcley & Segal, 2011). Building on this, this research seeks to answer a question: To what extent does the body image of actresses and female fashion models cause depression to the young women who seek to imitate them? It aims to find if fashion models and celebrities really do have an impact and cause depression in women due to their high desire to look like them. Moreover, it aims to analyze and understand the reasons behind this.
Definition, Causes and Types of Depression

Each health organization or researcher defines depression differently, although they agree that it is a mental disorder. Depression is something that affects our feeling, way of thinking and acting (American Psychiatric Association, 2014). According to a study that was done in the U.S, depression affects five to eight adults each year although only half of them receive treatment (National Alliance Mental Illness, 2010). Researchers believe that half of the people who commit suicide are depressed (National Alliance Mental Illness, 2010). There is a difference between depression and sadness. The most prominent difference is that depression continues for months or even years, while sadness lasts for less time (American Psychiatric Association, 2014). NAMI clarified depression according to many categories such as age, ethnic, racial and socioeconomic groups (National Alliance Mental Illness, 2010).

Depression can occur for various reasons and it is classified according to the reasons that it may be happening. Some people experience depression while they are suffering from a serious illness, others when they face changes in their life. Still others experience depression because they have a family genetic history of depression. WebMd website adds that there are other causes of depression (such as being lost in the society, family problems and because of some types of medications) (WebMd, 2005). According to NAMI (2010), depression can be experienced by men and women, children and adolescents.

The Role of Society and Body Image in Causing women’s depression:

As women in society have a range of challenging roles which are set by society and have to change their roles in every situation, they are more prone to being depressed. Even if she works outside her home, people still have the same ideas about a woman. Simonds (2006) claims that instability in one’s relations with others and with oneself can cause depression. For example, men’s perception of women as being a person who is important to a house and yet has to work outside the house can often cause confusion for women who are not sure how to cope with all the different expectations. Society provides a fixed role for women such as taking care of children but this is not always enough. In other words, we can say that Simonds agrees that society provides a restricted relational image of women. For example, a woman is always seen as a complete and perfect character and is identified in definite terms such as a responsible woman, a good girl, a good mother and a good daughter. These factors lead women to get a sense of high responsibility which she may not always be ready to fulfil. As a result it puts a high stress on her, which causes depression (Simonds, 2006).

Body image also has a role in causing women’s depression. In our societies, being thin and having a good body shape is treasured and preferable. As a result of this, women go on diets in order to lose weight which causes them several problems such as eating disorders and psychological problems, such as stress and depression (Farrar, 2014). There are many factors that are connected to the construction of a body image, particularly for women. For example, society sets a high value on thinness and attractiveness for women and they associate success and high status with a certain standard. There are many influences which create the perfect body image in television, movies, shows and magazines that affect women. Caring about the body image starts at an early age. Studies conducted by the centers for diseases control and prevention show that more than 50% of the American girls who are between 9 and 10 years old feel satisfied by doing diet although only 18% of adolescent suffer from obesity. Another study also shows that 80% of the girls from the same age group have been going on diets in order to lose weight. Mostly the poor body
image affects women and girls more than men; however both genders suffer from the bad image but it is more likely to affect women. I mentioned before that the poor body image causes some psychological problems. For instance, poor body image causes depression, anxiety and some problems in having relationships with others (Farrar, 2014). Body image contributes to depression or psychological problems in general in the way that the bad body image decreases a person's self-confidence. As a result the low self-confidence can affect a person's relationships either in the workplace or any other public place. Moreover, low self-confidence can lead to sadness and depression, especially for women (Farrar, 2014). Relevant to this problem is that individuals can enhance their self-confidence by focusing on their good characteristics and values. Furthermore, they can also use books that may help them overcome this problem. Farrar recommends people to seek help from psychotherapist and mental health professionals if they are disturbed by their body image (Farrar, 2014).

Hamilton's (2008) research studies the relationship between a low body image and depression. He uses the multidimensional body-self relations questionnaire (MBSQR) to measure if there is a relationship. Moreover, he uses a BDI, which is a Beck depression inventory, to measure an occurrence of depression found in the participants. Hamilton's results show that there is no significant relationship between the participants' total score on the MBSQR and their score on the BDI. The results of the same study support his initial hypothesis which shows that there are some factors related to the body image that cause depression and this argument agrees with Farrar's (2014) hypothesis. Assessing these relationships may help women deal with their low body image and avoid getting depressed and having eating disorders. This study agrees with the findings that women and adolescents from different nationalities who are more obsessed about their body image show high levels of depression (Hamilton, 2008).

Dissatisfaction among Women

Klein's (2013) research, aims to study the role of social media in causing eating disorders and body dissatisfaction among college women. First, Klein distinguishes between the eating disorders and disordered eating by saying that the former includes a different type, which is anorexia. According to the American Psychological Association (APA) anorexia is defined as “[A] distorted body image that causes them to see themselves as overweight even when they’re dangerously thin. Often refusing to eat, exercising compulsively, and developing unusual habits such as refusing to eat in front of others, they lose large amounts of weight and may even starve to death” (Klein, 2013, p. 16).

Mennell and Mucrott (1992) in their book called The Sociology of Food also talk about anorexia. The authors mention some syndromes that are related to anorexia nervosa such as fear of obesity. Then, they talk about a study about eating disorders. The findings of this research suggests that “eating disorders are most common in modern industrial countries among young, white, affluent women” (Mennell & Mucrott, 1992, p.50). He mentions some reasons behind the desire to have a slim and thin body. One of these reasons is that being slim is preferable as people relate it to success, power and many other good values while obesity always refers to being unhealthy, lazy and slothful (Mennell & Mucrott, 1992).

Klein (2013) tries to find if there really is a relationship between social media, body image concern and anxieties. She found that over half of the women who are between 18-25 years prefer to do heavy workouts than being obese (Klein, 2013). Klein (2013) suggests that women who suffer from eating disorders or disordered eating suffer from low self-confidence and dissatisfaction with their body image. She justifies this by saying that this happened because these people criticize
their body size and shape by comparing their body image with an ideal body shape. According to Rumesy, the media “helps to shape beauty ideals by showing certain body size [as...] beautiful and desirable” (as cited by Klein, 2013, p. 23). As social media is now everywhere and is easy to use, women can enter any program and see image of girls, fashion models and celebrities which leave them dissatisfied about their body (Klein, 2013).

Another study, which was conducted by Rice, talks about the effect of mass media (television programmes and advertising) on women’s perception about their body image. Rice has somehow the same perception as Klein. He says that women who suffer from eating disorders and disordered eating value ideal body image (Rice, 1992). Rice (1992) mentions many researchers in his study who prove his hypothesis about the impact of mass media in women’s perceptions of their body image. One of these studies deals with four women’s and four men’s magazine and found that there are 63 advertisements about food and diet in the women’s magazines while there was only one advertisement about it in men’s magazines (Rice, 1992). Moreover, Rice (1992) uses a medical record that talks about women’s dissatisfaction about their body image. The medical record shows that patients who lost weight had high self-esteem, however; too much concern with ideal body image could lead to illness and death.

Rice in his study about self-schema contributes to the discussion on women's dissatisfaction about their body image. According to Philip, a self-schema is “[a] person’s construction of those traits that make the person distinctive and constitute the sense of ‘me’” (Rice, 1992, p. 115). A person gets this sense after observing her own behaviors and others’ behaviors in order to know what are the most important characteristics of the self, according to society. In addition to this, the writer focuses on young women’s self-schema and he claims that it is a mental construction, not an objective evaluation (Rice, 1992).

**Adolescent Development and their Concern about Body Image**

Since the childhood stage, a person goes through different changes in body size and shape especially in the puberty stage where everybody notices the new body shape adolescents get. The change during the puberty stage happens in five areas: shoulders width, weight, height, hip width and muscle strength. According to the U.S public health service, females are heavier than males at the age of 12 while at the age of 17 males are heavier than females and this happens because of the changes that happen during the puberty stage. They also say that adolescents gain more weight during the height growth, as there is a relationship between both (Newman & Newman, 1986). There are three different types of body: ectomorph, mesomorph and endomorph and most of the people have mixture not one type and the feature of each type changes as the person grows up (Rice, 1998). Rice adds that adolescents feel scared of being obese as adolescents think that being obese not only affects their health but also contributes to many diseases such as, hypertension, joint disease and gynecological disorders. Moreover, it affects their social relationships, school accomplishments and emotional concerns. Adolescents at this stage suffer from a poor relationship with peers which make them lonely, isolated, low self-esteem and withdrawn (Rice, 1998), which cause them depression and stress. However there is no significant fact, which suggests that adolescents suffer from stress. Most of the adolescents live their life well without experiencing stress and depression while there are some who experience depression because of the poor relationship with their parents, deliberate changes in their lifestyle and dietary changes (Coleman, 1999).
In conclusion, this literature review brings up different matters in relation to women and depression. It explains why young women experience depression and this is primarily due to the impact of the mass media (advertising and television) as well as social media. It gives clear evidence that the majority of researchers prove this hypothesis. One important issue this literature review has shed light on is the role of body image and society in causing women’s depression. Both society and body image have a significant and important role in affecting women’s moods. As a result of that, women tend to be more depressed compared to men. Moreover, it is important to know adolescents’ growth in order to understand why they are obsessed about their body image. Lastly, researchers should conduct studies to emphasize the impact of actresses and female fashion models in causing depression among women due to their desire to be like them and this is what this research looking for too.

Results:

These charts are divided according to four categories: the role of society in causing women’s depression, the relationship between body image and depression, the role of actresses and fashion models in causing depression among women and the role of social media and mass media in causing depression. Some of the significant findings of the research according to the four categories are presented below:

![chart 4-1: Role of society in causing depression in women](image)

There are 24% of the respondents are young female who are below 20 years old in this survey and 78% of the respondents are young female who are above 20. The data shows that half of the respondents agree that women experience depression more than men do, however; only 2% of the respondents disagree with this point. 54% of the respondents are neutral with the statements that talks about the rigid position women have in their society. About 48% of the respondents said that society prefers women to be thin while 16% disagree with this (see chart 4-1).
In the statement that discusses the adolescents’ obsession about their body image 66% of the respondents agree that there is a relationship between having a good body image and getting depressed, however; 14% disagree. Half of the respondents agree that adolescents have passion for a good body image. About 46% of the respondents agree with the role of the transitory stage between childhood and adulthood in causing women’s depression (see chart 4-2).

![Chart 4-2: Adolescents’ obsession about their body image](image)

In this chart 20 % strongly agree and 54% of the respondents agree with the statement that said, “Young women look at fashion models and actresses’ body image as an ideal body, while only 8% disagree (see chart 4-3).

In the chart below 50% of the respondents think that social media and mass media have role in making the women feel jealous of the fashion models and actresses’ body image. There is no significant figure in the statement that talks about the women who use Instagram to browse celebrities’ photos are more dissatisfied about their body image. But in general who agree are more than who don’t. 50% of the respondents agree that advertisements are one of the factor that encourage women to go on a diet and get eating disorders due to the perfectly shaped and attractive bodies they display (see chart 4-4).
Conclusion:

In conclusion, the data collected by the questionnaire and interview to investigate the role of the body image of actresses and fashion models in causing depression to the young women who seek to imitate them revealed the following findings:

1. The data collected shows that thinness is eligible in our societies.
2. The results show that the instability in the relations with other and self can cause depression in women.
3. There is a relationship between having a good body image and getting depressed.
4. Women experience depression more than men because of the hormonal factors, social factors and the nature of the women.
5. The data collected indicates that adolescents have passion to the good body image.
6. The results demonstrate that transitory stage between childhood and adulthood has role in making the adolescents obsessed about their body image.
7. The results indicate that the young women look at fashion models and actresses’ body image as an ideal.
8. The data collected shows that social media and mass media have role in making women jealous of fashion models and actresses’ body image.
9. The results indicate that women who use Instagram to look at celebrities and fashion models’
photos are more dissatisfied about their body image.

All in all, Further study is needed to elaborate more on the psychological factors that make women dissatisfied with their body image. Moreover, another suggestion for further study is to investigate the parenting’s role in helping adolescents to be satisfied about their self and body image.

**chart 4.4: Role of social media and mass media in causing depression in women**

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In conclusion, the data collected by the questionnaire to investigate the role of actresses and fashion models in causing depression among young women who seek to imitate them revealed the following findings:

1. The data collected shows that being thin is preferred in our societies.
2. The results show that instability in the relations with others and oneself can cause depression in women.
References


Chapter 8
What are the Strategies that English Language Teachers Use to keep Students Attentive?

Noor Musallam Al-Mahri

Abstract

Attention is one of the most important phenomena in educational psychology. Although attention plays a significant role in learning and teaching processes, there is a dearth of published studies that studied this topic in an Omani context. Since there are no prior studies that have looked into such strategies in Oman, the present study will offer an insight on the effective attention-getting strategies that are used in the Omani EFL context. The current study sought to investigate the attention-getting strategies used by English teachers and to identify the factors that affect students’ attention as perceived by teachers and students. To achieve this, 40 Omani students and 23 English teachers responded to two questionnaires. Each questionnaire consists of seven categories with 47 items utilizing a 5-point Likert-type response key. Results indicate that Omani students and teachers generally agree that calling students using their names, motivating students, smiling at students in the class and varying the pitch, volume and tone of the voice while teaching are very effective strategies to keep students attentive. Findings also suggest that the strategies that are related to punishment are not widespread among the teachers. Pertaining to factors affecting students’ attention, it was found that classroom environment factors receive higher means than the social and psychological factors. The classroom environment factors include the number of students in class, the place where a student sits, the temperature of the classroom and classroom equipment. Based on these findings, the researcher recommends providing teachers with training courses and workshops to improve their abilities to attract students’ attention in class. The researcher also suggests that further research is needed to investigate the effect of other factors such as gender, qualifications and the years of experience on the used attention-getting strategies.

Introduction

Motivation and attention are terms that were discussed by many modern psychological studies throughout the twentieth century. A common experience among teachers is students’ tendency to not pay attention throughout the entire lesson. A strong relationship exists between motivation and attention. Students’ motivation affects their processing of information during class. It is more likely for students who are more motivated to pay attention longer than the unmotivated once. The average attention span of unmotivated students is limited to 10-20 minutes. This means that a teacher can note the decline in students’ attention after 10 minutes (Bunce, Flens & Neiles, 2010).

In the context of Oman, the official language is the Arabic language. Not only is Arabic the official language of the government, but it is also the language spoken all over the Sultanate and the language of the media, religion and education. The English language is taught as a foreign language in Oman (Al-Mahrooqi, Abrar-Ul-Hassan & Asante, 2012). Omani Students do not speak English as a native language and many of them are not aware of the value of English language competence. They regard English as not having any vital role in their lives. However, as the English language has become the most commonly used language across the world, it is obligatory for Sultan Qaboos University students to achieve an excellent level of English (Al-Jadidi, 2009).
Narrowing the focus to SQU, students with low English proficiency must go through an English Foundation Program that is offered by the Language Centre (LC) at the university. Despite the fact that students spend a year studying English foundation program courses and that various programs to enhance students’ level of English are available, students still do not master a high level of English language proficiency. Therefore, SQU is employing a wide variety of strategies that can enhance the level of English among SQU students (Al-Hadhrami & Amzat, 2012). Attention-getting strategies is one type of the strategy that can enhance students’ learning. The findings of this study will show the frequent and most effectively used attention-getting strategies used by English teachers and the factors that affect students’ attention.

Research Questions

1. What are the strategies that English language teachers use to keep their students attentive in the Language Centre at SQU?

2. What are the factors that affect students’ attention?

Review of Related Literature

Definition of attention and characteristics of inattentive students

The literature reviewed suggested that student’s academic performance is directly affected by their attention level. According to Wang (2015) attention is the process of encoding specific information, keeping it in the working memory and then retrieving the information from the long-term memory” (p. 8).

An article by the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA (2008) suggests that inattentive children have difficulty in concentrating on a particular thing, so after only a few minutes they easily become bored with a task. They often forget things, disregard details, and make careless mistakes. These students struggle following instructions, completing tasks, and staying organized. Inattentive students couldn’t pay attention to the objects, and to their interaction with the teacher. Their attention is easily distracted by any sudden external stimuli, and they have difficulty in following instructions and in listening to others. They always forgot necessary things and leave the work they begin.

Strategies to Keep students’ attentive

Chapman (2013) and Abdullah (2004) suggest that lecturing alone does not convey as much information as do pictures, figures, charts, symbols, objects, or visual behaviors accompanied with gestures. Students tend to lose attention in classes where the dominant method of teaching is lecturing directly from the text book. In addition, an article by Amjah (2014) shows the effectiveness of using cards and posters as well as ICT to create an interactive learning environment to capture students’ attention. From teachers’ point of view, ICT and music are the most preferred techniques by students to attract their attention to follow the lesson effectively.

Barmaki (2014), stated that “eye contact; facial expression; vocalization; gestures and body movements” (p. 442) were necessary behaviors for teachers to get students’ attention. These behaviors display an increase in students’ concentration during lessons. Barmaki emphasized
the usefulness of teachers’ body Language. He regarded it as an effective way to get students’ attention.

Moreover, Amjah (2014) in his study stated that ICT helped in keeping students attentive while McCoy (2013) claimed that as more students use ICT, students’ use of ICT leads to more classroom learning distractions. He believed that digital technologies did more to distract students than to help them academically. However, Beeland (2002) found that interactive whiteboards in the classes had the potential to increase student engagement. The visual aspects of using the interactive whiteboard were the main reason for students’ engagement. Therefore, teachers should realize the potential of these interactive whiteboards to get and maintain students’ attention and to improve student performance.

Factors affecting attention

There are many social and health factors that have a significant influence on student’s attention. According to Abdullah (2004), students who have temperamental and aggressive patterns were more likely to have attention problems. Furthermore, mothers who drink alcohol and smoke during pregnancy tend to have children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

In regards to health factors, students with health problems often struggle with attention behaviors. Ear infections and hearing impairments are considered to be the most common health problems that influence attention. Research has shown a significant relationship between ear infections and inattention. Children with ear infections tend to be less persistent, inattentive, and less responsive towards an activity. Visual impairments also influence children’s capability to concentrate and sustain their attention. There are also some physical illnesses that reduce children’s ability to pay attention. Children may not be able to effectively pay attention because they may be preoccupied with the pain or discomfort of having a disease (Engels, Fiorentino, Karpman, &Turnley, 2004).

Some psychological factors determine the amount of attention students pay in class, similar to social and health factors. Students’ chances to learn decrease if their attention is disturbed by any external stimuli. Studies by Abdullah (2004) and Banikowski (1999) suggest some factors that impact students’ attention. Abdullah (2004) reported that the factors behind inattention were “students’ concerns, motivation, time management, procrastination, and academic anxiety” (p. 56).

Also, in Banikowski’s (1999) study, students’ attention seemed to be affected by motivation, anxiety, and tiredness. Both Abdullah (2004) and Wang (2010) believed that motivation played a vital role in keeping students’ attention. Teachers were able to get students’ attention by stimulating their motivation through designing attractive learning materials and creating learning environment that increased students’ intrinsic motivation.

Several researchers have studied the learning environment in class. It was found to be a significant factor in keeping students attentive. In her study, Abdullah (2004) reported that reducing the distracted stimulus inside the classroom, putting simple clear guidelines, choosing good lightning and appropriate seating arrangement, and helping students to build self-control increased students’ attention.
Data collection

The sample of the study consisted of 23 EFL teachers and 40 SQU students. The students who participated in the study were 20 males and 20 females. The teachers who participated in the study were 9 males and 14 females. These participants were recruited through a snowball sampling method. In the current study, two questionnaires were designed to identify the strategies used by teachers to keep students attentive and the factors affecting students’ attention as perceived by teachers and students. The questionnaires were almost the same and they were given to the English teachers and the students. Both questionnaires were validated by three professors at the Humanities Research Centre. In addition to this, the questionnaires were also piloted with 5 English (Majors) students who did not take part in the main research. The questionnaire was disseminated in two formats, paper-based and online via the university website. The majority of questionnaires were distributed online. The questionnaire data was first entered into an Excel spreadsheet and then imported into the statistical analysis software SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Scientists). Means, standard deviations and percentages were used to analyze the data.

Strategies used by English Teachers to Keep Students Attentive

Given below is a summary of the results of the questionnaires given to students regarding attention retaining techniques

Table 1: Student and Teacher Items with Highest Means.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivating the students</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>Using language body</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling students using their names.</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>Asking varied questions</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making the teaching process enjoyable</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>Walking around the room</td>
<td>3.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Varying voice tone</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>Varying voice tone</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing positive feedback</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>Introducing interesting topics</td>
<td>3.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using body language while teaching</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>Using and encouraging humor</td>
<td>3.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking around the room</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>Providing positive feedback</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dividing lessons into short segments or activities</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>Connecting the course to other courses</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Student and Teacher Items With Lowest Means.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Student</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criticizing students to get their attention in the class</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>Criticizing students to get their attention in the class</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ignoring students as a way of punishment for not paying attention & Ignoring students to punish them for not paying attention & 2.08 & 1.47
Sending students to the back of the class & Sending students to the back of class & 1.73 & 1.22
Sending students to the headmaster & Sending students to the headmaster & 1.47 & 1.20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Factors That Affect Students’ Attention</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 3  Student and Teacher Items With Highest Means.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students’ motivation to the lecture.</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>Criticizing students to get their attention in the class</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of students in class.</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>Ignoring students to punish them for not paying attention</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students relationship with the teacher.</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>Sending students to the back of class</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students family problems.</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>Sending students to the headmaster</td>
<td>1.20</td>
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| Table 4 Student and Teacher Items With Lowest Means. |

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The temperature of the classroom.</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>Criticizing students to get their attention in the class</td>
<td>3.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The educational level of the parents.</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Ignoring students to punish them for not paying attention</td>
<td>3.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The frequency of family contact with the school.</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>Sending students to the back of class</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings of the present study support those of Abdullah (2004) who suggested that teachers should diversify their teaching methods. In line with Barmaki (2014), both students and teachers maintained that it was very important for teachers to vary their voice tone while lecturing, to walk around the room while teaching and to call students using their names in order to get students’ attention.

Other attention-getting strategies that student participants believed to be important for their English instructors, reflecting the findings of Steinert and Snell (1999), were “dividing lessons into relatively short segments or activities”, “asking varied questions while teaching” and “connecting the course to other courses”. In addition, the findings of this study support Henderlong and Lepper (2002) and Abdullah’s (2004) studies. Both of these studies showed the effective role of reinforcement in sustaining students’ attention. Some of these strategies related to reinforcement were “smiling at students in the class”, “recognizing students’ effort and achievement” and “developing good relationship between teachers and students”.

<p>| <strong>Table 3</strong>  Student and Teacher Items With Highest Means. |
|----------------------------------|------|----------------------------------|------|</p>
<table>
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<tbody>
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<td>The number of students in class.</td>
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<td>1.47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students relationship with the teacher.</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>Sending students to the back of class</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students family problems.</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>Sending students to the headmaster</td>
<td>1.20</td>
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<p>| <strong>Table 4</strong> Student and Teacher Items With Lowest Means. |
|----------------------------------|------|----------------------------------|------|</p>
<table>
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<th>Teacher</th>
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<th>Mean</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The temperature of the classroom.</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>Criticizing students to get their attention in the class</td>
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<td>The educational level of the parents.</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Ignoring students to punish them for not paying attention</td>
<td>3.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The frequency of family contact with the school.</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>Sending students to the back of class</td>
<td>2.15</td>
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</table>
In items exploring teachers’ attention-getting strategies related to teaching aids, the researcher found that “using colourful pens to add emphasis on what teachers’ write”, “using visual aids such as TV, pictures and videos”, and “using computer programs” were all frequently used by teachers. These findings agreed with studies by Chapman (2013) and Amjah (2014) who stressed the importance of using visual aids rather than the traditional way of lecturing directly from the text book. On the other hand, the findings showed little use of strategies that are related to punishment such as criticizing students for their inattention, sending students to the back of the class and sending the students to the headmaster. The researcher believes that it might be because university students are at different educational stage and they are mature enough unlike school students who would be affected by punishment strategies. Moreover, both groups of participants believed that teachers should use body language very effectively to capture students’ attention for better understanding. A similar finding has been suggested by authors such as Gregersen (2007) and Barmaki (2014).

The second research question explored the factors that may influence students’ attention. Similar to student participants, teachers believed that all of the questionnaire categories which were related to social, psychological and classroom environment had an effect on students’ attention. Teachers agreed with students on the importance of a productive learning environment to maintain students’ attention. In line with Galton and Pell (2012), student and teacher participants strongly agree that “the number of students in class”, “the place where a student sits” and “the classroom equipment such as advanced teaching aids” had a significant effect on students’ attention. This is true because students in smaller classes received more individual attention from the teacher. Teacher participants also highlighted the importance of being aware of the psychological problems of inattentive students. Similar to findings reported by Bunce et al. (2010) and Wang (2010), teacher participants stressed the effect of tiredness, stress and boredom on students’ level of attention.

On the other hand, the findings showed that social factors have little effect on students’ attention. The items from the social factors category that received the lowest means included students order among their siblings, the frequency of students’ family connection with the school and the educational level of the parents. However, there was an exceptional social factor that recorded almost the highest mean. This factor was students’ family problems and its effect on their attention. Both students and teachers believed that students who had problems in their families tend to pay less attention in the class.

To sum up, attention has a significant influence on learning. Students’ academic performance is directly affected by their attention level. If the students are motivated and attentive, they will perform at a high level. The effective teachers should use different strategies to get students’ attention (Al-Hadhrami&Amzat, 2012). Teachers can play a vital role in getting students’ attention through the use of appropriate strategies. Teachers need to be knowledgeable about the causes of inattention. Thus, teachers will try as hard as they could to eliminate those factors that disturb students’ attention.
References


