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Prospective Foreign Language Teachers in Greece as Dictionary Users: An Empirical Survey

Konstantinos D. Chatzidimou
ASPETE, Sapes, Greece

The present paper explores dictionary use from an empirical point of view, 185 undergraduate students from three departments of foreign languages (English, French, and German) at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki participated in the questionnaire study. The main issues examined were ownership of dictionaries, frequency of their use, categories of information sought, level of difficulty in the use of each dictionary type, level of student satisfaction with their competence in using a dictionary, level of satisfaction with the information provided by the dictionary they use, teaching of dictionary use, and necessity of dictionary skills training at various levels of the Greek educational system. Frequency analysis of all the variables and a cross-tabulation between the independent and dependent variables were performed with the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 17.0 (SPSS 17.0). The students' answers allow for some interesting comparisons to be made with the answers given by future Greek language teachers in a similar study.

Keywords: dictionary use, teacher education, dictionary skills training, teaching methodology, pedagogical lexicography, higher education

Introduction

Dictionary users as agents of the research on dictionaries (Hartmann, 2001, pp. 80-95) and the utility of the dictionary in the educational process as part of the didactical research (Chatzidimou, 2008a) have recently been in the forefront of discourse, not only in the international bibliography, but also, to a certain extent, in the Greek one. To be more specific, research on dictionary use (Atkins, 1998; Béjoint, 1989; Tono, 2001; Welker, 2006; 2010; Wiegand, 1998; 2006) and the dictionary users started in the international bibliography in the 1980's—despite their emphasis on subject didactics, especially on language teaching, and the fact that the need to conduct such research was noted as early as in the 1960's (Bogaards, 2003).

With the exception of some recent publications on relevant issues (Anastassiadis-Symeonidis, 1997; Anastassiadis-Symeonidis & Mitsiaki, 2009; Chatzidimou, 2006; 2007a; 2008a; 2008b; 2011; Efthymiou, 2009; Gavriilidou, 2000; 2002; Gavriilidou, Labropoulou, & Giouli, 2009; Iordanidou & Mantzari, 2003; Mantzari, 2011; Nikiforaki, 2003; Zerdeli, 2012), the corresponding research is still rather limited resulting in unexplored fields in the research of dictionary use in the Greek context.

This scarce bibliography in the research of dictionary use, as noted above, is characteristic on both Greek (Chatzidimou, 2007b, pp. 92-93) and international level (Hartmann, 2001, pp. 94-95). With the Greek

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research, however, being still in its infancy, whereas the number of empirical studies has grown internationally during the last decade (for example, Bogaards, 2002; Chen, 2010; 2012; Cubillo, 2002; Lew, 2011; Martin, 2008; Nesi, 2000; Nesi & Hail, 2002; Scharnhorst, 2004; Szczepaniak, 2006; Tono, 2001; Welker, 2010). Bearing this context in mind, by conducting this research through questionnaires, we strived to investigate the use of dictionaries and the extent of dictionary skills training by taking prospective foreign language teachers who were students at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki as our sample group. By the presentation and the discussion of the findings, this research is aspiring to fill in the said research gap to a degree and in accenting the importance of using dictionaries in the teaching and learning procedures. Readers will also be able to gain some insight into various parameters of using dictionaries at all levels of the Greek educational system.

Aim and Methodology of the Research

In order to compensate for the research gap observed in Greek educational research concerning the investigation of several social groups as dictionary users, particularly those of teachers and students, the primary aim and the core research question of this study were to investigate prospective foreign language teachers as dictionary users. The sub-questions raised by this research were the following:

1. Ownership and frequency of using various dictionary types (general dictionary, dictionary of technical terms, bilingual dictionary, thesaurus, and encyclopedic dictionary);
2. Study of a dictionary's preface;
3. Reasons and occasions of usage;
4. Preference for printed or electronic dictionary and type of electronic dictionary used;
5. Level of satisfaction with prospective teachers' competence in using a dictionary and with the information provided by the dictionary;
6. Difficulties in dictionary use;
7. Sources of information for dictionaries;
8. The amount of incentive for using dictionaries given by parents and teachers;
9. Training students in dictionary use at schools and universities;
10. The necessity of this training.

These research questions have already been explored with the sample of the prospective teachers of Greek Language and Literature from the School of Philosophy of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Chatzidimou, 2013). Thus, in this research, there will be an attempt to compare its results with those of that previous research, wherever it is considered necessary on the basis of the criterion of substantial similarity or difference.

A questionnaire was used as a research tool, despite the fact that the method poses certain limitations in research in general and in studying the use of dictionaries in particular¹. The number of questions, including those regarding demographic features of the participants, amounted to 28, the majority of which, namely 24, were closed questions. Its structure was based on a questionnaire used in an older survey conducted by the

¹ For example, the subjects of a research are known to say they do something that may be different from what they actually do (Bogaards, 2003, p. 26). Therefore, it would be useful to combine the use of the questionnaire as a research tool with other techniques, such as observation or protocol, which are found, among others, as methods in research on dictionaries (for example, Hartmann, 2010, pp. 179-187).

author of the present study concerning dictionary use by university students (Chatzidimou, 2007a), which was in turn based on a questionnaire relative to the corresponding research conducted by Hartmann (1999)². The total number of students from the three academic departments of foreign languages of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki who completed the questionnaire during the Spring Semester 2010 was 185. The sampling method used was nonprobability purposive sampling, which does not allow for applying generalizations from the sample to the population (Katsillis, 2006, p. 31), but it does allow for drawing conclusions for the issues under study. The analysis and the elaboration of the questionnaire data were conducted with the use of the statistical programme Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 17.0 (SPSS 17.0).

Results and Discussion

The results of the research are presented for each one of its thematic fields, as they were formed on the basis of the research questions mentioned above. Certain demographic features of the 185 participants are presented in the beginning, followed by the results of the frequency analysis on the thematic fields. The presentation of the results is concluded with the findings emerging from the correlation of variables.

Control of statistical significance was carried out using the criterion χ^2 (Pearson's chi-square test) and at a significance level of 0.05. The relations were considered statistically significant when at a level lower than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) and statistically highly significant when at a level lower than 0.01 ($p < 0.01$). The strength and direction of the correlation were determined in each case by the statistical indices ρ and γ if their value was higher or lower than 0.30 or -0.30.

Participants' Personal Data

From the 185 prospective foreign language teachers participating in the research, 84.3% were females and 15.7% were males. Seven percent (13) were students at the Department of English Language and Literature, another 40.5% (75) of the students came from the Department of French Language and Literature, and 52.4% (97) of the students came from the Department of German Language and Literature, all belonging to the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The vast majority of the participants (91.8%) had entered university having taken the pan-hellenic university entrance exams. Thirty-nine percent of them were first year students, 5.5% were second year students, 10.4% were third year students, 9.9% were fourth year students, and the remaining 35.2% were in their fifth or higher year of studies. According to their own statements, their academic performance was as follows (the first year students excluded):

1. Twenty-five point two percent of the students achieved an average mark scaling from 5.00-6.49 attributing an overall "Good" performance;
2. Sixty-eight point two percent of the students achieved an average mark scaling from 6.50-8.49 attributing an overall "Very good" performance;
3. Six point five percent of the students achieved an average mark scaling from 8.50-10.00 attributing an overall "Excellent" performance.

As far as the participants' competence in foreign languages is concerned, 97.8% spoke English, 60.5% spoke German, 58.4% spoke French, 36.8% spoke Italian, 12.4% spoke Spanish, and 8.6% spoke some other foreign languages. A percentage of 52.4% spoke three or more foreign languages.

² The same questionnaire was used to investigate the specific thematic fields, using as subjects prospective teachers of the Greek Language and Literature (Chatzidimou, 2013).

The profile of the participants depicted in the research indicated that most of them spoke at least one foreign language, other than the one they studied at the university as prospective teachers of foreign languages. Their performance in their academic studies ranged on average from “Very good” to “Excellent” and they were mainly females³.

Thematic Fields

Ownership of dictionaries and frequency of use. It seems that the bulk of the participants (90.3%) possessed a bilingual dictionary, followed by 78% owning a general dictionary and 56.8% owning an encyclopedic one. Much fewer were the students who claimed to possess a dictionary of technical terms or a thesaurus at 29.7% and 22.7% respectively. The remaining types of dictionaries included in the research accounted for a much lower percentage of frequent or very frequent use by the students who completed the questionnaire. In particular, percentages of frequent or very frequent use appeared as: (a) 27.8% for general dictionaries; (b) 25.9% for encyclopedic dictionaries; (c) 20% for thesauri; and (d) 18.7% for dictionaries of technical terms.

Comparing the responses of prospective teachers of foreign languages with those of prospective teachers of the Greek language (Chatzidimou, 2013), differentiation is observed in the top positions concerning possession of various types of dictionary: About 90% possessed a bilingual dictionary and 80% had a general dictionary. On the contrary, prospective teachers of the Greek language mostly possessed a general dictionary (about 90%), followed by those owning a bilingual one (about 80%). It is obvious that the proportions with respect to the type of dictionary they possessed to a greater extent were similar in the two groups of prospective teachers. As to how often they used dictionaries, it was shown that the percentage of prospective teachers of foreign languages who used the bilingual dictionary they had was high, much higher than the percentage of prospective Greek language teachers, who at large possessed a general dictionary. In the first case, the bilingual dictionary was used often or very often from 80% subjects according to their statements, while for prospective teachers of the Greek language, the percentage of frequent or very frequent use of the general dictionary fluctuated around 55%. The percentages of students who used the remaining types of dictionaries were much lower for both categories. However, the prospective teachers of the Greek language did use a bilingual dictionary with percentages of frequent or very frequent use at around 50.5%. It could be argued that it is normal and rather expected to some extent that prospective teachers of foreign languages use the bilingual dictionary more often than prospective teachers of their native language do, since the bilingual dictionary is a necessary and effective tool for learning and teaching a foreign language.

Studying a dictionary’s preface. Examining the degree to which students resorted to the preface of a dictionary before using it, it appeared that 50.3% of the students enquired did not bother to do so, whereas 42.6% of them took it into slight consideration, with only 7.1% paying a high degree of attention to it.

The percentages of responses of prospective teachers of the Greek language to this question were similar, attributing slightly greater importance to the introduction/preface of the dictionary than prospective foreign language teachers did. It appeared, however, that the subjects of the sample of the two surveys did not study the introduction/preface of dictionaries carefully before they used them. This could lead to the assumption that the dictionary is not used appropriately, a matter that needs to be investigated further.

³ The fact that women constituted the majority of prospective teachers in the present study sample responds to reality, since the majority of students in the departments of education and of teachers in the schools of primary and secondary education in Greece are women (Argyropoulou, 2006, p. 20).

Reasons and occasions for using dictionaries. The main reason why the majority of the prospective foreign language teachers participating in the research would resort to using a dictionary is looking up the definition(s) of a word, as 76.2% did so frequently or very frequently. At an impressively lower rate, that is 34.6% of frequent or very frequent use, stood using dictionaries so as to check a word's spelling. Finding examples of usage followed at 29.5% with a slight difference from seeking the etymology of a word at 26.9%. A percentage of 25.8% used dictionaries frequently or very frequently for acquiring encyclopedic information, 25.0% for finding synonyms or antonyms of a word, 14.4% for looking up a word's pronunciation, and 11.3% for examining a grammatical feature. Regarding the occasions for dictionary use, 59% of the students replied that they made frequent or very frequent use of a dictionary during writing a text and 48.6% during reading, while 14.6% would use it when listening.

When compared with the responses of the Greek language teachers to the corresponding questions in the questionnaire, it is evident that the first reason why both categories of teachers resorted to using a dictionary was finding the meaning of a word. The reasons that followed, however, differed: For the prospective teachers of the Greek language followed the use of a dictionary to find the etymology, synonyms/antonyms, encyclopedic information, and to verify the spelling of a word, while for prospective foreign language teachers, the second reason for using a dictionary was to check the spelling of a word, followed by looking for examples of usage, seeking its etymology, and finding encyclopedic information and synonyms/antonyms. The last two places for both categories of teachers regarding the reasons for using a dictionary were occupied by looking up grammatical elements and the pronunciation of a word. Searching for the pronunciation preceded in the case of prospective foreign language teachers and looking for grammatical elements followed. The reverse was true for the prospective teachers of the Greek language. As for the occasions of dictionary use, it was evident that the prospective foreign language teachers used dictionaries mostly in the production of a written text rather than during reading a text, while the prospective teachers of the Greek language stated that using a dictionary during reading a text preceded its usage when writing a text. In both categories of prospective teachers using a dictionary during listening came third. These differences might, to some extent, be justified, since the purpose of using dictionaries in their teaching is different for the two categories of teachers.

Printed or electronic dictionary and types of electronic dictionaries used. When asked whether they preferred to use a printed or an electronic dictionary, 56.3% of the students expressed preference for a printed one, whereas 38.4% would opt for an electronic dictionary. A percentage of 5.4% did not voice particular preference for either one. As for the type of electronic dictionary they preferred, the majority of students (47.5%) claimed to be using Internet dictionaries at a frequent or very frequent mode. At a much lower rate, that is 16.2%, followed those using frequently or very frequently dictionaries compiled in compact discs (CDs) and those using portable applications of electronic dictionaries at 7.5%.

As for the preference of students for printed or electronic dictionaries, findings indicated that both prospective teachers of foreign languages and those of the Greek language expressed preference to use the printed ones. However, prospective foreign language teachers who stated that they preferred electronic dictionaries represented a much greater percentage than the respective ones of the Greek language who stated that they had the same preference. Furthermore, for both categories of prospective teachers, the choice of an electronic dictionary on the Internet was predominant when asked about the form of electronic dictionary they were accustomed to using. However, the prospective teachers of foreign languages, compared to those of the Greek language, seemed to be more familiar with dictionaries compiled in CDs and portable applications of

electronic dictionaries. The answers, however, of the subjects of both surveys suggest somehow that the printed dictionary (linguistic and encyclopedic) still has the primacy over the electronic one, despite the technological progress made so far. It seems that this progress has not yet affected Greek dictionary users so much, which is a matter worth considering by the decision-makers of the official educational policy when they implement reforms; the same finding emerged in previous studies carried out with different samples (Chatzidimou, 2008a, pp. 213-215).

Level of satisfaction with prospective teachers' competence in using a dictionary and with the dictionary's content. A particularly high percentage of 96.2% of the prospective teachers of foreign languages who participated in the research reported being satisfied with their dictionary-using skills. Regarding the satisfaction with the information included in the dictionaries they used, 80.8% found it sufficient to a high degree, whereas 18.7% were satisfied at a low degree. Only one participant responded that he/she was utterly dissatisfied with the dictionary's content.

Satisfaction rates of prospective teachers both of foreign languages and of the Greek language with their competence in using dictionaries were extremely high in both cases. The same applied for the degree of satisfaction with the information contained in the dictionary they used, with the satisfaction rate "greatly" to be slightly higher in the case of prospective teachers of the Greek language (86.0% vs. 80.8% of the prospective teachers of foreign languages). This finding suggests that the students' research sample seemed to be satisfied with the skills they had as regards dictionary use. The matter requires, however, further investigation, given the fact that dictionary use has not been systematically addressed neither by experts nor by teachers in order to enable users to handle a dictionary without particular difficulties.

Difficulties in dictionary use. For the majority of the participants, difficulties arose mostly when using a dictionary of technical terms, since 16.4% stated that they encountered a high degree of difficulty and a further 50.9% experienced a low degree of difficulty. The respective rates for the encyclopedic dictionary were 7.1% and 37.1%, for the thesaurus were 6.4% and 39.1%, for the general dictionary were 2.2% and 16.6%, and for the bilingual one were 1.6% and 19.2%. When asked what were the reasons for their difficulties in dictionary use, 29.7% of the students addressed that their dictionary did not live up to their expectations for the information they were seeking, another 27% admitted lacking knowledge of the existing types of dictionaries, and a further 19.5% did not bother to read the instructions on how to use the dictionary. Finally, 9.2% claimed lack of dictionary reference skills and 8.1% expressed the assertion that their dictionary did not contain accurate users' instructions.

The findings emerging from the study of both categories of prospective teachers suggested that the type of dictionary that they found harder to use is the technical dictionary. In contrast, again in both cases, the general dictionary and the bilingual dictionary were found in the last two positions. The type of dictionary in their possession and the one they used more frequently were said to be giving them less difficulty than all the other types (the bilingual dictionary for the prospective language teachers and the general dictionary for the Greek language teachers).

Information resources on dictionaries. University professors were acknowledged as the main source of information concerning dictionaries for 67.0% of the students participating in the research. A percentage of 47.6% acquired such information from bookstores whereas 38.9% from their fellow students. Following at distance came newspapers at 15.1%, publishers' catalogues at 10.3%, the Internet at 8.1%, and scientific journals at 7.0%.

Information sources for dictionaries seemed to be the same for both categories of prospective teachers, since they prioritized them the same way, the only difference being in the last two positions (for the prospective foreign language teachers, these were the Internet and scientific journals, and for the prospective teachers of the Greek language, the order was reversed). The fact that, in both categories, university students received information for using dictionaries by their academic professors is encouraging. It is also indicative of the high esteem that university professors hold for the role of the dictionary use in education thus motivating their own students to use them.

Parents and teachers' motivation for using dictionaries. Secondary education teachers were said to be the individuals initiating the participants into using dictionaries (56.2%). University professors followed at 50.3%, parents at 49.2%, primary school teachers at 43.2%, and at much lower rates, fellow students at 11.4%, "No one" at 10.8%, and "A third party" at 3.8%.

The extent of teaching dictionary use at schools and universities. A percentage of 25.9% of the participants of this study claimed to have been taught more than once how to use a dictionary at elementary school. The percentage appeared slightly reduced for junior high school at 22.8% and senior high school at 21.4%. On the contrary, the corresponding percentage was much higher for university, as 34.3% of the participants declared having been taught how to use a dictionary more than once at university. As to the extent, they valued the necessity of being taught the use of dictionaries during schooling and academic studies, the percentages of positive answers scaled as: (a) 73.7% found it necessary at elementary school; (b) 87.4% at junior high school; (c) 77.8% at senior high school; and (d) 80.6% at university.

A percentage of 35.5% of the participants believed it to be "Important" and another 54.6% believe it to be "Very important" for students of their own subject field to be taught dictionary use. Considerably fewer (6.0%) were those who did not consider it important, while 3.8% remained neutral and opted for the answer "I do not know".

What arises through the comparison of the two categories of prospective teachers is that the level of education in which they were taught how to use a dictionary was at large the university for prospective teachers of foreign languages, while it appeared to be primary school for the respective ones of the Greek language. More specifically, the rates of teaching dictionary use in elementary school, junior school, and senior high school were similar for both categories of university students. However, great discrepancies were observed, as noted already, in university, where prospective foreign language teachers said they were taught how to use the dictionary at twice the rate that their fellow students of Greek language did. In the question of the necessity of teaching dictionary use in the various levels of education, both categories of students seemed to reach consensus, as the percentages of those who considered it necessary were similar for all degrees of education. Finally, both categories of prospective teachers considered it important that students of the same subject were taught dictionary use, an element that should be taken into account by both teachers of primary and secondary education and academic professors.

Findings Deriving From the Application of Gamma and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Tests

The following statistically significant relationships emerged in relation to gender, department of studies, competence in foreign languages, performance at university studies, and year of studies.

Gender. Controlling for the variable "gender" showed that female participants used general dictionaries more frequently than male ones ($\chi^2 = 10.28$, $df = 4$, $\gamma = 0.47$, and $p < 0.05$), and the same occurred for bilingual

dictionaries ($x^2 = 14.69$, $df = 4$, $\gamma = 0.49$, and $p < 0.05$). Female participants also resorted to dictionaries more often than male ones to find the meaning of a word ($x^2 = 14.48$, $df = 4$, $\gamma = 0.40$, and $p \leq 0.01$) and its pronunciation ($x^2 = 9.55$, $df = 4$, $\gamma = 0.34$, and $p < 0.05$). It seems that female students, compared with male ones, used dictionaries more often. This differentiation requires further investigation, an endeavor we are likely to embark on in the future.

Department of studies. In examining the department of studies of the subjects who participated in this research, the following findings were made evidently:

1. The students of the Department of French Language and Literature used general dictionaries more frequently than their fellow students of the Department of German Language and Literature ($F = 3.836$; $p < 0.05$) and the same went for technical dictionaries ($F = 3.184$; $p < 0.05$);

2. The students of the Department of English Language and Literature used bilingual dictionaries more frequently than the ones of the Department of German Language and Literature ($F = 6.327$; $p < 0.01$);

3. Both the students of the Department of French Language and Literature and those of the Department of English Language and Literature used thesauri more frequently than the students of the German department; the same conclusion was drawn concerning the students of the English department when compared with those of the French department ($F = 12.781$; $p < 0.001$);

4. Both the students of the Department of French Language and Literature and those of the English Department used dictionaries more frequently than the students of the German one to check the spelling of a word ($F = 7.359$; $p \leq 0.001$), to find synonyms/antonyms of a word ($F = 7.359$; $p \leq 0.001$), and the etymology of a word ($F = 8.864$; $p < 0.001$);

5. The students of the Department of French Language and Literature used dictionaries more frequently than the ones from the Department of German Language and Literature to find examples of a word's usage ($F = 7.225$; $p \leq 0.001$) or a grammatical element ($F = 10.074$; $p < 0.001$);

6. As far as using a dictionary to seek the pronunciation of a word, it was reported that the students at the Department of French Language and Literature as well as those at the English department used dictionaries more often compared with the students of the German one, while the same was true for the students of the English department, as compared to those of the French one ($F = 23.129$; $p < 0.001$);

7. Regarding the occasions for using a dictionary, the students of the English department, compared with those of the German department, maintained to be using a dictionary more frequently when writing a text ($F = 3.503$; $p < 0.05$), during reading ($F = 3.445$; $p < 0.05$), and during listening to a text ($F = 4.028$; $p < 0.05$);

8. The students of the Department of French Language and Literature used electronic dictionaries on the Internet more frequently than the ones from the Department of German Language and Literature ($F = 5.682$; $p < 0.01$);

9. The students of the Department of German Language and Literature opted for the answer "I do not use any sources of information concerning dictionaries" more often than the students of the French department ($F = 6.748$; $p \leq 0.001$);

10. Concerning the people who urged the participants to use dictionaries, the students of the Department of French Language and Literature declared to a higher degree than those in the other two departments that it was their university teachers who motivated them to use a dictionary ($F = 17.731$; $p < 0.001$). By contrast, the students of the Department of German Language and Literature asserted to a higher degree than those of the French department that "No one urged them to use a dictionary" ($F = 3.086$; $p < 0.05$);

11. In the question of teaching the usage of dictionaries, the students of the Department of French Language and Literature declared to a higher degree that they were taught to use a dictionary at school in comparison with the students in the other two departments ($F = 6.131$; $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, both students of the French and English departments stated to a higher degree than their fellow students of the German one that they were taught how to use a dictionary at the university ($F = 26.718$; $p < 0.001$);

12. The students of the Department of French Language and Literature considered the teaching of dictionary use necessary in high school ($F = 4.883$; $p < 0.01$) and university ($F = 4.502$; $p < 0.05$) to a greater extent than those of the German department;

13. Finally, both the students of the French and English departments seemed to attach more importance to the need for students in the same disciplines as their own to be taught how to use a dictionary than their fellow students in the German one ($F = 9.157$; $p < 0.001$).

These findings seem to indicate that the students of the departments of English and French language and literature were more informed and knowledgeable in using dictionaries than those in the Department of the German Language and Literature. The assumptions made are that the students in the departments of English and French language and literature had to achieve higher scores in order to be admitted to the university or that their academic curriculum is more adapted to using dictionaries, but these aspects need further investigation.

Foreign language competence. With reference to foreign language competence, the findings show that those who were competent in three or more foreign languages used technical dictionaries more often than those who spoke fewer than three foreign languages ($\chi^2 = 10.47$, $df = 4$, $\gamma = -0.34$, and $p < 0.01$). They also showed preference to use both the printed and the electronic dictionaries without indicating particular inclination for either ($\chi^2 = 11.69$, $df = 2$, $\gamma = -0.37$, and $p < 0.01$), they used an electronic dictionary in the form of CD more often ($\chi^2 = 8.26$, $df = 4$, $\gamma = -0.31$, and $p < 0.01$) and they were taught how to use a dictionary more frequently in high school ($\chi^2 = 5.84$, $df = 2$, $\gamma = -0.33$, and $p < 0.05$). It seems that students who spoke three or more languages were more knowledgeable and familiar with the various parameters of the uses of dictionaries being investigated in this research. This could perhaps be seen as normal, since using dictionaries in learning a foreign language is considered an essential prerequisite for the effective learning of the language.

Performance at university studies. The following statistically significant relationships arose from the correlation of the variable “performance at university”:

1. The students who reported having “Excellent” academic performance in current studies had a greater degree of possession of a technical terms dictionary compared with those who had “Good” performance ($F = 3.045$; $p < 0.05$) and they used dictionaries more often to check the spelling of a word ($F = 4.536$; $p < 0.05$);

2. The students who had “Very good” performance reported to use a dictionary more often to find synonyms/antonyms of a word compared with their colleagues who had “Good” performance ($F = 3.494$; $p < 0.05$), and were satisfied to a greater extent with the information their dictionaries provide ($F = 4.144$; $p < 0.05$);

3. The students with “Excellent” performance in their studies were informed from newspapers about dictionaries to a greater extent than those who had “Very good” and “Good” performance ($F = 5.143$; $p < 0.01$).

It would not be too farfetched to assume that, based on the findings, using dictionaries is associated in some way with academic performance at the university—if not directly, at least indirectly.

Year of studies. The correlation of the variable related to the year of studies showed the following relationships:

1. Compared to the first year students, the students who were in their fifth or higher year of studies used technical terms dictionaries more often ($F = 3.325$; $p < 0.05$). Also, they referred more frequently to dictionaries to find particular grammatical elements ($F = 3.001$; $p < 0.05$). On the other hand, the first year students more often chose “Someone else” (apart from their parents, their primary and secondary school teachers, their professors at the university, and their fellow students) when answering the question “Who urged you to use dictionaries?” ($F = 2.952$; $p < 0.05$);

2. The participants who were in their fourth year of studies used bilingual dictionaries more often in comparison with both the ones in their first and third years of studies ($F = 3.717$; $p < 0.01$);

3. Compared with the first year students, both the students of the fourth year and those who were in their fifth year of studies or higher fell back on a dictionary more often to find the pronunciation of a word ($F = 4.669$; $p \leq 0.001$);

4. The students of the first year of study, compared to the students of all the other years (second, third, fourth, and fifth year or higher), claimed to have been taught how to use a dictionary at the university to a lower degree ($F = 14.014$; $p < 0.001$);

5. The students who were in their fourth year of studies considered the teaching of dictionary use in high school more necessary than the third year students ($F = 2.710$; $p < 0.05$).

The academic year of the students who participated in the research seemed to positively influence students to use dictionaries since it was apparent that the higher the year of studies, the more frequently students used a dictionary, referred to it, and maintained that they had become familiar with it.

Conclusions

The results of the present research depicted that the prospective teachers of foreign languages who participated in the study predominantly possessed and used a bilingual dictionary, as was expected, owing to the nature of their field of studies. Nevertheless, only a minimal number was those who claimed to pay a considerable amount of attention to the introduction or the preface of a dictionary. This fact makes it imperative that they be informed and trained, as the introduction/preface constitutes a basic part of every dictionary, containing important information that may prove essential for its effective usage⁴.

According to the participants' responses, what prevailed as an outstanding reason for using a dictionary, as anticipated from findings of previous relative research (Chatzidimou, 2007b, p. 97; Chi, 2003, p. 363), was looking up the meaning of a word. Other reasons that would make them resort to using a dictionary, though in fewer occurrences compared with searching for meaning, were spelling, finding examples of using a word within context, etymology, encyclopedic information, and seeking synonyms/antonyms⁵. For the majority of the participants, finding out how a word is pronounced or its grammatical context did not appear to be a substantial enough reason to use a dictionary. Interestingly enough, the participants quite often adopted the productive usage of a dictionary when writing and reading texts. This finding may carry considerable value in lexicography, since there is a difference in the planning and writing of a dictionary when it comes to choosing whether its orientation will be productive (Rundell, 1999) or receptive (Scholfield, 1999).

⁴ For more on the study of the preface of a dictionary before using it, cf. Chatzidimou (2008a, p. 65; p. 348, including bibliography).

⁵ Other studies of the author of this text conducted from 2004 onwards came to these findings, only with slight fluctuations and a different sample, cf. Chatzidimou (2008a; 2013).

Additionally, the participants' principal preference for using printed dictionaries rather than electronic dictionaries was overtly expressed⁶. The difference between the two types of dictionaries, however, was consistently intense primarily amongst the prospective teachers of the Greek language, 70% of whom opted for the printed dictionary. The fairly higher degree of familiarity and the more frequent use of electronic dictionaries demonstrated by prospective teachers of foreign languages could most likely be attributed to the development and variety of dictionaries available that address their subject of studies and their interests.

Moreover, the participants appeared to be thoroughly satisfied with their competence in using dictionaries and the information contained in the dictionaries they used. This display of self-esteem of the students as dictionary users is confirmed by other relative research data (Chatzidimou, 2007a, pp. 60-61; Hartmann, 1999, p. 47). This is very likely the reason why students ascribed the difficulties they encountered when using a dictionary primarily to shortcomings of the dictionary itself and not so much to their personal ignorance of types of dictionaries or their indifference to the instructions of how to use them. The type of dictionary that seemed to cause distress to the participants was the technical terms dictionary. Therefore, it could be suggested that incorporating the study of such dictionaries in the lesson plans of university teachers might prove of some use in familiarizing students with their contents. It is notable that the number of participants possessing such a dictionary was rather limited.

On the other hand, it is worth highlighting that the research participants indicated their university teachers as their cardinal source of information concerning dictionaries. Their secondary school teachers were recorded second regarding the people who urged them to use dictionaries. Another element deriving from participants' responses was that dictionaries play a considerably significant role in their academic studies, as more than 30% declared that they were taught how to use a dictionary at the university. The proportion may be considered relatively low, bearing in mind that it concerns prospective foreign language teachers, whose main vocation will be teaching a foreign language. The proportion was, however, higher than the corresponding percentages for the elementary and secondary education, where the scarcity of teaching dictionary usage prevailed. Finally, the participants seemed to consider the teaching of dictionary use essential throughout all levels of education, primarily in high schools and universities, while 90% regarded it as important or highly important for students in the same subject field as themselves⁷.

In conclusion, from the results elicited by the correlation of variables, one could set forth that the students of the Department of French Language and Literature had the closest relationship with dictionaries, as manifested in the statistically significant relationships that emanated from several parameters concerning dictionary use. The familiarization of the students of the above mentioned department with dictionary use is probably higher than in the other two departments, however, an element deserving further investigation. Some more interesting findings would include the type of dictionary that participants find difficult to use, the technical terms dictionary that is, which is more frequently used by multilingual students who are competent in three or more foreign languages, students with exceptional performance in their studies regardless of the year of studies, whereas students in the diametrically opposite categories seem to avoid using this particular type of dictionary to a high degree. Despite the interpretation given to the findings by the researcher of this study, they

⁶ For the same findings, cf. also Chatzidimou (2008a), the participants of this research were teachers of primary and secondary education from former experimental schools in Greece.

⁷ For sources of user information and the need to use the dictionary in primary and secondary education, cf. also Chatzidimou (2008a; 2009; 2013).

constitute in themselves a separate field of research that requires further investigation, likely to be conducted in the near future.

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Becoming a “Full” Woman: Emirati Women’s Experience of Postgraduate Studies

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This article presents Emirati women’s experience of, and transformation through, participation in a postgraduate study program run in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in partnership with an Australian university. The paper presents the professional and personal transformations the women described during interviews about their participation in the master’s degree program. The data presented in this paper indicate how deeply the experience affected both the women’s professional and personal lives as they became immersed in a culture of learning, reflection, and peer collaboration. The transformations to their personal lives and what appears to be life-changing re-thinking about their futures as women and as women leaders, provide a more complex view of the relationship between educational experiences and re-imagining future possibilities.

Keywords: “full” woman, postgraduate studies, transformative learning

Introduction

This article looked at the experiences of a group of Emirati women during their participation in a postgraduate study program conducted in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in partnership with an Australian university. The study looked at the challenges, barriers, and conflicts the women faced and the coping strategies they employed to successfully complete a Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree. While it could be argued that it would be expected that some kind of professional transformation would occur as a result of participation in higher education studies (Trede, Macklin, & Bridges, 2012), the data presented in this paper also indicate the deep effects on these women’s personal lives as they became immersed in a culture of learning, reflection, and peer collaboration. One of the women expressed her feeling about the deep personal changes she had experienced. She said:

I am a full woman on my own; I do not need to associate with any man to be heard or be accepted in society. For me, this is really important; this is a breakthrough in my understanding of my womanhood. ...I can never be a weak woman again; I do not need to.

Background Information

According to Nelson (2004, p. 8), “Traditionally, religious, social, and cultural norms in the UAE have dictated the position of women. Under this tradition, girls were socialised into the nurturing roles of mother and wife, rather than encouraged to develop careers”. Nelson (2004) acknowledged that this has now changed

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remarkably and many women are now being encouraged to obtain higher education qualifications, mainly before marriage (p. 7), although higher education is not commonly undertaken at a postgraduate level. These changes are partly related to the changing economic circumstances in the UAE, global influences, as well as a focus on Emiratization (Squalli, Vellinga, & Wilson, 2008), a policy aimed at reducing dependence on imported labour and consequently greater employment of Emirati nationals. Emiratization calls for a decrease in dependence on imported labour by increasing the participation of Emirati nationals in leadership roles in both business and government sectors. In 2003, UAE nationals made up just 8.3% of the estimated workforce. Squalli et al. (2008) saw the dependence on skilled foreign expatriates as hampering the UAE's efforts at Emiratization and argued that the higher levels of education for males and females alike will help to address this imbalance.

Although Emirati national women "comprise upwards of 70% of registrants and graduates of domestic higher education institutions" (Nelson, 2004, p. 8), they are not as well represented in postgraduate studies, the numbers being less than males for this cohort (Nelson, 2004, p. 11). Adam (2003) found that in the UAE, married women with children find it hard to balance their roles as caregivers with work outside the home. Abdulla (2005, p. 8) argued that "Emirati women have high educational and occupational aspirations", however, while women have high participation rates in undergraduate courses, the ambiguous nature of their cultural experiences, the complexity of which may be compounded through participation in higher education, does not necessarily translate into a perceived pathway into postgraduate studies. Emirati women's experiences of work are similar to their experiences of postgraduate studies in that:

Despite their success in the educational arena, the percentage of women in the labor workforce remains low, increasing from 9.6% in 1985 to 11.7% in 1995, with the majority of women employed in the education sector as teachers or in clerical work. (Abelkarim, 2001, as cited in Abdulla, 2005, p. 13)

This complex set of intersecting social, economic, and political factors contributes to the context in which Emirati women find it difficult to successfully participate in postgraduate studies. This paper examines the lived experiences of a group of Emirati women who did manage to successfully negotiate pathways through postgraduate studies despite these contextual impediments.

The Program

The Deakin University's M.Ed. program has been offered in collaboration with the Abu Dhabi Women's College and Dubai Women's College since 2005 as part of an agreement between Deakin and the Higher Colleges of Technology in UAE. The staff of Faculty of Education at Deakin University provide a series of study intensives in the UAE, drawing on contemporary Web-based and print materials. Students are supported both by Deakin's distance education resources and support structures, as well as local UAE tutorial and infrastructural support (Deakin University, 2006).

The Deakin M.Ed. offered in the UAE was the first flexibly delivered postgraduate course in education in the Middle East, initially attracting 32 students, principally young Emirati women who had graduated from the women's higher colleges and mostly working full-time in local primary and secondary schools, the Ministry of Education, and higher colleges. The content and delivery mode of this M.Ed. were determined in extensive negotiations between the two partners with a view to responding to the specific circumstances of Emirati women. Although some postgraduate study programs in the UAE are available in the field of education, most programs

are delivered in the fields of business (e.g., Master of Business Administration (MBA)) and science (Nicks-McCaleb, 2005, p. 326). This M.Ed. program created an opportunity for Emirati female nationals to participate in study in the field of education at postgraduate level while still living with their families within their local cultural and religious community. In this way, the program offered an opportunity to further the UAE's twin agenda of Emiratization and educational reform (Clarke & Otaky, 2006, p. 114) and Ibrahim's (2007) call to "encourage women to continue postgraduate studies" (p. 29).

In consultation with UAE colleagues, Deakin academics presented the part-time course through mixed-mode delivery, which included a combination of face-to-face teaching intensives delivered in the secure and familiar surroundings of the Abu Dhabi Women's College and Dubai Women's College and online follow-up. Teaching intensives consisted of 20 hours face-to-face on-campus teaching delivered by Deakin academics, who were supported by the local UAE tutors and employees of the Higher Colleges of Technology. This face-to-face instruction was supported with Deakin's well-established online learning management system with focused discussion sites as well as study guides and readings.

Objectives and Methodology

This study investigated the effects of participation in the Deakin University's M.Ed. program on these Emirati women's lives, both in professional and personal terms, to determine the opportunities provided to them and to open up new life trajectories within the constraints of the traditions of the UAE society. A total of 20 participants from the group of graduating students were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews to document their reflections on this experience and the opportunities that this qualification represented. Interviews were conducted at Abu Dhabi Women's College and Dubai Women's College to ensure the location was as non-threatening as possible. The interviews were conducted by the female researcher who had also taught the graduands during one of their early units in the first program. The interviewer was therefore able to build upon the previous shared learning experiences and was not seen solely as an authority figure. It was also important that the interviewer was female so that issues of religious and culturally sensitivity in relation to gender were addressed and were seen to have been addressed.

Schostak (2006) described interview as "individuals directing their attention towards each other with the purpose of opening up the possibility of gaining insight into the experiences, concerns, interests, beliefs, values, knowledge, and ways of seeing, thinking, and acting of the other" (p. 10). It requires a willingness to be open both on the part of the interviewer and the interviewee. An interviewer has to accept that he/she cannot "control" what comes out of the mouths of the interviewees. The participants' gifts to the research were similar to those mentioned by Schostak (2006, p. 13) in that the participants opened a space where their questions, curiosities, concerns, and interests could be foregrounded. The richest data occurred when the participants' questions, curiosities, concerns, and interests intersected with those of researcher. It is the coming together of interviewer and interviewee that "enriches the encounter by expanding the field of experience" (Schostak, 2006, p. 12). Methodologically, this means that the interview has to be approached in a double fashion: in terms of the possibilities of its constitution and in terms of its deconstruction (Schostak, 2006, p. 13), as an infinitely expanding yet fluid opportunity.

Professional and Personal Transformations

Gough (1994, p. 53) suggested that, as educational researchers, we are working with actors in a

story-telling practice. Thus, data and facts are not only important elements of the stories we fashion from them, but also are given meaning by the story-telling practices that produce them (Kamp, 2006). The participants in this study told their stories and deconstructed their experiences in the telling, made sense of their experiences, and were able to foresee possible futures. The telling of their stories, which is the methodology of semi-structured interviews, also provided an opportunity for the participants to re-imagine their possible futures. The data presented here shed light on these possible future imaginings of their professional and personal lives.

The influence of education on the imagining of possible futures has been written about by philosophers, such as Freire (1970), who believed that the process of learning was inseparable from individual empowerment and social change and based much of his/her work on this premise. Mezirow (1977) described how through education we can “become critically aware of the cultural and psychological assumptions that have influenced the way we see ourselves, our relationships, and the way we pattern our lives” (p. 101). Mezirow (1977) explained how “the structure of cultural assumptions within which new experience is assimilated to and transformed by one’s past experience which becomes a personal paradigm for understanding ourselves and our relationships” (p. 101). Findlow (2000) argued that the route to enlightened empowerment manifest in economic, cultural, and political freedom is the defining attribute of a “citizen” as opposed to a “subject” (Freire, 1970; Apple, 1996). Findlow (2000) also said:

Social revolution brings the critical function into its own, equipping citizens to challenge hegemonic wisdom and help build “a new identity that redefines their position in society, and by so doing, seek the transformation of overall social structure” (Castells, 1997, p. 8), shifting the balance of power to make it more inclusive. (p. 113)

In the interviews, the Emirati women talked about the personal and professional transformations that they perceived were the results of their participation in the higher education degree. They described their perceptions of their own “emancipation, liberation, and awareness” (De Weerd, Bouwen, Corthouts, & Martens, 2006, p. 324) that have been a result of their participation in the postgraduate program. Undertaking the M.Ed. seemed to have affected their abilities to challenge their personal and professional statuses and to disrupt the cultural and personal assumptions about being an Emirati woman.

We make a cautionary aside here that we do not make any claims about the nature of the program itself in terms of pedagogy or content, which could be interpreted as recommendations for future higher education that would support such personal and professional transformations. We do not have data to support claims that it was the particular program or teaching styles that led to these emancipatory moments for this group of women. We are cautious of the application of transformative learning theories, such as those constructed by Mezirow (1994) that have been taken up so enthusiastically in the adult and higher education literature. However, what is clear in the data reported in this paper is that these particular women seemed to have had some personal emancipatory experiences while undertaking postgraduate studies. This paper reports on these “transformations”.

Professional Transformations

The stories that the participants told during the interviews indicated that their experiences had led to changes in their thinking about their professional lives, both in relation to the way in which their learning opportunities affected their ideas about learning in general and also in relation to the professional opportunities in their careers.

Changing thinking about learning. The M.Ed. provided new models of the teacher-student relationship,

pedagogical approaches, and provision of learner support. Not only were these Emirati women studying at a higher level that is common, the form of study was also different from the more traditional didactic, transmission approach to teaching that they had previously experienced and which was commonplace in education in the UAE (Although there are examples of different teaching approaches now being used in isolated cases) (Clarke & Otaky, 2006; Mpofu, Lanphear, Stewart, Das, Ridding, & Dunn, 1998).

The pedagogical approaches used included providing feedback on students' work. This appeared to be especially useful for the students, not only in their own learning, but also in these new practices of their own teaching.

And also, I learnt the methods of teaching from the lectures, such as how do they respect the opinions of students, how do they respond about the feedback, and the immediate feedback by all the lecturers and the instructors, who gave or provided these modules in the UAE. And this is what I am doing now whenever I have a test or an assignment, I do my best to finish it as soon as possible and to provide feedback—positive feedback and sometimes some comments, in a diplomatic way, in order to.... I am sensitive in my feedback and comments on students' work. And these are the things I learnt from this programme. (Participant (P)-1)

Yes. So, because of this, we were taught to be honest with our students, how to provide them with feedback, how about comments and the questions and assignments themselves. Now, I have been influenced by the questions or the assignments, instead of asking students for information only. I try to think of an assignment which encourages students to use their thinking. (P-2)

The M.Ed. program provided the students with different models of support, both from lecturers and local tutors, and also from each other. The students met for intensive teaching and also for follow-up tutorials with the local UAE tutors. As a result, they got to know each other quite well and this led to the organic formation of some groups:

Of course, doing it within a group also helps and that was another reason for it was a positive experience, because you always learn from other people's ideas and when you share and you discuss and even our fears that surface, you know, in due course, our misunderstandings and even the wrong paths that we took were also a learning experience. Again, I mean, I keep going back to my first statement that it was a positive experience. But by no means was it easy; it was difficult! (P-1)

I do not like to attend a lot of classes with all the other things I have in my life, so I prefer this flexibility. However, I would like to have a dedicated person to help me—from the college—to answer quick questions, and stuff like that. I have nice colleagues. ...and women, with distance learning, can organise themselves to do it, and especially the women who are undertaking the master's degree would be working at the same time, so this is very convenient for them. (P-3)

The UAE model provided a range of levels of support that was well-suited to these students as comments, such as these demonstration:

The lecturer was wonderful, but we needed someone at home and on campus. I needed to go to someone and say, "Look, I have read this, let us talk about it", so we had. I would not call it a study group, but we had a critical friend group and we would meet every Sunday, that is one of the best ideas I have ever had. Whether it was for my research or for my understanding in general, came from this study group. So there is no way that I could underestimate the benefit and the importance of what I gained when I had someone to talk to and to discuss things with. (P-4)

Yes. ...and another thing is, I had one of my colleagues to dinner, she is my research buddy: We have a special place in the college—a couch—we sit and negotiate, and because we are at the same level, she reminds me of things and I remind her, especially with the distance learning. You need someone to be with you all the time. So I would advise other people who do research to find a research buddy, who can be found most of the time. I mean sit with her on a regular basis and just chat—about anything. When I find something, I tell her, and when she finds something, she tells me. We do not have the in-house tutors for the research pathway. This is a point I will encourage—and I mean that apart from that advice

is maybe, for the research pathway, is to advise students to form a research body.... (P-3)

The importance of support in teacher learning cannot be underestimated and when this is combined with learning in a second culture, a second language, and a new paradigm (postgraduate studies), the unquestionable need for effective, appropriate, and timely support is enormous. One of the outcomes of this experience for all concerned is the growing recognition of the importance of the professional learning communities for developing and supporting the work of teachers (Bascia & Hargreaves, 2000). Professional learning communities in this context can provide support for postgraduate students who are able to share and therefore better understand the cultural, social, and personal dilemmas that they face through this form of study.

Changing thinking about careers. The participants believed that the changes to their professional lives were not only restricted to their practices, but also to the qualifications they gained, as well as the knowledge and the personal changes they have experienced, which will lead to career advantages, as well as open up future trajectories that were not envisaged previously.

Well, I got a promotion. I think it shows ... I mean it shows the dedication. I am a faculty member teaching Information Technology courses for different levels—diploma and bachelor. So, I got a promotion to be a chair of the diploma in my department, where I am involved in managing 30 faculty members ... 32 courses, and many students. So, I think ... it really shows the dedication that I have. (P-6)

Yes, a master's degree does attract promotion. It can give you a new promotion or at least it can give you a salary increment.... So, this is one thing—they think about increment and if they have master's degrees, of course, which everyone is encouraged here to do in the country, not only for women, even for men. It will be a very good way for them to get a new job or a position in the future. (P-5)

And a lot of people said, "Oh, as soon as you get your M.Ed., you are going to be the supervisor of the business department, or something else"; I have heard this more than 10 times. Now, this is not my plan of today. The reason is that I want to continue with the research pathway; I want to go on to doctoral studies. (P-2)

These participants now see themselves as able to "convert the resources" (Walker, 2006, p. 166) of the master's degree into the capability to function successfully in new employment opportunities. They expect that the recognition of their range of new capabilities, most importantly, their personal recognition and valuing of selves, will lead to these new opportunities.

A master's degree can be an advantage for new employment opportunities. (P-1)

Yes, it will be easier for me to get a job at any higher education institution; it could also be that my salary would be increased, but not too much. If I stay in my job, it is just about 1,000 dirham a month. So, in schools, it is just the same; they just increase your salary, but it would be useful for getting a job outside schools. You can join one of the private institutes or colleges. (P-4)

Personal Transformations

While these changes to the participants' thinking about their professional lives could be explained as a usual outcome of any successful postgraduate experience (Bramming, 2007; Trede et al., 2012), the transformations to their personal lives and what appears to be life-changing re-thinking about their futures as women and as women leaders, provide a more complex view of the relationship between educational experiences and re-imagining future possibilities. This requires going beyond the more traditional approaches to the relationship between identity construction and learning, as De Weerd et al. (2006) explained, "integrating complementary dimensions of learning by acknowledging that identity learning is a matter both of sense-making and of participation" (p. 325). Rather than the painful process described by Bramming (2007), these students described a joyful and pleasurable experience of learning that has an impact on their personal

lives. In particular these women spoke of the changes in their confidence as women and their perceived status.

Confidence of self and perceived status. The Emirati students' comments indicated that the participation in the M.Ed. program had a strong impact on their confidence and the status they perceived for themselves. Participation in this type of high level rigorous study was found to be transformative (Mezirow, 2000) in many ways. The rigour of the experience leads to changes in the way that the participants viewed themselves and the ways in which they tackled personal life tasks and life in general. They spoke of increased levels of confidence and the relationship among achievement, confidence, and assertiveness.

It has changed my view to life. It has changed a lot. Even if I do something simple, I research, because I know it is important. So I think I am very confident now after having a second degree ... I am going to do well in my Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). I am very confident to do it. (P-1)

For me, a master's degree, yes, it has benefits to my career, which means better pay and my family is at a higher standard of living. I see this as an advantage, but in terms of a master's degree, for me to begin with, it is a personal achievement. When a woman achieve it, she has a higher sense of confidence, and when she is more confident, she is more demanding of her rights—as a woman, as a career woman, as a mother, and as a professional. So she has definitely become more assertive. (P-3)

It made me stronger and assertive; I have something to fall back onto my qualification, which translates into a good career or a good job, which made me independent. I was financially independent before I got the master's degree, and now, even more so. And I can feel satisfied that I am contributing to my society. If I have to take the route of a single woman, a lot of people would look down on me: She is a zero; she is a null; and she is not contributing to society. But an educated woman does contribute to society and my master's degree has increased my level of education. I feel that I do not need to be associated in ... an uneven relationship, because I am the weaker partner. (P-2)

Now, I feel that I have the confidence and the competence to talk with other people about education issues in my country and organize my opinions in a systematic way. It is better, completely different from my approach before I joined the class. (P-4)

During the interviews, the joy of the students' in their achievements was clear. The qualification provided a status that was previously unknown. They had not all expected the changes that would come with a higher qualification. An understanding of these changes grew over time.

Gaining a qualification from an overseas university is prestigious.

But it turned out to be much more worth than just getting a degree, because it helps you secure a work contract, or you can show off in front of people by saying that you have got a master's degree. (P-6)

This change in status has led to a change in their perception of how the women can be positioned in the UAE society. There has been a change in their beliefs about possible futures. This experience has led the participants to a belief that women with a master's degree can become role models in their society. They have been "exposed to possible futures" (Wenger, 2000, p. 17). They described some of these possible futures:

So, I want to be in that position where I go and meet other women and tell them what I have, and this is the result. And this is the fruit what my country has. I mean I am 31 years old, so this is the product. So, I hope ... I think we will also play a role model for others.... (P-2)

Two participants provided examples of when this happened:

... A student for the first year diploma said, "How would I be like you?". It shows that they have an interest and when I stand there I can say, "You can be like me too".

And I told them that if I can do it, they can do it, and they asked me so many questions. I did not expect that. They asked me: "How many hours did you study and how did you do it?", "What did your husband say?", "Are your kids happy?", "What is your university called and where is it in Australia?", "How much did you pay?", "Did the college pay

for you?" ... "Was it difficult?". I must have been asked more questions and I did not expect it ... they were full of hope ... they were seriously contemplating getting there. (P-1)

This type of reward is part of a change of perception in possible futures, not only for the participants, but also for the future generations of Emirati women. This fits with the comments of Ana Agostino, who said that: "Education, in the very broad sense of an enabling process for deepening and creating knowledge, motivates us to question the familiar, to search for 'other ways of doing things'" (Moseley, Ginsburg, Pigozzi, & Agostino, 2000, p. 3).

Personal gains. The students used very personal language to describe their joy in learning and changes in their attitudes and behaviours, and the pleasure they derived from the experience was very clear.

It was a pleasure to study. It was about gaining knowledge for me. That is why I enjoyed the journey. I found the whole experience personally enriching. Since all my teachers or instructors were all so kind and responsive to my needs when I asked them questions, they respond to my questions and requests by their emails, sometimes in a kind way, and then, this was reflected in my behaviour at home and at the school where I teach. (P-3)

For me, I am doing the research for myself, personally, so, it has an impact on the way I look at life. And it has influenced the way I look at my family. (P-5)

This was a very positive experience. I did not think, I mean, I did not imagine that this was going to happen; I did not think that it was going to go this way: The amount of change I have experienced and how I grew in that course. It took me into uncharted grounds. It was profound. (P-2)

I mean I took so many courses to my heart; it affected me personally. I do not know if everyone goes through that, but I guess, from my experience, that is a part of the journey in getting a master's degree. (P-1)

I am happy. I do not want to go back to what I used to be. I am at a higher level of whatever you want to call it cognitive ... development ... So, I am happy being at that level and I do not want to revert back to the old, ignorant person I was (she laughs). And the thing with learning is you do not realise how less knowledgeable you were till you have reached that stage. (P-4)

So, I was affected in different areas—positively. Yes, I learnt more during that two and a half years than I had learnt during my whole life. (P-6)

These participants now believe that women with higher education qualifications may become leaders in their society, but increased responsibility will follow with that:

... that is an added responsibility, because with dialogue ... inter-cultural dialogue, inter- whatever dialogues, you know, going outside our own culture and sharing it with others, again this is another dimension—a dimension to the responsibility I have that I cannot ignore. (P-1)

While this might seem to be a positive in terms of individual circumstances, there is also an associated negative in cultural and social terms. One participant noted that:

Women with higher degrees are not always highly regarded at the family level. There is a disdain, you know; it is not a popular image of a woman in family that she is the career professional who knows and challenges men, and everything. (P-6)

Participation in the M.Ed. program affected not only the students, but also family relationships, perceptions of gender, dynamics, and possible futures for family members. The participants described how it has set new educational goals within their families:

I invited my two little daughters to the graduation ceremony (They are seven and eight years old). I think it will really affect their whole life to come and see their mum graduating. I think it will send a message to them. (P-1)

For my son, it is particularly important for him to see that his mother's time is divided among work, family, study,

and leisure to make it easier, for his wife, hopefully, when she strives to stretch and divide her time because the traditional man in our society, and probably in other societies, is that he knows that his wife's time is at his disposal; she is at his beck and call. (P-5)

My family, I think, has benefited from my higher standard of education; I know there is no end to education from what I have achieved. Now, my kids, I mean, what is expected from my daughter is that, like when I say I have my master's degree, I could see my daughter going through college and undertaking her master's degree automatically, as opposed to me.... (P-2)

Coping strategies. These changes did not occur without struggles, however, as women's positions within the Emirati society impacted on their journeys. The participants talked of the coping strategies they used. For example, one participant described keeping her participation hidden from her husband's family to avoid their expected opposition:

I had to make a decision and was not sure, so I decided not to tell anyone about it and kept it quiet, because I was too scared that it would be spoilt for me, you know. But for my daughter, it is going to be ... It is expected from her and she does not have to keep it to herself. (P-1)

Even though, or maybe because her husband was supportive, she was concerned to ensure that she did not have to deal with any efforts that other family members might make to block her successful completion of the postgraduate degree. Previous experience within the patriarchal family and society in which men make many of decisions for their wives, leads her to employ the coping strategy of avoidance. She decided that, "What they did not know about was less likely to hurt her". Even so, this was a risky business.

The participants discussed the need for effective time management:

I think I am very good at time management. I have a rule that I never work or study at home. Home is for home, I just switch off. I wear only the mother and the wife hat at home. So I do not do anything. I do not touch a book.... (P-3)

At the weekend, I hate to come to work, so I do not come to work. I have a "me" time during the weekend, that is some time—that is very important—that recharges me for the whole week. So the kids are busy for something or visiting family, and then, I have some "me" time. That is really when I do research. (P-1)

Balancing family and study time commitments required juggling or negotiating a "roller coaster":

So, the extra hours came from my kids' time as opposed to my husband's time. But he paid though, he paid in weekends because there was one day on the weekend where I did 12 hours, and yes, I would just cram everything into one day. I could not do it otherwise. So he would say, "Ok, let us go out for a trip", and I would say, "No, I cannot, I have got this exam", and he would respect that. He was supportive. (P-2)

You could not do it without persistence.

... Yes, I have enjoyed it, but it has ... you know, it is like a roller coaster; I am sure other people have said that. But some moments are really, you know, ... a flash of ... you know when you understand something and it is the first time you go through it, it is ... very memorable. And then, you go down and you think why do I have to go through this? It is too much pressure; I cannot ... why do I need to go through all of this pain to, for example, to achieve this degree? But it was worth it. (P-3)

It can be seen that participation in the master's degree program for these Emirati women was positive in many ways, although it did present challenges and did require them to develop and draw on coping strategies. The Emirati women students took on postgraduate education wholeheartedly and with passion leading to enhanced personal circumstances, improved social conditions, and positive changes in individual circumstances and personal trajectories.

Conclusions

What we are seeing is an ontological shift (Bramming, 2007), in which these Emirati women are quite literally “remaking” their world and the way they are positioned within it. We are able to see how the women have gained a significant new understanding, a “seeing the world through new eyes” effect. It is possible that these shifts are identifiable because of the interviewing process itself: As the women formulated and reorganised their thoughts about their experiences and the consequences on their lives, they began to think in different ways about their lives.

Certainly, it is clear that the Emirati women now see themselves as being positioned to play more significant roles in their society. The qualification of a M.Ed. degree and the subsequent graduation ceremony in front of families and members of the academic community provided public affirmation that allowed the participants to see themselves in new ways. In this way, they received affirmation from a professional community that acknowledges their new status. The formal qualification and the public celebration of their achievement at the graduation ceremony are the academic community's affirmation of these women's newly-won status. These artefacts contribute to a newly reconciled subjectivity that has been manifested in the interviews and in telling of the participants' stories. These new subjectivities are much more complex than those can be described through a simplistic association between learning and identity, or the application of “transformative” learning practices. In particular, the women's accounts of the changes in their personal lives and their senses of empowerment and liberation, echo the “consciousness-raising” contexts of the liberal feminism in the early 20th century. Newman (2012) pointed out that Mezirow's initial work on transformative learning theories occurred within this historical and social context. Certainly, the Emirati women display a sense of agency in their accounts of reconstructing their lives that moves beyond participation in any particular learning situation. It may be that, just as females access to higher education in the 1960s and 1970s contributed to the shift in societal expectations of gendered participation in middle class, white contexts, the growth in access to higher education by women in the UAE may have a similar impact.

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Indicator and Institution Selection for a HELENA European University Efficiency Analysis*

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This paper presents a comparison of 67 European universities selected from the leading rankings: Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), Leiden, and Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings, as well as the European University Data Collection Project (EUMIDA) dataset, in order to obtain as many different reliable data as possible for evaluating universities' performance. This is combined with the budget data of these leading European universities in order to calculate a data envelopment analysis (DEA) regarding the overall efficiency of these institutions. The results help to further the discussion about the role and message of rankings in the light of efficient and effective service provided in higher education systems.

Keywords: university efficiency, data envelopment analysis (DEA), indicator selection, European universities

Introduction

University rankings, for example, the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings, Leiden, or Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), are a major field of discussion in academics and higher education managers alike. Most rankings do not include the efficiency perspective and lack a proper discussion of the selection algorithm (e.g., Why are colleges/universities of applied sciences/Fachhochschulen excluded?) of ranked universities as well as the indicators used in correlation with the prospective type of excellent universities depicted in the ranking. The suggested European University Efficiency Ranking is based on European University Data Collection Project (EUMIDA), THE World University Rankings, ARWU, and budget data. It clearly states the relevance of the used indicators and the threshold of included versus excluded institutions based on the data envelopment analysis (DEA) efficiency calculation method used in the German Higher Education Global Efficiency Analysis (HELENA) federal research project on higher education efficiency.

One of the major faults of the existing ranking systems is their lack of input and efficiency data leading to a “competition for size” instead of a “competition for excellence” by the universities pushing for high ranking position under the notion of world class university's concepts. As Shin and Toutkoushian (2012) put it in one of the latest books on university rankings:

Occasionally, the raters of universities and the consumers of rankings do not pay much attention to the fact that

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rankings were initially conceived as a tool for measuring the effectiveness of higher education institutions. It is often assumed that highly-ranked institutions are more productive, have higher quality teaching and research, and contribute more to society than lower-ranked institutions. However, the three main dimensions of institutions—teaching, research, and service, can differ or even conflict with each other, and thus institutions that are performing well in one area may perform poorly along other dimensions. For example, a small institution may be very efficient in educating a given number of students with limited resources, but not very efficient in the production of research. On the other hand, we might find a large institution that is very efficient in knowledge production but not in teaching undergraduate students. (pp. 3-4)

As many rankings focus on output and outcome indicators, such as the number of publications and citations, the number and success of graduates, internationalization, academic awards, or industry income, in many cases, the input (e.g., budget, faculty numbers, etc.) is neglected. Therefore, the described productivity perspective usually gets lost, urging the university leaders to look out for institutional growth by the way of mergers and increasing input.

This gap in institutional research by most of the existing ranking schemes is addressed by the HELENA research project in Germany regarding higher education efficiency research. Within this approach, a new method, the already broadly used DEA (Charnes, Cooper, & Rhodes, 1978) is suggested as it exactly heals the above described deficit: As this method is a non-parametric and relative efficiency measurement calculation, it allows all calculated institutions to have individual focal points of their strategy and productivity and calculates individual weightings of these areas in the most favorable way for each single institution. Therefore, no institution gets punished for concentrating on one or several of the multi-perspective output areas in higher education, whether be it teaching, research, or third mission (service). As several researchers in higher education have been suggesting for calculating efficiencies of universities operations (Cohn, Rhine, & Santos, 1989; Beasley, 1995; Dundar & Lewis, 1995; Glass, McKillop, & O'Rourke, 1998; Ng & Li, 2000; Korhonen, Tainio, & Wallenius, 2001; Kocher, Luptacik, & Sutter, 2006; Kao & Hung, 2008; Sarrico, 2010; Worthington & Higgs, 2011; Zangouinezhad & Moshabaki, 2011), this contribution is combining several output indicators from different datasets (EUMIDA, THE World University Rankings, Leiden, and ARWU) as well as input budget data from about 67 leading European universities in order to show the ranking effects of such an efficiency calculation using DEA.

European Universities' Performance and Budget Data

The proposed institutional efficiency analysis is being conducted by utilizing a method from the DEA-family to calculate the relative efficiency of higher education institutions (Cooper, Seiford, & Tone, 2000; Sarrico & Dyson, 2004; Taylor & Harris, 2004). A major focus of DEA evaluations is the question of viable objectives and performance data, especially if universities from different countries are involved (Ramsden, 1994; Stahl, Leap, & Wei, 1998; Worthington & Lee, 2008; Sarrico, Teixeira, Rosa, & Cardoso, 2009). In this case, the following performance indicators have been selected in order to allow for a broad and comprehensive evaluation band for all universities included into the efficiency measurement:

1. The THE World University Rankings total score (O1);
2. The Shanghai Ranking ARWU total score (O2)—in the cases of ranking places 101-150 and 151-200 replaced with assumed scores of 20 and 10;
3. The Leiden Ranking total publication number score (Thomson Reuters) (O3);
4. The number of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) graduates and Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) students from the

EUMIDA dataset (O4 and O5);

5. The university budget (2011).

Table 1 represents the complete dataset used for the DEA efficiency analysis. Interestingly, the THE World University Rankings and the Leiden Ranking provide the most comprehensive listing of European universities among the top 200 (with THE a slight “focus” on the UK institutions), or in other words, in the ARWU, there are the least European universities represented.

Table 1

Dataset for 67 Universities Plus Five Residuals

Unit name	O1 THE score	O2 ARWU score	O3 Leiden score	O4 Ph.D. graduates	O5 B.A. students	Budget 2011 (€)
U Oxford, UK	93.7	55.9	12,208	850	19,583	1,093,538,183
U Cambridge, UK	92.6	69.6	11,742	950	17,837	942,019,645
Imperial C, London, UK	90.6	41.6	10,098	725	11,027	837,396,247
ETH Zürich, CH	87.8	43.5	7,257	581	10,364	1,189,794,717
University C, London, UK	85.5	43.0	11,208	610	17,181	953,219,017
U Edinburgh, UK	76.1	30.5	6,320	520	20,823	773,930,364
ETH Lausanne, CH	73.0	20.0	4,139	266	4,749	646,111,066
Karolinska Inst., SE	72.4	32.7	6,920	352	6,416	604,377,426
LMU München, DE	70.4	29.5	6,896	1,270	39,297	488,600,000
U Manchester, UK	70.1	0.0	8,531	830	33,640	962,018,693
King's C, London, UK	66.2	28.8	5,964	305	19,215	623,243,038
KU Leuven, BE	66.1	20.0	8,909	529	26,226	720,631,780
U Leiden, NL	65.1	27.8	5,524	302	17,736	514,700,000
U Utrecht, NL	64.1	30.4	8,179	438	29,276	767,354,000
U Göttingen, DE	63.2	20.0	4,131	758	20,529	412,101,313
U Wageningen, NL	63.2	20.0	3,951	210	5,161	710,000,000
EU Rotterdam, NL	62.9	10.0	6,036	265	19,584	542,000,000
U Bristol, UK	62.5	29.2	5,502	355	15,807	486,122,672
TU Delft, NL	61.6	0.0	3,957	236	15,461	520,600,000
U Heidelberg, DE	61.4	30.2	6,359	1,039	22,922	316,700,000
U Durham, UK	60.7	0.0	2,533	200	14,928	295,978,310
U Lund, SE	60.3	20.0	6,507	425	29,090	700,000,000
U Amsterdam, NL	60.1	20.0	7,128	353	28,325	600,000,000
U Groningen, NL	58.8	24.9	6,268	306	24,814	576,000,000
U Zürich, CH	58.8	29.7	6,345	670	20,330	1,008,015,049
U Ghent, BE	58.4	25.5	7,630	389	24,806	410,000,000
HU Berlin, DE	57.5	0.0	4,955	455	24,925	339,400,000
U York, UK	57.1	0.0	2,488	250	12,070	303,579,328
TU München, DE	56.8	30.6	5,408	708	22,612	1,095,000,000
U Uppsala, SE	56.6	28.0	5,545	364	23,311	596,410,285
U St Andrews, UK	56.5	0.0	1,999	145	7,421	199,550,503
U Helsinki, FI	56.4	27.2	6,428	466	30,092	643,056,100
Trinity C, Dublin, IR	56.2	0.0	2,619	269	13,581	265,745,000
U Sussex, UK	56.2	20.0	1,712	175	11,476	197,160,321
U Sheffield, UK	56.2	20.0	5,002	430	22,453	511,332,556
TU Eindhoven, NL	55.6	0.0	2,943	191	7,066	312,600,000
U Maastricht, NL	55.5	0.0	3,730	185	12,990	343,421,000

(Table 1 to be continued)

U Nottingham, UK	54.8	25.6	5,905	540	29,185	607,653,340
U Warwick, UK	54.4	0.0	3,153	275	26,995	498,251,956
RU Nijmegen, NL	54.0	20.0	5,727	260	17,706	500,250,000
FU Berlin, DE	53.7	0.0	5,177	574	28,010	392,500,000
U Lausanne, CH	53.6	0.0	2,955	186	9,494	333,360,595
U Southampton, UK	53.6	0.0	4,977	480	21,851	519,585,226
U Geneva, CH	53.5	28.7	4,118	272	10,256	604,511,700
U Glasgow, UK	53.0	10.0	4,243	340	22,138	535,347,349
VU Amsterdam, NL	52.9	20.0	5,825	264	21,045	459,700,000
KTH Royal Inst. of Techn., SE	52.9	0.0	3,320	235	14,120	443,481,686
U Basel, CH	52.8	25.6	3,464	365	9,150	366,100,074
U Leeds, UK	52.8	10.0	5,377	460	30,185	575,339,501
U Freiburg, DE	52.3	24.3	4,123	716	18,640	280,900,000
Queen Mary, U London, UK	52.1	0.0	2,099	195	12,571	356,743,644
U Lancaster, UK	52.1	0.0	1,586	215	12,320	214,902,371
KIT Karlsruhe, DE	51.5	0.0	3,941	351	17,737	397,000,000
U Bern, CH	51.5	10.0	4,086	496	11,152	603,582,236
U Exeter, UK	51.3	0.0	1,941	175	13,356	292,767,617
RWTH Aachen, DE	51.1	0.0	4,070	725	27,337	605,130,013
U Vienna, AU	50.2	10.0	3,128	594	61,788	509,700,000
U Liverpool, UK	49.0	20.0	4,028	260	17,946	475,658,192
U Bonn, DE	49.0	20.0	4,152	651	23,273	534,400,000
U Reading, UK	48.8	0.0	1,871	190	13,613	258,880,538
U East Anglia, UK	48.8	0.0	1,834	205	14,783	229,546,698
U Aberdeen, UK	48.8	0.0	2,637	135	13,193	261,612,006
U Newcastle, UK	48.6	0.0	3,595	300	17,228	454,491,402
U Twente, NL	47.9	0.0	2,409	160	8,135	279,400,000
U Col, Dublin, IR	47.9	0.0	3,728	255	19,236	442,000,000
U Leicester, UK	46.7	0.0	2,639	220	14,040	416,200,918
U Frankfurt, DE	46.4	20.0	3,869	589	30,511	489,500,000
U Catholique de Louvain, BE	50.0	20.0	2,779	-	-	370,000,000
TU Denmark, DK	51.7	10.0	3,876	-	-	558,000,000
U Copenhagen, DK	53.6	33.8	9,241	-	-	1,047,874,149
U Aarhus, DK	55.3	26.0	6,167	-	-	789,599,000
U Paris-Sud, FR	58.6	34.5	4,940	-	-	450,000,000

Note. Bold italic: assumed scores.

Results

The efficiency results with the DEA methodology were calculated with the Charnes, Cooper, and Rhodes (CCR) input-oriented model (assuming constant returns to scale). Table 2 outlines the results here. The efficiency leaders include (if all outputs are taken into account) the UK universities, such as St. Andrews, Sussex, as well as Heidelberg and Vienna. The lowest efficiency score is realized by the universities of Zurich, the TU Munich, and Wageningen. The further discussion section and detailed figures regarding the different combinations of the included five output measures are shown in order to analyze the DEA results further. This may lead to further organization and management insights for higher education management concepts.

Table 2

Efficiency Results

Unit name	Score
U St Andrews, UK	100.00%
U Sussex, UK	100.00%
U Heidelberg, DE	100.00%
U Vienna, AU	100.00%
LMU München, DE	94.80%
U Ghent, BE	92.70%
U Freiburg, DE	92.10%
HU Berlin, DE	91.30%
U Lancaster, UK	90.90%
U East Anglia, UK	88.90%
FU Berlin, DE	82.40%
Trinity C, Dublin, IR	81.90%
U Durham, UK	79.20%
U Aberdeen, UK	76.70%
U Reading, UK	76.10%
U Cambridge, UK	75.90%
U Göttingen, DE	71.20%
U York, UK	71.10%
U Basel, CH	70.70%
TU Eindhoven, NL	70.30%
U Maastricht, NL	69.30%
U Exeter, UK	68.60%
U Twente, NL	66.60%
U Frankfurt, DE	66.20%
U Lausanne, CH	64.40%
VU Amsterdam, NL	63.20%
U Bristol, UK	62.30%
U Amsterdam, NL	62.20%
KIT Karlsruhe, DE	61.70%
KU Leuven, BE	61.60%
U Warwick, UK	60.60%
Imperial C, London, UK	60.10%
U Leiden, NL	59.80%
U Leeds, UK	59.70%
Karolinska Inst., SE	59.60%
University C, London, UK	58.60%
EU Rotterdam, NL	57.80%
U Nottingham, UK	57.50%
U Helsinki, FI	57.30%
U Sheffield, UK	57.20%
RU Nijmegen, NL	57.00%
U Groningen, NL	56.90%
Queen Mary, U London, UK	55.80%
U Oxford, UK	55.60%
U Col, Dublin, IR	55.50%
U Southampton, UK	54.50%

(Table 2 to be continued)

U Utrecht, NL	53.10%
U Lund, SE	51.90%
U Glasgow, UK	51.90%
U Uppsala, SE	51.80%
U Bonn, DE	51.70%
King's C, London, UK	51.50%
U Newcastle, UK	51.30%
U Liverpool, UK	50.90%
RWTH Aachen, DE	50.80%
KTH Royal Inst. of Techn., SE	50.40%
TU Delft, NL	50.10%
U Leicester, UK	48.50%
U Geneva, CH	48.20%
U Manchester, UK	46.30%
U Edinburgh, UK	46.00%
ETH Lausanne, CH	46.00%
U Bern, CH	39.10%
ETH Zürich, CH	37.50%
U Wageningen, NL	37.50%
U Zürich, CH	31.30%
TU München, DE	29.10%

DEA Results in Details

Figures 1-5 outline the detailed dual combinations of two output or performance measures in order to compare them graphically as follows:

1. The first combination of the outputs of THE scores and ARWU scores (per input budget) analyzes the University of Sussex (UK) to be the most efficient one in this regard, followed by the German universities of Heidelberg and Freiburg. For all the three cases, it can be stated that the institutions are mid-sized (see Figure 1);

2. Figure 2 depicts the output combination of ARWU and Leiden Ranking scores. In this comparison, Sussex, St. Andrews, and Heidelberg universities are the most efficient in a DEA model as described—with St. Andrews being a very small but prestigious university;

3. Figure 3 uses the outputs of THE ranking scores and Ph.D. graduates (according to the EUMIDA dataset) with the most efficient universities in Heidelberg and Sussex again, followed by St. Andrews and Freiburg. In Figure 3, it is obvious that there is a distinctive German-UK profile characteristics as most UK universities are very productive regarding the output measure THE ranking scores (lower half of the grouped institutions), whereas the German universities are populating the upper half of the figure, representing a relatively productive characteristic in terms of Ph.D. graduates;

4. Figure 4 featuring the frontier comparison of university efficiency according to DEA describes the combined outputs of B.A. graduates (EUMIDA) and THE ranking scores, with the universities of Vienna (B.A. graduates) and Sussex (THE ranking scores) being the most efficient;

5. Figure 5 outlines the output combination of Leiden Ranking scores with Ph.D. graduates—therein, the University of Heidelberg is the efficiency leader, followed by Ghent, Freiburg, and Munich.

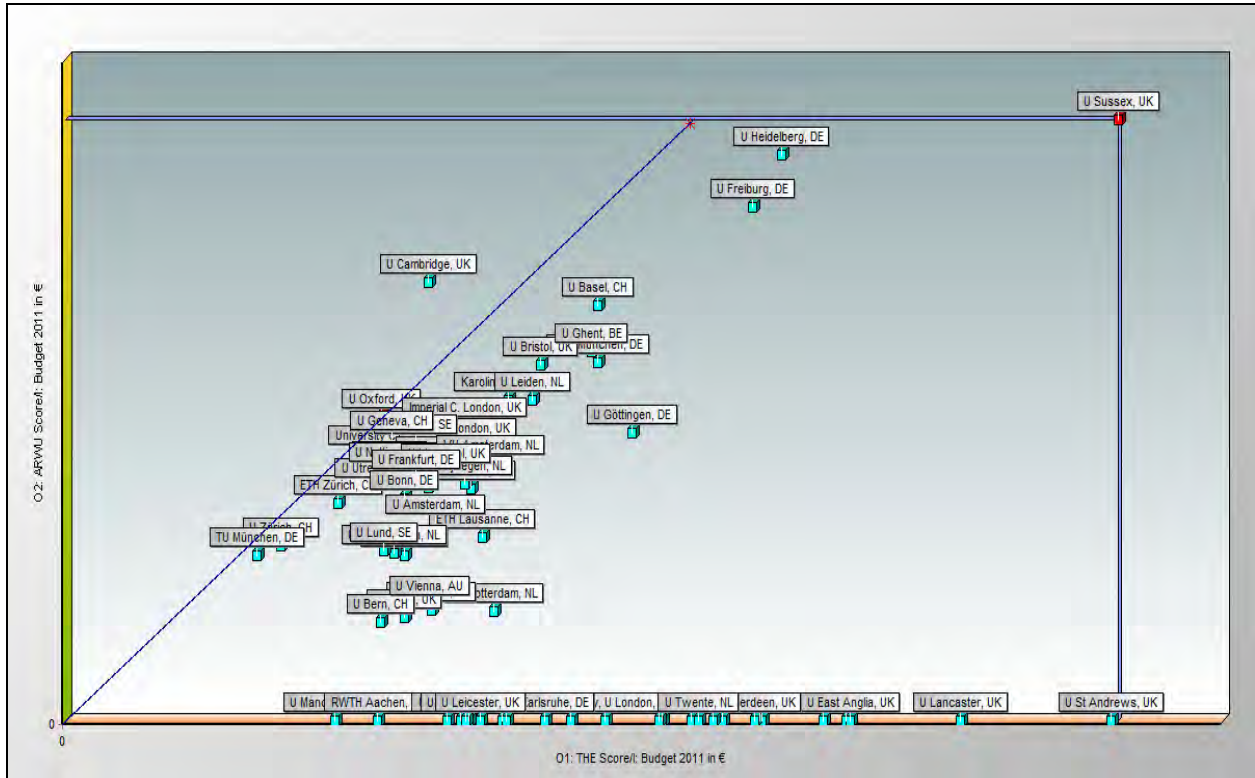


Figure 1. Frontier plot for university efficiency—Outputs of THE (X) and ARWU scores (Y).

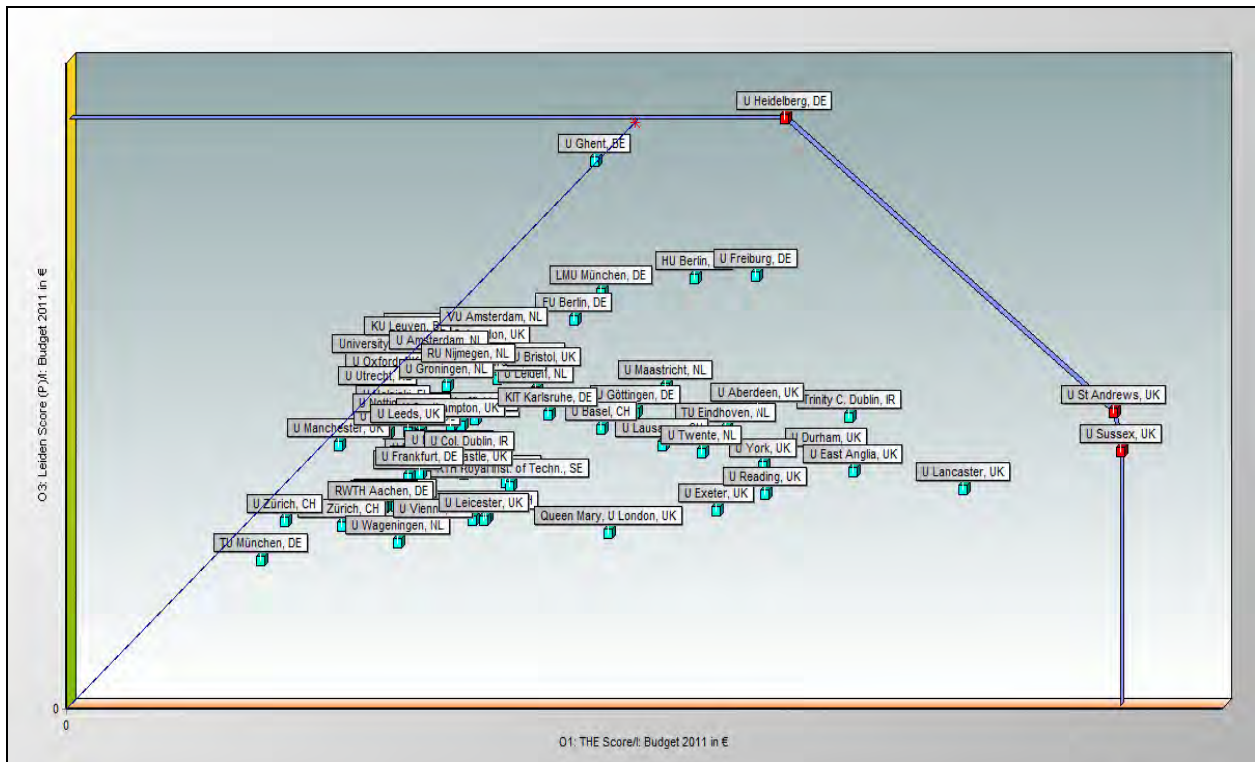


Figure 2. Frontier plot for university efficiency—Outputs of THE (X) and Leiden scores (Y).

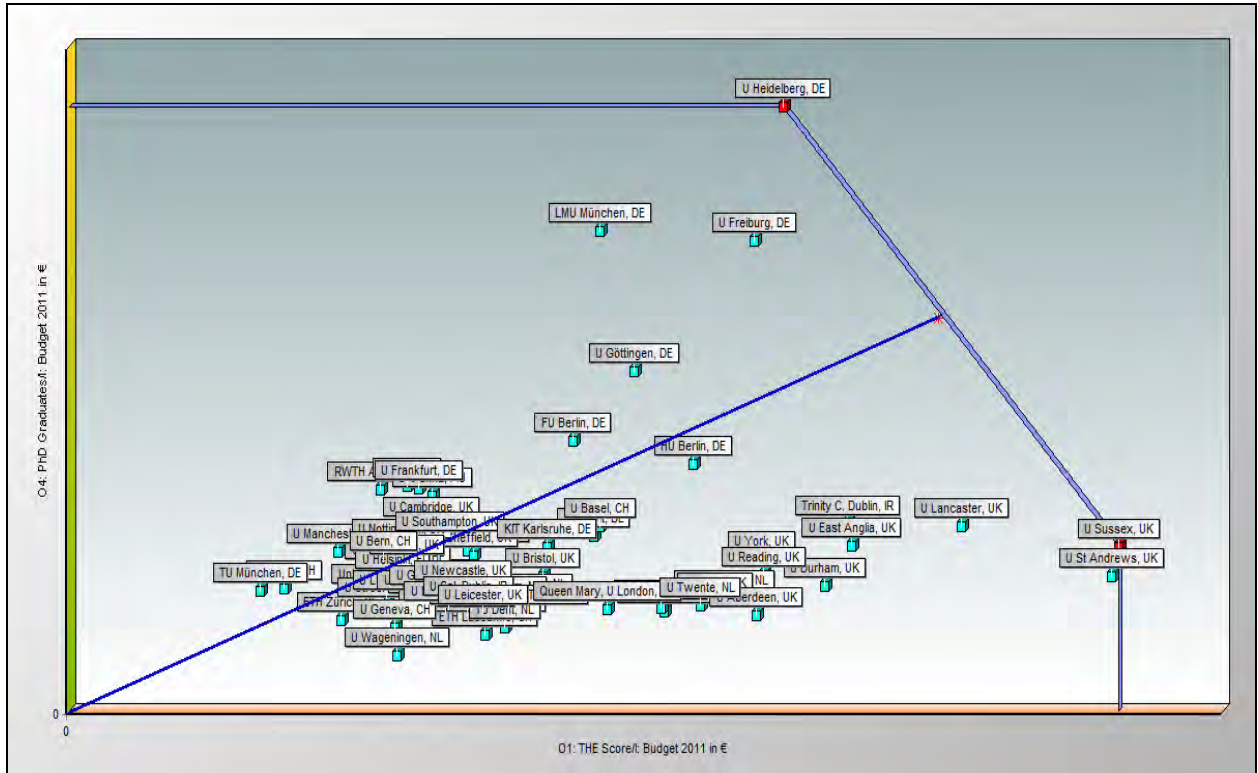


Figure 3. Frontier plot for university efficiency—Outputs of THE (X) and Ph.D. graduates EUMIDA (Y).

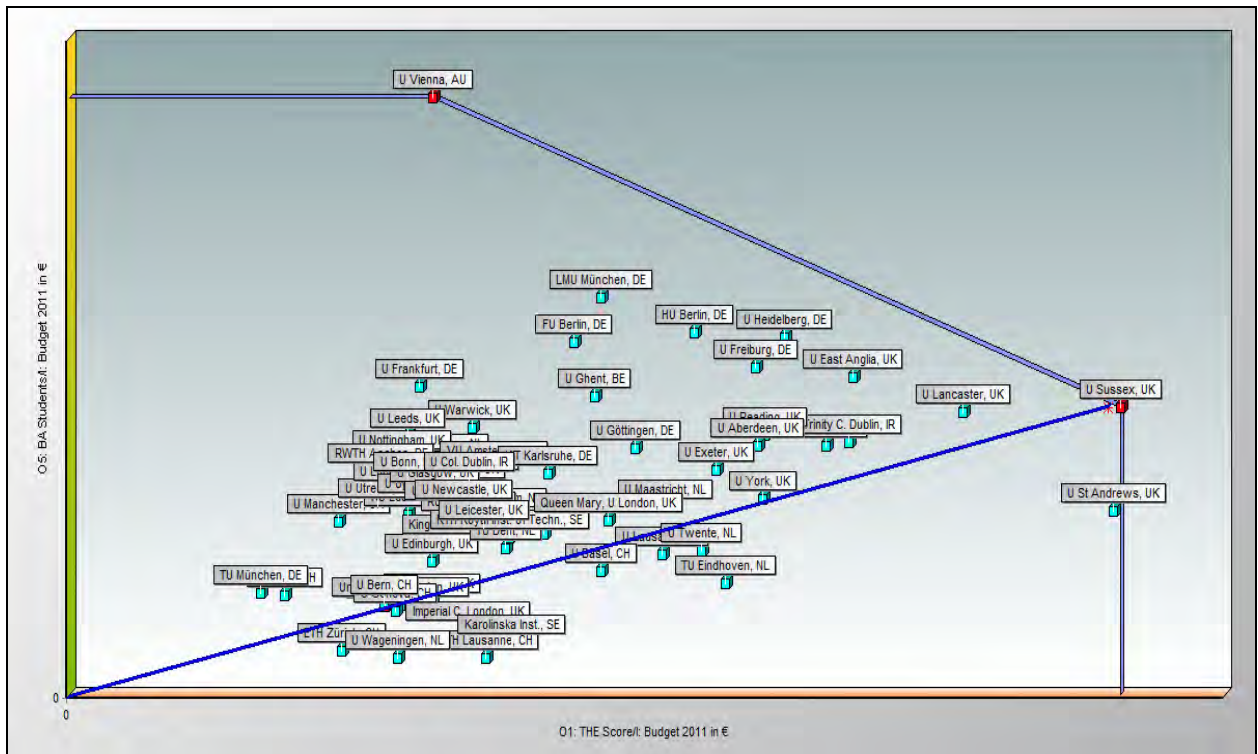


Figure 4. Frontier plot for university efficiency—Outputs of THE (X) and B.A. students EUMIDA (Y).

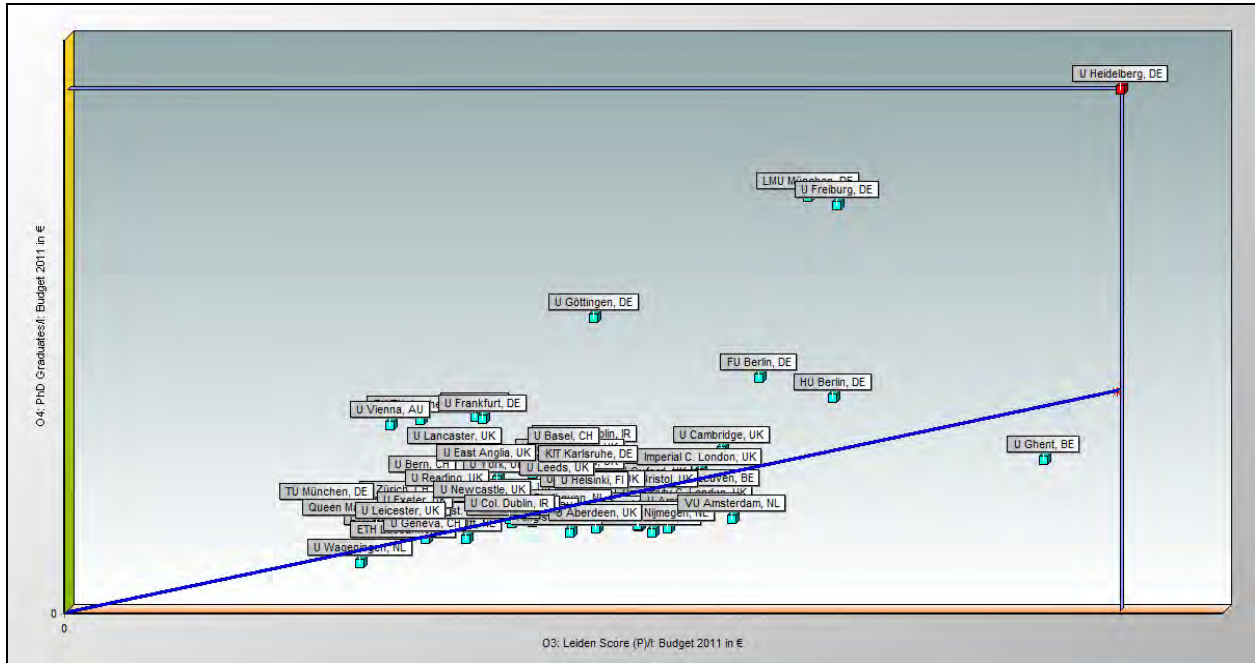


Figure 5. Frontier plot for university efficiency—Outputs of Leiden scores (X) and Ph.D. graduates (Y).

Conclusions

The different perspectives of different ranking endeavours provide for a much differentiated view towards university efficiency. Interestingly, the budget size-efficiency correlation over all those output perspectives is negative ($r = -0.65$), indicating that smaller universities are more efficient in the light of several different performance disciplines and areas (see Figure 6).

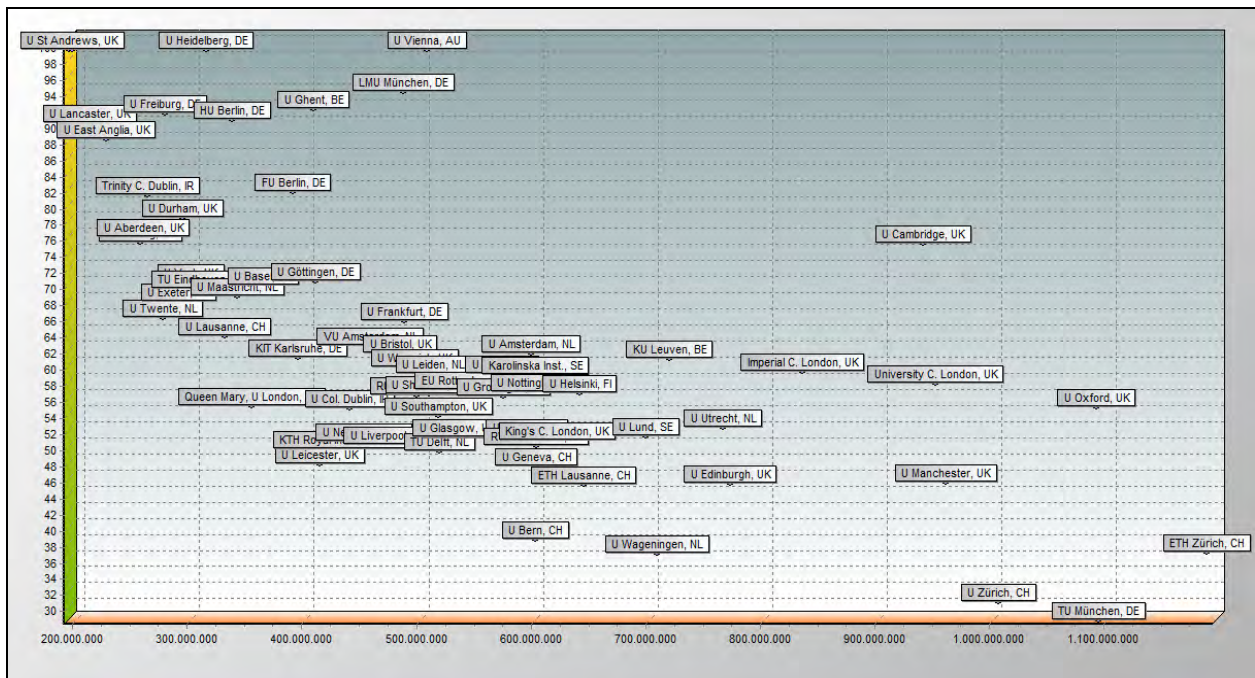


Figure 6. The correlation between budget size (X) and efficiency (Y) ($N = 67$).

On the other hand, different ranking scores also feature a very high correlation regarding the compared university dataset—the highest one for the THE World University Rankings, with the Leiden Ranking ($r = 0.80$) as depicted below (see Figure 7). This indicates that ranking results are largely comparable and stable across different measurements and indicator concepts—though not including the selection bias question, as the institutions compared here are all included in the rankings compared.

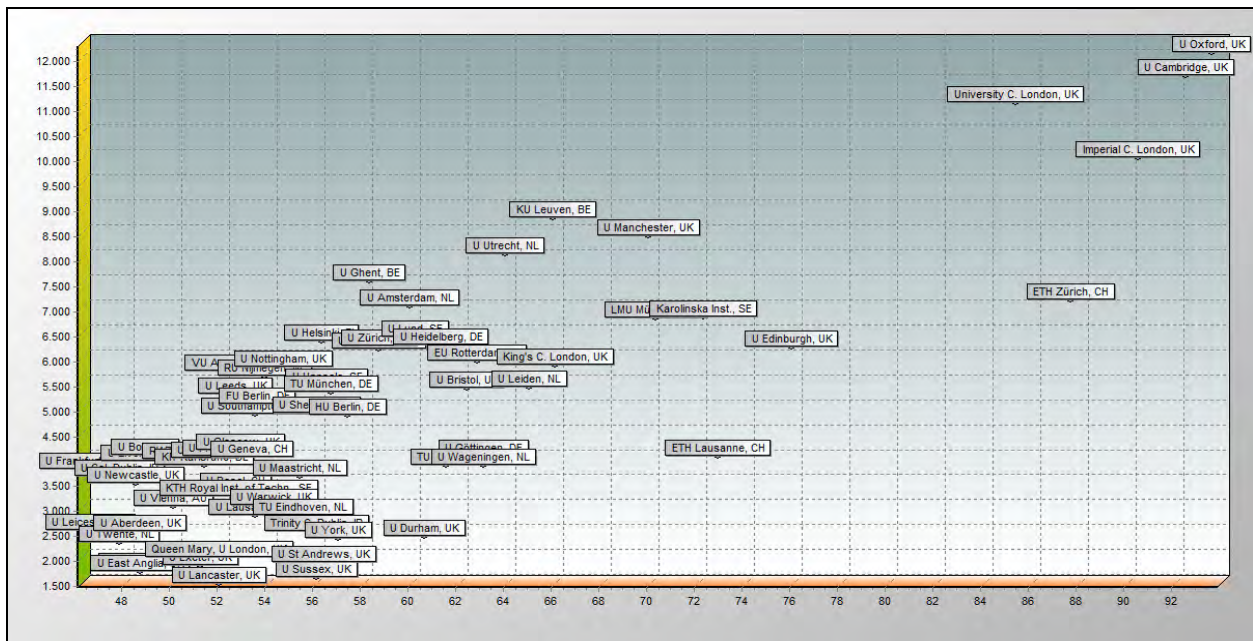


Figure 7. The correlation between Leiden scores (Y) and THE scores (X) ($N = 67$; $r = 0.80$).

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Differentiated Supervision Model: A Way of Improving School Leadership in Saudi Arabia

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The purpose of this study is to evaluate the differentiated supervision initiative that was implemented in some Saudi schools as a way for school leadership improvement. Four reports written by the supervisors of districts participating in the initiative were qualitatively analyzed looking for their main themes. All reports agreed that the model is effective and helps to improve the instruction and the school environment. There was also an agreement that the model enhances the role of the supervisor in the instructional aspect of the schools' daily life. According to these reports, another advantage of the model was that it increased the ability of the supervisor to focus on a few schools. Major weaknesses and barriers to its implementation were also identified.

Keywords: differentiated supervision model, school leadership, professional development

Introduction

Instructional supervision is “the comprehensive set of services provided and processes used to help teachers facilitate their own professional development so that the goals of the school districts or the school might be better attained” (Glatthorn, 1990, p. 84). Thus, supervision is a way of offering specialized help to teachers in improving their work (Oliva & Pawlas, 1999). It is a process that involves working with teachers in a collegial and collaborative relationship to enhance the quality of teaching and learning within schools, which promotes the professional development of teachers (Beach & Reinhartz, 2000).

Supervision in Saudi Schools

According to the *Supervisor's Guide* (Ministry of Education, 1999), educational supervision in Saudi Arabia has gone through four main stages: strict administrative inspection, “educational” inspection, direction, and supervision.

The 1957 inspection system, which is the traditional form of supervision, involved strict inspections supervised by the Ministry of Education. Inspectors were expected to visit each school three times during the school year in order to inspect the administrative and instructional aspects of the school and to enforce the regulations of the Ministry of Education. This type of inspection was characterized by the behaviors of telling, directing, and judging. Often, the purpose of the supervisory visits to schools is to identify mistakes or shortcomings. In 1964, this system was changed to technical (instructional) inspection. The word “technical” was used to denote the educational and scientific aspects of the inspections and to move the focus away from the administrative inspection. In reality, the nature of the inspection did not change. Inspectors were assigned

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new tasks that focused on the instructional aspects of the schools in addition to administrative aspects.

In 1967, inspection sections were established in the districts' educational directorates, and the inspection sections were linked to the departments of elementary, intermediate, and secondary schools. Each district inspector was expected to submit a biannual report on his/her work to the inspectors in the Ministry of Education. Later, the title "inspector" was changed to "director", and directors were encouraged to develop good working relationships with teachers.

In 1981, another significant development in supervision occurred in Saudi Arabia—the establishment of the Department of Instructional Supervision and Training within the Ministry of Education. In 1996, the title "director" was officially changed to "instructional supervisor" (Ministry of Education, 1999).

Supervisory practice in Saudi Arabia has been rooted more in traditional and personal preferences than in a body of research or knowledge. Supervisors in Saudi schools do not follow a set approach in supervision. In fact, most of them do not have clear and well-defined goals (Almakushi, 2003). Although the situations vary considerably between schools and regions, nearly all of the supervisors perform the same tasks within the general guidelines that are mandated by the Ministry of Education. Thus, supervisory practices are largely built on personal experiences and experimentations. Because supervisors are typically appointed without prior preparation, the quality of their work depends strongly on their personal abilities, qualifications, and willingness to work. In some studies, teachers and supervisors have indicated that there is a need to revise the supervision system in Saudi Arabia (Al-Tuwajri, 1985).

Research in Saudi Arabia (Al-Tuwajri, 1985; Alabduljabar, 2008) has shown that teachers desire an alternative model of supervision characterized by shared teacher-supervisor responsibility, collegial rather than superordinate supervision, cooperation and trust rather than imposition and fear, and a democratic rather than authoritarian process. Saudi teachers also support the use of different supervisory activities.

In 1997, the Ministry of Education proposed the *New Supervision Practice*, and supervisors were highly encouraged to employ it. In this new system, collegial supervisory and staff development activities were emphasized. In addition, the co-supervisor, who is an expert teacher whose teaching load is reduced so that he/she can arrange professional development activities for teachers, was proposed as an on-site supervisor.

The genesis of supervision and the practices of many supervisors are tied to classroom visits and evaluations. For both teachers and supervisors, it is difficult to separate supervision from these two practices. Supervision is often confused with the evaluation of teachers, which hinders the improvement of supervision. According to Al-Tuwajri (1985), "Saudi supervisors generally are of the opinion that teachers feel insecure during the supervisor's classroom visit" (p. 167).

The most part of all the different approaches and models of supervision has the ultimate goal of supervision: improving instruction. Improving instruction, which eventually improves students' outcomes, is the purpose of every supervisory system. Supervision in Saudi Arabia, as in other countries, encounters many difficulties in achieving its goals. According to Starratt (1997), "There is no research that shows that supervision, as it is generally practiced, results in substantial and sustained changes in teachers' teaching" (p. 6). Alhammad (2000) surveyed the obstacles facing supervisory practices in his study and concluded that the major obstacles were: (a) lack of trust between teachers and supervisors; (b) the supervisors' high load of teachers; (c) lack of training for supervisors; (d) weak relationships between teachers and supervisors; (e) lack of cooperation from principals; (f) the amount of office and paper work supervisors must complete; and (g) the emphasis on the classroom visit as the only supervisory practice.

Many models have been implemented; however, more reform efforts are needed. Problems, such as tension and lack of mutual trust between supervisors and teachers, poor staff development programs, and ritual supervisory activities, to mention a few, are common in the school environment. The supervision field must develop a supervision model that can integrate the advantages of the other models while avoiding their shortcomings.

Differentiated Supervision

Differentiated supervision is among the latest approaches to supervision. It aims to carefully consider the individual differences among teachers on the one hand, and the human relations between the supervisors and the teachers on the other hand. Thus, it provides teachers with the opportunity to choose the type of supervision they will receive (Glatthorn, 1990).

The differentiated supervision model was first proposed by Glatthorn (1984). It “is an approach to supervision that provides teachers with options about the kinds of supervisory and evaluative services they receive” (Glatthorn, 1997, p. 3). The basic premise of differentiated supervision is quite simple: Different circumstances and different teachers require different approaches of supervision (Daresh & Playko, 1995). As Glatthorn (1997) emphasized, in differentiated supervision, the term “supervisor” denotes any professional providing supervision services, including supervisors, principals, and peer experts. This broad view of supervision presents it as a process rather than a job. From this perspective, a supervisor is not the sole person who is in the position of “supervision”; rather, anyone who practices the process of supervision fulfills this role.

Differentiated supervision is a relatively new concept. It was proposed as a supervision model by Glatthorn (1984) in the first edition of his book, entitled *Differentiated Supervision*. In this book, the author proposed four options for teachers’ professional development. These were modified in the second edition of the book (Glatthorn, 1997) into only three options, which he called “components”: (a) intensive development, which is a version of clinical supervision; (b) cooperative development; and (c) self-directed development.

In the second edition of *Differentiated Supervision* (Glatthorn, 1997), the full model is presented. The author provided the foundation for differentiated supervision, including the rationale behind it. In the book, the author presented two options for his model: the developmental option and the evaluative option. Then, the book demonstrates the three components of the developmental option in detail. At the end of the book, the author provided readers with “a process approach” that each school or district can utilize to develop its own model.

In his argument for the rationale behind differentiated supervision, Glatthorn (1997) stated that teaching should be considered a profession, not a craft. Teachers should not be required to wait for the supervisor to solve their problems or improve their performance. Teachers should take the initiative and should have more control over their professional development, within generally accepted professional standards (Glatthorn, 1997). Teachers can work toward their own professional development. Glatthorn added that working in a collegial school environment, where teachers serve as sources of support and feedback for one another, motivates teachers, which is essential for school effectiveness. He also asserted that a differentiated system is one of the best ways to foster collegiality as it strongly emphasizes cooperation and mutual assistance. A key component of the differentiated approach is that it enables teachers to work together, helping each other grow professionally.

Another rationale for the model that was identified by Glatthorn (1997) is individual differences among teachers. Teachers differ in their skills, abilities, and motivations. They also vary in their preferences for

professional development strategies. Differentiated supervision takes this into consideration and attempts to provide teachers with several options for improving their teaching. Glatthorn's (1997) final rationale for the model is that supervisors cannot do everything alone. One of the main problems that supervisors face is their inability to work effectively with a large number of teachers. Visiting all of the teachers is time-consuming and prevents supervisors from concentrating their efforts on areas that need improvement. Differentiated supervision enables supervisors to focus the assistance on those teachers needing or requesting them, rather than providing ritualistic visits for all teachers (Glatthorn, 1997, p. 5). The differentiated model of supervision enhances the leadership aspects in school work. It empowers principals and teachers to create a self-renewing school.

In addition to the variety of options available in the differentiated model, flexibility is a distinctive feature that makes the model applicable and practical. Glatthorn (1997) recommended that each school or district should develop a differentiated supervision model that best suits the environment.

Differentiated supervision was originally implemented in three schools in Riyadh. The principals and the teachers were briefly oriented to the model and provided with short workshops on it. The principals received coaching from three supervisors (including the researcher). Several meetings were held with the teachers. Also, there were several meetings for the principals in which they presented their progress and discussed the problems they faced. By the end of the school year, the model was modified and rebuilt to suit Saudi schools. Major changes included deleting curriculum evaluation and action research from the second option (professional development) and suggesting some standards for each option. In the following year, the model was implemented in four districts. All supervisors were trained during the implementation. The project was supervised by a team from the Ministry of Education. This phase of implementation lasted for one school year. At the end of the first semester, representatives of the participating districts held a meeting to review their progress. At the end of the school year, each district was asked to hold a workshop for the supervisors to write an evaluative report of the implementation.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the differentiated supervision initiative in Saudi schools by analyzing the reports written by the districts participating in the initiative. Each district submitted a detailed report that showed the process of application, advantages and disadvantages of the model, and the difficulty faced during the application period. Evaluating this initiative would help in developing the model and enlightening the decision about its implementation.

Data

This study is based on the analysis of the four reports written by the districts that applied the model. These are five lengthy reports developed through supervisor and principal workshops held specifically to review and evaluate the project. Some reports include results of questionnaires administered to the teachers and the principals. Each report begins by describing the process of implementation, and then, focuses on detailed description of the advantages and disadvantages of the model as well as barriers to its implementation as seen by the principals and the supervisors.

The basic qualitative research approach was followed (Creswell, 2009). The reports were analyzed looking for general themes in three main areas: advantages (What are the positive points in the model?), disadvantages

(What are the negative points in the model?), and obstacles (What obstacles did the schools face during the period of application?). Each report was read several times and coded according to the categories that related to the above three main themes.

Results

The data analysis revealed major findings in the three areas of strengths, weaknesses, and obstacles. The detailed results are described below.

Strengths

Analysis of the reports revealed several positive aspects in the model. These aspects are closely related to the instructional process at school.

All the reports agreed that the model is effective and helps to improve instruction and the school environment through initiating and fostering professional dialogues inside the school. It “created warmth in the school”, according to one of the reports. The reports also showed the agreement that the model enhances the role of the supervisor in the instructional aspect of the schools’ daily life, rather than focusing on inspection and evaluative tasks. It reinforces a motivating educational leadership. According to all the reports, the teachers are starting to develop a new understanding of supervision and they are now looking at supervisors as advisors. As one of the reports stating it, “They are not coming just to look for mistakes”.

In the traditional supervision system, a supervisor was required to visit up to 50 schools. In this differentiated model of supervision, a supervisor is responsible only for 4-5 schools. Thus, according to these reports, another advantage of the model is that it enhances the ability of the supervisor to give greater attention to a few schools. Focusing on a limited number of schools enables the supervisors to plan for improvement and follow up their planning and helps in developing a collegial relationship inside schools. Offering different options for teachers along with not focusing on classroom visits was mentioned by the reports as a factor that led to an atmosphere of trust and acceptance between the teachers and the supervisor. The teachers feel that supervision is more responsive to their abilities and changing needs. Another strength mentioned by some principals is that the application of the model created rapport in the school, which schools typically lack. The teachers began to work collaboratively and discuss their professional growth and responsibilities. The model also led to the discovery and enhancement of teachers’ abilities. Another remark mentioned as an advantage for the model is that it transfers training into the school building. The reports also agreed that the model “breaks the ice” and facilitates the advancement of a culture of professional development in the school. The current results confirm those of Piraino (2006), including a strong principal preference for differentiated teacher supervision. Also, the principals indicated that differentiated supervision was effective in fostering a school culture that encourages teacher collaboration, professional inquiry, and a commitment to continuous improvement. The principals also stated that differentiated teacher supervision was quite effective in improving teachers’ planning and preparation, classroom instruction, and professionalism through collegiality and professional inquiry. It is evident that this model has created a sense of collaboration and trust among the teachers, which is one of the main factors for creating a learning community.

Weaknesses

The reports, however, indicated several weaknesses and disadvantages of the model. The most perplexing comment in the reports (which was also raised frequently during the regular meetings with the supervisors) was

the model's general approach to teacher supervision. Many supervisors were concerned about the fact that they had to observe teachers in other subject areas and analyze their teaching. They asserted that assuring that the teacher is presenting sound information on the subject matter is a major task for the supervisor and cannot be accomplished by teachers from different specialties. They further stated that this approach of general supervision is embarrassing and limits the supervisor from providing real assistance to teachers from other specialties. It appears as though the traditional view of specialized (subject matter) supervision is deeply rooted in the culture of instructional supervision. The reports mentioned that some supervisors are afraid that teachers will stop keeping their knowledge in their subject matter area current because they do not receive visits from a specialized supervisor. Another weakness mentioned by several principals is the lack of time, as teachers with four to five classes per day cannot engage in peer coaching sessions. Lack of time was identified as one of the main problems of supervision in Saudi schools (Albaptain, 2009). Several principals, however, stated that if the teachers are committed to the activity, they will find the time to complete it.

Obstacles

The third theme that the study revealed is the obstacles—the administrative or environmental factors that external to the model but they negatively affect its implementation. The reports mentioned several obstacles that limited the process of applying the model, which included the lack of: teachers and principals' time; proper rooms for meetings and other staff development activities; and an orientation for teachers and principals. Principals and supervisors' lack of leadership skills seems to be an obstacle for effective implementation of the model. Although these obstacles are mentioned in the reports as factors that hinder the implementation, it should be noticed that these obstacles are not limited to the model. In fact, they hinder the implementation of any model for improvement. Several studies have sited lack of proper buildings and rooms a major problem that prevents supervisors from implementing staff development activities (Alhammad, 2000; Albaptain, 2009).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The evaluative reports of the differentiated supervision initiative in Saudi schools show that the model is promising and helps in building the characteristics of a successful school, such as collaborative work, collegiality, and professional development in the school building. The model also has some weak points that could be modified through training and collaboration with other specialists. The obstacles identified are not limited to this model and could be overcome through careful planning and appropriate orientation. The model is promising, though it needs development taking all teachers and supervisors' concerns into consideration.

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Reading Deficiencies Among Primary and Secondary School Pupils: A Case of Zimbabwe

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Being able to read is a magic key to all learning, yet, reading has proved to be a great problem to learners worldwide. Suggestions and theories have been tried and governments have cheeped in, but the problem remains. At its independence in 1980, the government of Zimbabwe declared education as a basic human right. The country has managed to achieve quantitative expansion in education. It now focuses on improving the quality through reading remediation. Through teachers' questionnaires and Statistic Package for Social Science (SPSS) computations, the research exposes that there is no significant difference among the causes for reading deficiencies among the primary and secondary school pupils in Zimbabwe. Also, hindrances to reading are numerous, thus, a multifaceted approach is needed to counter them.

Keywords: reading deficiencies, reading inability, qualitative, incompetency, remediation, corrective reading, hindrances

Introduction

In the era of a globalized world, the ability to read, which is a basis of all learning, is a crucial element in the development of countries and their citizens. Learning to read, which seems so simple at hindsight has proved to be a real problem to many learners worldwide. At its political independence in 1980, the government of Zimbabwe declared education as a basic human right in line with the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 28 (Verheyde, 2005), which states that it is the right of every child to go to school. It worked and is still working flat out ensuring that education is made accessible to all the people of Zimbabwe, both young and old. Students are expected to master the national curriculum at all levels of schooling, regardless of ability (Mutepfa, Mpofu, & Chataika 2007). It has thus adopted the inclusive education system; however, the major problem is that the disadvantaged students begin school with inferior reading skills (Albert & Foil, 2003, as cited in Blinkhorn, 2009) and these reading gaps widened over the years when not remediated (Deshler, 2007, as cited in Blinkhorn, 2009), causing poor quality education products. Again, sometimes, pupils of average or even superior intelligence meet problems that delay or block their reading.

The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) in Zimbabwe has always strived to improve the education system. Currently, the country has managed to achieve quantitative expansion in education; has pushed its literacy percentage rate of 97%—second position from Tunisia in Africa—to the first position in the continent. It now focuses on the improvement of the quality of education, which lags third behind Kenya and

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Gambia (Onila, 2012). Though the quality of education in Zimbabwe seems to be very high, there is a low pass rate at secondary schools, especially at “Ordinary” (“O”) level. According to Gonda (2013), for the 172,698 pupils who sat for “O” level examinations in 2012, only 31,767 (18.4%) passed with at least five subjects, which are the “O” level pass-cut-line. The bottom three subjects were Shona, English, and maths; hence, there is a need to do something for the improvement of these three subjects.

In spite of this challenge, the MESC continues to commit itself and facilitate the provision of high quality and relevant education. In a bid to improve matters, many policies were put in place. The Education Act (1987) and several amendments to the Education Act (2006) were used to formulate several education policy objectives (Education Act, as amended as at 1st October, 2004). The Nziramasanga Commission of Inquiry Into Education and Training (1999) in Zimbabwe presented its findings, some of which have been implemented; yet, a lot of work is still desired as far as the quality of education is concerned. To this effect, remediation in English and maths was introduced in secondary schools in 2013; all along, it was a feature of primary schools.

When considering remediation, reading is the starting point of the whole matter, because for the nonreaders and the challenged readers, the advantage of the tutors and other educational support cannot be recognized (Haynes, 2005, as cited in Blinkhorn, 2009). Consequences of the inability to read can therefore be fatal; they are associated with humiliation, impediment to further studies, limited wisdom, and missing the joys of learning from printed pages.

On the other hand, the ability to read is essential since all learning depends on it. The importance of reading cannot be over emphasized. It has been summarized by A. M. Villamin and C. R. Villamin (1990) in the following manner:

Reading enables man to ponder the mysteries of the world, explore accumulated knowledge, and contemplate the unknown. From this search, he begins to uncover some answers to some questions; he is stimulated to raise more questions, and to continue in his pursuit of deeper understanding. It can be one of man’s ingredients for blending his inner psychological world with the outer social world, and emerging into a new world of thought, imagination, and reality. (p. 1)

Balfakeh (2009) carried out a research in Yemen on pupils’ reading abilities and found out that the students have serious deficiencies in reading skills. This reading problem is a worldwide problem which affects even the developed countries. Seligman (2001) reported that around 6,000,000 of the 48,000,000 students enrolled in school in USA have reading problems. As a result, initiatives and interventions as well as theories and methods have come, tried, and gone over the years.

The reading problem has become fiercer and fiercer and blame has been put on everyone who is associated with reading, including teachers, learners themselves, parents, and even the governments of the nations. The Ministry of Education in several countries (Zimbabwe included) have spearheaded researches in the area and have used a lot of money in implementing the research findings. Due to the urgency of the matter—the ability to read being a determiner of students’ success or failure (Adeniji, 2010)—some governments made huge investments on commercially reading schemes that never guaranteed success. The result was very little or no positive change at all on the reading problem. Those involved in teaching reading are often put under pressure by expectant parents. As a result, teachers seek to put things right, as a matter urgency, especially in Zimbabwe.

It should be understood that the process of reading is surrounded by the complexity of a pupil’s inner and outer worlds; learning to read being a process that closely involves the complexity of the human mind. It

involves the active use of the brain cell. This means that the reading process is associated with comprehension; the readers should be able to integrate what they read, make sense out of it, and then translate their perceptions into meaning.

What encourage researchers and educators to pursue in the reading problem is that it was well-established by research that anybody has the innate ability to read. A. M. Villamin and C. R. Villamin (1990) argued that appropriate teaching strategies and adequate materials in the hands of a dedicated and skillful teacher will enable a disabled child or even a moron to acquire basic reading skills.

The following quotation, from Dogberry in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* (Act 3, Scene 3) emphasizes the same point: "To be a well-favored man is the gift of fortune; but to write and read comes by nature" (Shakespeare, 2005 ed.).

The implication of this quotation is that, when taught well, holding all other factors constant, every learner can be able to read; the reading process is just like any other natural processes, such as language development (even though reading is propelled by instruction). In fact, reading and language development go hand in hand. However, when the connection is lost, reading deficiencies merge.

What can then be taken as a starting point in teaching to read, and most importantly, in corrective reading (reading remediation) are the hindrances to reading. When they are known, precautions can be taken against them. Feldman (2009) summed it up in this way: "We can close that literacy gap by direct focus, instruction, and practice—at a student's instructional level using age-appropriate materials—and work on appropriate accommodations simultaneously" (p. 3).

Statement of the Problem

Being able to read is a magic key to all learning, yet, reading has proved to be a great problem to many learners worldwide, including Zimbabwe. This has grossly and negatively affected the education quality of countries. Suggestions and theories (in a bid to improve the situation) have been tried and governments have cheeped in, but the problem remains. The researcher is of the conviction that it is only when the children's abilities to learn are understood and when the problems that hinder them from learning are explored, that the panacea to the reading problem can be found.

Methodology

Research Questions

This research has the following questions to answer:

1. What are the main hindrances to pupils' reading ability at: (a) primary school level? and (b) secondary school level?
2. What is the relationship between the hindrances to reading for primary school pupils and those affecting secondary school pupils?
3. Which suitable recommendations can be given to the Zimbabwean MESCC for the alleviation of the reading problems among secondary school pupils?

Sample and Sampling Techniques

A sample of all English Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) Solusi University Block students who were present during the April session, 2013, were the participants of the study. The sample summary is shown in Table 1. The participants were from 7/10 provinces of Zimbabwe.

Table 1

Composition of the Sample

		<i>F</i>	Percent (%)	Valid percent (%)	Cumulative percent (%)
Valid	Secondary	22	41.5	41.5	41.5
	Primary	31	58.5	58.5	100.0
	Total	53	100.0	100.0	-

Procedure for data collection. The researcher embarked on a content analysis study in order to find out and make a compilation of causes of reading problems from other researches that have been done worldwide. This information was used to draft a questionnaire for the participants. The questionnaires were distributed by the researcher to the participants during the April block release session of 2013.

Procedure for data processing. Data obtained from the questionnaires were computed using the Statistic Package for Social Science (SPSS) package in order to find out the main causes of reading deficiencies among both primary and secondary schools. A *t*-test was computed to find out the relationship among causes of reading deficiencies among primary and secondary schools.

Findings

The research revealed that the following causes hinder reading among pupils at both primary and secondary schools:

1. School administrative causes: This finding tallies with that of Adesiyani (2007) (as cited in Adeniji 2010), which exposed that the government plays a significant role in promoting reading culture and the government being the provider of education;

2. Teacher causes: This is consistent with the finding of Adeniji (2010), Omolewa (2001), and Havighurst (1981) (as cited in Adeniji 2010), which depicted teachers as managers of knowledge, mediators of learning, disciplinarians, socialites, supervisors, models or ego ideal, examiners, leaders, second parents, organizers, coaches, and motivators of learning;

3. Pupil causes: That is, some pupils are not prepared to get the reading instruction;

4. Neurological and physiological causes: From Eckert's (2001) study, it is realized that neurological and physiological disorders hinder pupils from reading;

5. Parental causes: It was found that parents' attitudes affect their children's learning;

6. Community causes: That is, conducive environment is bedrock to learning how to read;

7. Peer causes: Some peers are not supportive to the struggling readers.

Table 2 shows that the causes of reading deficiencies among primary and secondary school pupils are the same, as indicated by the means and standard deviations (*SD*). Both the mean difference and standard deviation difference per cause between the primary and the secondary school are less than 0.5, making the differences insignificant, which indicates that all the causes above have a strong impact on reading deficiencies.

It can also be seen in Table 2 that most of the means exceed 3.5, except for one cause (the neurological and physiological causes) that is rather weak, with less than 3.5 for both primary and secondary schools. However, this cause is considered worthwhile because the mean is more than 2.5.

Also, the study, through a *t*-test computation, exposed that there is no significant difference among the causes. According to Table 3, the mean difference is less than 0.5 and the *F*-value is less than 2 and both indicators show that there is no significant difference among causes for reading deficiencies among the primary

and secondary school pupils in Zimbabwe.

Table 2

Causes of Reading Deficiencies Among Primary and Secondary Schools (Group Statistics)

	School level	N	Mean	SD	Standard error of mean
School administrative causes	Primary school	31	3.7661	0.68217	0.12252
	Secondary school	22	3.8750	0.83897	0.17887
Teacher causes	Primary school	31	3.7173	0.65563	0.11776
	Secondary school	22	3.7166	0.95880	0.20442
Pupil causes	Primary school	31	3.5438	0.68429	0.12290
	Secondary school	22	3.7013	0.58514	0.12475
Neurological and physiological causes	Primary school	31	3.0546	0.90390	0.16235
	Secondary school	22	2.9161	0.79229	0.16892
Parental causes	Primary school	31	3.7527	0.62110	0.11155
	Secondary school	22	3.7576	0.57749	0.12312
Community causes	Primary school	31	3.6452	0.88349	0.15868
	Secondary school	22	3.7000	0.76780	0.16370
Peer causes	Primary school	31	3.8011	0.77030	0.13835
	Secondary school	22	3.8864	0.83632	0.17830

Table 3

T-test on the Causes of Reading Deficiencies

Cause averages	Levene's test for equality of variances		T-test for equality of means at 95% confidence interval of the difference				
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Standard error of difference
School administrative causes average	0.453	0.504	-0.520	51	0.605	-0.10887	0.20928
			-0.502	39.277	0.618	-0.10887	0.21681
Teacher causes average	1.658	0.204	0.003	51	0.998	0.00069	0.22151
			0.003	34.854	0.998	0.00069	0.23591
Pupil causes average	1.324	0.255	-0.876	51	0.385	-0.15752	0.17989
			-0.899	49.142	0.373	-0.15752	0.17512
Neurological and physiological causes average	0.961	0.332	0.578	51	0.566	0.13851	0.23966
			0.591	48.654	0.557	0.13851	0.23428
Parental causes average	0.452	0.332	-0.029	51	0.977	-0.00489	0.16824
			-0.029	47.312	0.977	-0.00489	0.16614
Community causes average	0.307	0.582	-0.235	51	0.815	-0.05484	0.23355
			-0.241	48.828	0.811	-0.05484	0.22798
Peer causes average	0.006	0.938	-0.383	51	0.703	-0.08529	0.22250
			-0.378	42.990	0.707	-0.08529	0.22568

From the findings, one can conclude that, with the appropriate reading materials, a conducive environment, and teachers with adequate educational qualifications, as well as good reading skills, pupils can greatly improve their reading abilities.

Conclusions

The research revealed that there is a plethora of conditions that cause reading deficiencies among school pupils, such as the learner himself/herself, the atmosphere at home, the learner's peers and community, conditions at school, and the classroom situation. If these are not supportive to the learner, it will cause reading deficiencies. To this effect, all the interested parties should play their roles in order to aid the pupils in their reading. It was also revealed that, what affect primary school children also affect the secondary school children.

Recommendations

Since the research revealed that the main hindrances to pupils' reading ability for both primary and secondary school pupils are the same, some solutions can be obtained from the primary school remediation approach—primary schools having a long history of reading remediation:

1. Parents should provide a conducive reading environment for their children. They should encourage their children to read at home. Books and other reading materials should be provided for them to improve their reading. They should also encourage their children to watch educational television mainly for phonetic improvement and vocabulary development. These children should cultivate the habit of using their leisure to read for pleasure;

2. The Zimbabwean government should provide appropriate materials for teaching reading skills. Libraries should be provided for all secondary schools even in the rural areas, since the absence of libraries is a factor for the deficiency in reading skills. The Zimbabwean government should also make available other referral specialists, like the general diagnosticians and neurologists. For this remedial exercise to be successful, the government should give incentive to remedial teachers;

3. There is a need for programmes to equip teachers with systematic diagnosis skills so that they will be able to diagnose readers until the actual cause of an individual's reading problems is established. Again, teachers must acknowledge the importance of reading skills and must plan an effective programme of reading instruction with a focus on promoting reading culture among pupils in their schools. Finally, teachers need to be encouraged to work in collaboration with parents and the community at large on educational goals and pupils' welfare, motivate pupils into reading remediation, and make reading referrals whenever necessary;

4. The MESCS should embark on training and employment of reading diagnosticians who will work hand in hand with the responsible teachers and should encourage school heads to support reading remediation programs by sourcing reading remediation materials and media, scheduling remedial time, as well as reducing the remedial classes.

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Appendix: Questionnaire for Teachers

I am Stella Muchemwa, a lecturer at Solusi University in the English and Communication Department, who is carrying out an academic research on the following topic: Reading Deficiencies Among Primary and Secondary School Pupils: A Case of Zimbabwe. May you kindly respond to the questions honestly. Your responses will be treated confidentially and will be used for the purpose of this study only.

Complete the Following Personal Information by Ticking the Appropriate Portion

Province..... (Write your province)

Level of your school: Primary School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Secondary School	<input type="checkbox"/>
Type of school: Day-School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Boarding-School	<input type="checkbox"/>

Complete the Likert Scale Bellow

On the following scale of 1-5, please rate the degree to which you agree with the following statements on the causes of poor reading abilities. Circle your response.

5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neutral; 2 = Disagree; and 1 = Strongly disagree

School Administrative Causes

(1) Provision of poor reading rooms	5	4	3	2	1
(2) Interference with reading times	5	4	3	2	1
(3) Failure to provide material essential for reading programmers (like reading texts and multimedia reading facilities)	5	4	3	2	1

(4) Failure to give teachers opportunities to purchase reading tools	5	4	3	2	1
(5) Absence of awards for hard working teachers	5	4	3	2	1
(6) Lack of moral support	5	4	3	2	1
(7) Unfavorable conditions for teacher creativeness	5	4	3	2	1
(8) No provision for remedial reading time	5	4	3	2	1

Teacher Causes

(1) Lack of training in reading programmers	5	4	3	2	1
(2) Lack of commitment to reading programmers	5	4	3	2	1
(3) Poor choice of reading materials	5	4	3	2	1
(4) Incompetency in teaching reading to pupils	5	4	3	2	1
(5) Poor reading teaching methods	5	4	3	2	1
(6) Inability to use sophisticated reading media	5	4	3	2	1
(7) Inability to adjust to pupils' reading needs	5	4	3	2	1
(8) Negative attitude towards pupils struggling with reading (blaming and labeling them)	5	4	3	2	1
(9) Inability to diagnose pupils' reading problems systematically	5	4	3	2	1
(10) Lack of persistence in reading diagnostics	5	4	3	2	1
(11) Failure to address individual reading needs	5	4	3	2	1
(12) Lack of teacher preparation	5	4	3	2	1
(13) Unclear reading instructions to pupils	5	4	3	2	1
(14) Unprepared to sacrifice spare time on reading remediation	5	4	3	2	1
(15) Lack of respect to pupils	5	4	3	2	1
(16) Inability to work with related parties, for example, parents	5	4	3	2	1
(17) Lack of referral know-how to reading specialists, for example, reading diagnosticians	5	4	3	2	1

Pupils Causes

(1) Lack of self-motivation	5	4	3	2	1
(2) Low self-esteem	5	4	3	2	1
(3) Lack of cooperation with reading instructors	5	4	3	2	1
(4) Emotional instability	5	4	3	2	1
(5) Unwillingness to learn	5	4	3	2	1
(6) Lack of commitment to reading	5	4	3	2	1
(7) Use of drugs	5	4	3	2	1
(8) Limited personal hygiene (for example, ear wax can develop impaired hearing)	5	4	3	2	1
(9) Lack of reading interest	5	4	3	2	1
(10) Absence of educational goals	5	4	3	2	1
(11) Low innate abilities (low intelligence)	5	4	3	2	1
(12) Lack of persistence when doing reading assignments	5	4	3	2	1
(13) Negative attitude towards reading	5	4	3	2	1
(14) Lack of proper reading guidance	5	4	3	2	1

Neurological and Physiological Causes

(1) Genetics (poor reading abilities due to heredity)	5	4	3	2	1
(2) Dyslexia (brain problems due to brain injury, dysfunction, trauma, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1
(3) Poor memory span	5	4	3	2	1
(4) Other diseases	5	4	3	2	1
(5) Auditory impairments	5	4	3	2	1
(a) Difficulties in hearing	5	4	3	2	1
(b) Lack of proper sound discrimination	5	4	3	2	1
(6) Visual problems (like fault eye coordination)	5	4	3	2	1
(7) Speech problems	5	4	3	2	1
(a) Stammering	5	4	3	2	1
(b) Change of accent	5	4	3	2	1
(c) Pre-acquired faulty pronunciation	5	4	3	2	1
(8) Motor problems (like lateral dominance)	5	4	3	2	1
(9) Left handedness	5	4	3	2	1
(10) Congenital problems (disorders due to injury at birth)	5	4	3	2	1

Parental Causes

(1) Lack of encouragement	5	4	3	2	1
(2) Lack of motivation	5	4	3	2	1
(3) Broken families	5	4	3	2	1
(4) Inadequate home reading materials	5	4	3	2	1
(5) Unhealthy diet	5	4	3	2	1
(6) Failure to provide pupils with uniforms	5	4	3	2	1
(7) Failure to provide reading facilities needed at school	5	4	3	2	1
(8) Indecent bedding	5	4	3	2	1
(9) No provision of aid for pupils' home reading	5	4	3	2	1

Community Causes

(1) Discrimination of all forms, according to (social status, gender, tribe, religion, age, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1
(2) Lack of educational goals	5	4	3	2	1
(3) No value for education in general	5	4	3	2	1
(4) No value for youngsters' related issues (health, education, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1
(5) Absence of reading related specialists (like neurologists, diagnosticians, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1

Peer Causes

(1) Bad company	5	4	3	2	1
(2) Unfriendly peers	5	4	3	2	1
(3) Discriminating peers	5	4	3	2	1
(4) Unsupportive peers	5	4	3	2	1
(5) Discouraging peers	5	4	3	2	1
(6) Unconcerned with educational activities	5	4	3	2	1

Validity and Reliability of the Academic Resilience Scale in Egyptian Context

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Academic resilience is regarded as one of the indicators of adjustment with the university life pressure and setbacks. It is the strongest predictor of enjoyment of study, class participation, and general self-esteem. There has been relatively less research focusing on academic resilience. In Egypt, there is no scale for the measurement of academic resilience. Therefore, this article attempts to ensure that the Academic Resilience Scale (ARS) is suitable for assessing academic resilience of Egyptian university students. It also investigates gender differences in academic resilience and its relation to academic achievement of the 100 participants (57 male and 43 female students). Results of exploratory factor analysis showed that the scale is valid and reliable. A statistically significant difference was found among males and females in academic resilience, in favor of males. The correlation between academic resilience score and age was also analysed, but no significant result was found. A statistically significant relationship was found between academic resilience and achievement.

Keywords: Academic Resilience Scale (ARS), validity, reliability

Introduction

Students face academic and social challenges everyday in classrooms, universities, homes, and communities, those challenges and pressure may weaken their achievements and lead to drop out of education. But, despite obstacles and difficult circumstances, there are students who can adjust with difficulties and attain high level of academic achievements and success, because they believe that successful learning is a product of effort and perseverance, not only ability. Those students are called academic resilient students.

Resilience emanated from interest in the characteristics distinguishing individuals who succeed under difficult conditions from those who do not. Historically, poor children have been disproportionately at risk of academic failure (Kanevsky, Corke, & Frangkiser, 2008, pp. 453-454). Although poverty works through several mechanisms to impede development and psychological adjustment of poor children and adolescents, a sizable percentage of economically disadvantaged children and adolescents overcome this adversity, exhibit competence in the face of economic hardship in their lives, and go on to lead highly successful, well-adjusted, and productive lives (Gizir, 2004, p. 38).

Academic Resilience

Academic resilience is defined as students' ability to deal effectively with setbacks, challenges, and

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pressure in the school setting over time (Fallon, 2010, p. 40). It is also defined as the heightened likelihood of success in school and other life accomplishments despite environmental adversities brought by early traits, conditions, and experiences. Academic resilient students are those who sustain high levels of achievement motivation and performance despite the presence of stressful events and conditions that place them at risk of doing poorly in school, and ultimately, dropping out of school (Alva, 1991, p. 19). Although there are many students who perform poorly and continue to perform poorly, there is a significant number of others who manage to turn around their academic misfortunes (Martin & Marsh, 2006, p. 267).

Academic resilience research is the study of high educational achievement despite the presence of risk factors that normally portend low academic performance. Academic resilience can be understood as the process and results that are part of the life story of an individual who has been academically successful despite obstacles that prevent the majority of others with the same background from succeeding (Morales, 2008b, pp. 197-198).

Kapikiran (2012, p. 474) examined the validity and reliability of the Academic Resilience Scale (ARS) in a Turkish high school. The participants were 378 students (192 females and 186 males). The compliance criteria of the scale regarding both exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses reached an adequate level. Results demonstrated the uni-dimensionality of the scale. Internal consistence and test re-test analyses were also conducted. Consequently, the scale was found to be a suitable instrument to assess the academic resilience of the Turkish students.

The Present Study

There has been relatively less research focusing on academic resilience. To date, the few studies that do deal with academic resilience are focused on ethnic minority groups and extreme underachievers. However, academic resilience is relevant to all students, because at some point, all students may experience some level of poor performance, challenge, or pressure (Martin & Marsh, 2006, p. 267). So, educators have long emphasized that personal resilience is needed to succeed in life and that great achievements that change the world require extraordinary resilience (Nota, Soresi, & Zimmerman, 2004, p. 201). The motivation to learn and to achieve one's potential is not sufficient to deal with academic setbacks or excessive study pressure and stress. Without some level of resilience to these types of challenges, the motivated students' gains may be lost (Martin, 2002, p. 35).

The core of the research problem of the present study lies in the question that why some motivated students have weak levels when they face academic pressure or study problems while others can turn around their misfortunes and achieve success. The point of this paper revolves around the need for a valid and reliable instrument that can be used in assessing the academic resilience of university students, and then, empowering those students who could not sustain difficulties through enhancing the components of their academic resilience, thus, improving their academic achievements.

There has been a focus on motivating students, but not so much on enhancing their academic resilience. In a perfect world, students would not only be energized and driven to achieve to their potential, but also equipped to deal effectively with academic setbacks and study pressure in the school setting. Surprisingly, academic resilience has not received a great deal of attention in the research literature (Martin, 2002, pp. 34-36). Given the potential importance and relevance of academic buoyancy, more research is required to clarify the nature of this construct and factors that might predict it (Martin, Colmer, Davey, & Marsh, 2010, pp. 475-488).

The Importance of the Present Study

1. The present research may be considered an addition to the few studies that deal with academic resilience, thus, it will provide a valuable literature which will be useful for other researchers;
2. The importance of the research lies in the importance of academic resilience itself as it is regarded as the determinant of the university students' achievements and careers;
3. The present research assesses the psychometric properties of the ARS, which may be the first instrument of academic resilience in the Egyptian context.

Literature Review

Educational researchers have studied resilience in their quest to identify the factors that place some students at risk of academic failure and to promote those factors that prevent this failure. The resiliency skills that have been identified in the literature should be nurtured among students (Bakersfield, 1996, pp. 182-188).

The resilient students excelled academically because they believe that they could understand the material and information presented in class and that they could do well in homework and tests (Gordon, 1996, as cited in Fallon, 2010, p. 41). Investigating academic resilience has its primary mission—the desire to learn about, and thus spread resilience to underachieving groups (Morales, 2008a, p. 229). In the same context, Borman and Overman (2004, p. 178) asserted the need for the detailed research in the field of academic resilience so as to identify the achievement gaps and discover why individuals succeed despite adversities. Previous research indicated that resilient children are more likely to succeed in academic areas than non-resilient children (Somchit & Sriyaporn, 2004, p. 302).

Borman and Overman (2004, p. 188) investigated the concept of academic resilience in mathematics of a sample consisting of 3,981 males and females (2nd-7th grades) at first. Results of the study proved that the most important individual characteristics associated with academic resilience are self-efficacy, self-esteem, student engagement, and attitude towards school. The effective school variables that lead to academic resilience are class size, instructional resources, and teachers' experience.

Martin and Marsh (2006, pp. 267-277) adopted within-network and between-network validity approaches to develop a uni-dimensional ARS by way of sound item and factor properties. Based on a sample of 402 Australian high school students, path analysis showed that academic resilience predicts three educational and psychological outcomes: enjoyment of school, class participation, and general self-esteem. The study concluded that it is significant to implement specific interventions and practices aiming at enhancing students' academic resilience. Intervention designed to target students' academic resilience should revolve around students' self-efficacy, control, persistence, planning, and anxiety. There are specific strategies that practitioners can use to enhance students' academic resilience.

Morales (2008b, p. 197) investigated the gender differences in academic resilience of 31 female and 19 male low socio-economic college students of color. Results clarified that females were more strongly motivated by their post-college professional goals than males. While Martin (2008) investigated the effects of educational intervention on high school students' motivation and engagement. The intervention incorporated some components of academic resilience, such as planning, persistence, and uncertain control. Findings showed that the treatment group made positive motivation shifts on key dimensions and these results attested to the potential for multi-dimensional educational intervention for enhancing students' motivation and

engagement.

Sinay (2009) attempted to identify the factors associated with academic resilience for a sample consisting of 5,788 students from 6th grade. Results stated that the personal factors were class participation, use of information, and problem-solving; family factors were parental education, parental presence at home, and parental expectations. Durham (2009) aimed at identifying the key factors that contributed to the academic resilience of the African-American students at the University of Kansas. Findings of the study clarified that the major factors were connection to the campus community, being involved in student organizations and activities, and the spirituality or religious beliefs.

Martin et al. (2010) conducted a study seeking to more clearly ascertain the effects of motivation (and its mediating role) on academic buoyancy over and above prior academic buoyancy. The study comprised about 1,866 high school students from six schools. Results showed that the 5-Cs (confidence, coordination, commitment, composure, and control) were significant predictors of subsequent academic buoyancy.

Fallon (2010) examined the relationship between academic resilience and academic achievement for students with multiple risk factors, specifically, Latino students from low social economic status background attending an urban high school. The subjects were 150 students. Significant relationships were found between academic resilience and academic achievement of the students. Whereas, Jowkar, Kohoulat, and Zakeri (2011, pp. 87-88) examined the relationship between academic resilience and family communication patterns. The sample consisted of 606 high school students (309 females and 297 males). Results showed that the two family communication patterns—conversation orientation and conformity orientation, positively predict academic resilience of the students.

Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1997, p. 2) asserted that resilience can be fostered through interventions that enhance children's learning, develop their talents and competencies, and protect or buffer them against environmental adversities. Academically resilient students possess greater academic confidence, stronger self-concepts, higher self-esteem, greater self-efficacy, long-term goals, greater involvement in extracurricular activities, and higher level of engagement. Durham (2009, p. 14) stated that there are several factors that could place people at risk and call for them to be resilient in order to succeed. If the traits or factors that create resilience can be identified, these traits may be developed or those factors altered in those individuals that are not so resilient, therefore, research on resilience holds great promise because there exists the possibility of fostering resilience through preventive interventions and programming (Gardynik, 2008, pp. 1-2).

Comment on Literature

Most studies that investigated academic resilience dealt with samples from school students, but only few studies dealt with university students, which examined the individual and school factors and features associated with academic resilience, this is why the researcher is encouraged to do this research, besides, we are in bad need of developing ARS for university students. The few studies that do deal with academic resilience are focusing on ethnic minority groups and extreme underachievers. There is relatively no Egyptian or even Arabic research, study, dissertation, article, or book dealt with the issue of preparing ARS despite the significant number of students who face academic pressure and study setbacks either in schools or in universities and are in an urgent need of developing their academic resilience.

Method

Objectives

This paper has three objectives: 1. It seeks to verify the validity and reliability of the ARS prepared by Martin and Marsh (2006) and to ensure that it is suitable for use in Egyptian context; 2. It attempts to detect the differences among college males and females in academic resilience; and 3. It examines the relationship between achievement and academic resilience.

Instrument

The research instrument is the ARS prepared by Martin and Marsh (2006). It has a 7-point Likert Scale ranging from "Not true of me at all" to "Extremely true of me". The original scale has acceptable fit values for confirmatory factor analysis (comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.97; non-normed fit index (NNFI) = 0.97), the reliability of the scale assessed through Cronbach's alpha (0.89) in addition to the total item correlations ranged from 0.59-0.78.

Participants

The participants were selected from College of Education at Minia University. Factor analysis was conducted using 190 cases, but the main sample of the research consisted of 100 students (57 males and 43 females, aged between 20-22). This sample was selected from the fourth year students at College of Education, because they are so experienced and mature that they could give an authentic vision of their academic bests, besides their ability to describe how they manage to overcome their study pressure and setbacks.

Discussion

Table 1 shows that the score of mean is equal to median and mode and approaches mode besides the value of skewness is near zero. Taken together, those data demonstrate that the sample distribution is semi-normal.

Table 1

Item Statistics of ARS (N = 190)

Item	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
1	5.68	6.00	6.00	1.12	-0.798	0.878
2	3.96	4.00	4.00	1.49	-0.152	-0.147
3	5.54	6.00	6.00	1.11	-0.568	0.495
4	4.92	5.00	5.00	1.23	-0.263	0.142
5	4.24	4.00	4.00	1.71	-0.100	0.351
6	4.68	5.00	4.00	1.58	-0.286	-0.433

Validity

Internal contingency. Internal contingency was conducted as an indicator to validity (see Table 2). The scale was responded by the fourth year college students ($N = 100$). The correlation coefficients were calculated between each item and the total score of the scale. Correlation coefficients ranged from 0.56-0.76 and all correlations were significant at level of 0.01.

Exploratory factor analysis. An exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation of the scale identified one factor: academic resilience (six items, Cronbach $\alpha = 0.71$). The percentage of variance explained by that factor was nearly 42.91 (see Table 3). The factor loadings of the scale are recorded in Table 4. The exploratory factor analysis was performed by the present researcher, while the confirmatory factor loadings were quoted

from the original scale validity performed by Martin and Marsh (2006, p. 272).

Table 2

Internal Contingency of the ARS (N = 190)

Item	Correlation & significance
1. I believe that I am mentally tough when it comes to exams.	0.559**
2. I do not let study stress get on top of me.	0.483**
3. I am good at bouncing back from a poor mark in my school work.	0.660**
4. I think I am good at dealing with schoolwork pressure.	0.698**
5. I do not let a bad mark affect my confidence.	0.695**
6. I am good at dealing with setbacks at school (e.g., bad mark, negative feedback on my work, etc.).	0.756**

Note. ** Significance level = 0.01.

Table 3

Eigenvalues and Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings

Component	Total	Variance (%)	Cumulative (%)
1	2.57	42.907	42.907

Table 4

Exploratory Factor Analysis and Confirmatory Factor Analysis of ARS

Item	Alpha if item deleted	Exploratory factor analysis loadings	Confirmatory factor congeneric loadings
1	0.71	0.589	(0.62)
2	0.74	0.350	(0.72)
3	0.70	0.726	(0.71)
4	0.68	0.748	(0.81)
5	0.67	0.642	(0.86)
6	0.68	0.779	(0.84)

Note. The values in parentheses belong to the original scale.

Results of the exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis indicate that all one-factor loadings are high and taken together, these data demonstrate that the academic resilience scale is valid.

Reliability

Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of the scale. Alpha coefficient value was 0.74. This value was acceptable and an indicator to the stability of the scale scores due to the small number of items in the scale.

Analysis of Gender and Age Differences

To examine the effects of gender groups, an independent sample *t*-test was performed on the total score of the ARS. The results indicated that males' total score was higher than the score of females (see Table 5). The correlation between academic resilience score and age was also analysed, but no significant result was found. This finding is consistent with that of Somchit and Sriayporn (2004, p. 302), which indicated that age showed no influence on resilience.

Table 5 shows that a statistically significant difference was found between the means of scores obtained by males and females on ARS, in favour of males at 0.01 level.

Table 6 shows that a significant relationship was found between academic achievement and academic resilience, and this finding is consistent with the previous research results, such as Fallon's (2010), which

indicated that a significant correlation relationship was found between academic achievement and academic resilience. Resilient persons are more likely to succeed in academic areas than non-resilient ones (Somchit & Sriayporn, 2004, p. 302). Borman and Overman (2004) stated that academically resilient students were greatly engaged in academic activities.

Table 5

T-test Results of the Gender Differences (N = 100)

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	T	Df	Significant level	Significance
Academic resilience	Males	57	30.59	4.8	3.7	98	0.000	Significant
	Females	43	26.69	5.6				

Table 6

Correlation Between Academic Resilience and Achievement

Pearson correlation	Academic achievement
Academic resilience	0.570 **

Note. ** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level.

Conclusions

The present paper aimed to determine the validity and reliability level of the ARS developed by Martin and Marsh (2006). This scale consisted mainly of six items. The results of the factorial analysis indicated that the scale consisted of only one factor with acceptable validity. Internal contingency proved the high internal correlations among the items of the scale. The reliability of the scale was assessed through Cronbach's alpha (0.74), which showed that the scale is characterized by acceptable reliability and stability of scores. Thus, the present study provided support for the reliability and validity of a relatively new measure of academic resilience.

Results of the independent samples *t*-test revealed that a statistically significant difference was found between the means of scores obtained by males and females on ARS, in favour of males. This result is inconsistent with the results reached by Martin and Marsh (2006, p. 273), which indicated that boys and girls are not substantially different in terms of academic resilience. Gender groups' result in the present paper is contradictory with the result reached by Kapikiran (2012, p. 480), which stated that academic resilience was not correlated with the gender of students. On the other hand, Morales (2008b, p. 203) demonstrated that statistically significant differences were found among males and females in academic resilience, in favour of females. While Somchit and Sriayporn (2004, p. 302) stated that females had higher resilience than males, thus, the results of the correlations between gender and academic resilience are not decisive and are still a matter of controversy among researchers.

The differences among males and females in academic resilience favouring males can be due to the hard nature and tough feelings of the youth that help them overcome the pressure and problems of study in the university setting. Their being as men bearing responsibility may oblige them to struggle and face challenges until they achieve goals. It is deeply rooted in the society that males are more patient than females in enduring difficulties of study and life owing to the romantic and even weak nature of females. Another possible interpretation can be represented in the high level of academic resilience that characterizes males may come from their belief in the fact that academic resilience has a considerable effect on achievement and consequently

influence the kinds of their future careers. Accordingly, they become academically resilient believing that academic resilience is the passing bridge that will lead them to world of work. The finding that males had higher academic resilience than females leads to the recommendation that academic resilience should be promoted in both genders, especially in females.

The significant relationship between academic achievement and academic resilience can be explained by the fact that the constructs of academic resilience encourage students to excel and push them towards achieving their academic goals. Moreover, academic resilience enables students to persist in front of study pressure and setbacks and helps them to plan and budget their time properly and lower their anxiety level. Accordingly, it raises the level of achievement. Academically resilient students are motivated by their resilience to struggle and convert their low grades into high ones, so there is an interrelation between those two variables. This finding paves the way to recommend that academic resilience should be enhanced among students for the sake of increasing the achievement of our students.

These results should not be taken for granted because this research was confined to some limitations, the most important limitation is that the respondents were selected from College of Education at Minia University. To generalize those results, the research should be repeated with larger number of students in different educational settings. Despite the limitation, this scale is proved to be a valid and reliable instrument for measuring academic resilience of university students.

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Literate Practices, Archiving, and the Concept of Authorship*

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The concept of authorship is related to the Social and Human Sciences since the 1960s, specifically in French academic studies concerned with the concept of subject and the structure of language. In this paper, we aim at demonstrating a theoretical rapport across researches about literacy and its link with authorship in oral discourse, based on the French Discourse Analysis, as well as in Lacanian Psychoanalysis. The concepts of literacy practices, archiving (discursive memory), and authorship will also be used. We will sustain that the subjects of literacy and writing are not coincident. For now, we can ensure that the subject of literacy, affected by the unconscious ideology, is articulated to various types of knowledge that, through signifiers, support the collective nature of literacy practices, although there are individual aspects intrinsic to their effects. This is an important point to consider when the scientist comes up with the problem of considering orality as a manifestation that includes the possibility of authorship.

Keywords: literacy, memory, archiving, authorship, discourse

Introduction

Initially for this paper, we must say that literacy practices are embedded in the middle of a contradiction between the uses of written and oral practices and interpretations. In view of literacy hereunder, this contradiction ensures the possibility to investigate the singularity of the interference of the various holders of texts available in our society in oral narratives produced by illiterate adults.

Before we further develop the relationship among literacy practices, archiving, and authorship, it is also important to remember that, according to Pêcheux (1993), there is not such a thing as a practice of the subject, but different subject-positions, supported by different regions of meanings negotiated in discourse.

It is further assumed that the operation of writing practices gained specific forms on behalf of imaginary formations through deconstructed sociological categories, such as education level, length of schooling, reading practice, in the sense of habit. The dominant imaginary formations, for example, predispose us to allocate authorship only in written production. This is because, in these productions, ideological mechanisms are articulated that designate the superiority of the written form in relation to the oral use of language, as investigated

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in Pereira (2011), and are anchored in the conception of the author as a writer, as discussed by Chartier (1998; 2001). However, we have the possibility of its de-naturalization through the articulation of concepts on literacy practices, archiving, and authorship, as it is shown below.

In this direction, this paper follows still mobilizing the notions of discursive memory and file that we will introduce the notion of authorship. However, even before we reach the definition of authorship here mobilized (Tfouni, 2005), it is necessary to deepen the concepts of archive, memory, and authorship, as it comes up in other authors, so that we understand the heterogeneous mean of articulation of literacy practices.

Discursive Memory and Archive in French Discourse Analysis

In a crucial text in French Discourse Analysis (Haroche, 1992), it is mentioned the transition from religious to legal determination as a shift from a file provided by religious sources to a file available to “all” by the rule of law.

Along the same lines, Pêcheux (1997a; 1997b), therefore, stated that file consists of an organization of imaginary regularities of discursive themes that tends to stabilize the semantic meanings socio-historically produced.

Thus, to consider that non-literate people make poor use of language would already be a form of interpreting a file’s place in which this theme¹ called “illiteracy” is affiliated to the dominant meanings of science. Contrary to this imaginary formation of deficit, adopting the perspective of Tfouni (1992; 2010), we accept the possibility of a condition as an interpreter for the subject who, contrary to the dominant place of the sociological category of non-literate, stands for authorship.

This is because the analyst’s interpretive work is exerted along the dispersion of material evidence, taking into consideration the senses that are no longer articulated, but whose traces are still present in the form of repetitions, hesitations, and pauses. In the case of this research, it is from this point of view that it becomes possible to write a dialogue with the subject consolidated through the file of orality, even if he/she does not read or write.

This is also justified, because orally the oral transmission becomes possible to be accessed by tracks of the process of organization of the file that are, many times, extirpated from written forms, as these suffer the imperative of circulation in their attempt to circumscribe the subject only as a legal subject.

Remember, however, according to Guilhaumou, Maldidier, and Robin (1994), “The file is not a simple document upon which references lie; it offers a reading that discovers devices, as signifying configurations” (p. 92).

Still on the notion of file, Coracini (2007) stated that “File is, therefore, what justifies without knowing its immediate reason, what can be said in a given system of discourses” (p. 16).

Thus, the question arises: What is (not) available within the tradition (in the sense of permanence) of oral knowledge? What does it reach? Which discursive mechanism turns audible the things that were resting in memory’s oblivion? How can the analysis contribute to permitting other ways of organizing literacy practices?

The re-updating dimension that stands as one of the key points of the file permeates and is permeated by the

¹ Believing that the file is organized by themes is already an imaginary effect; personally, therefore, it is an inevitable belief whereby the imaginary function of the subject organizes the language practices.

role of imagination, through repetition, which constitutes the individual myth.

As Maingueneau (1991) stated, what is at stake is the organization of a community's universe where the file is not merely a memory trace, but the way of noticing the form in which the enunciation appears as archival information. This is because, more important than the density of the statements, is their way of articulation, where repetition and the possibilities of application cause the emergence of a certain point of the file and not another.

This dilemma between accessing a file and controlling the use that will be made from it shows the non-neutral and politically articulated the role of the file, which interferes in the also political game of enunciations.

We know, according to Guilhaumou et al. (1994), the file is not a neutral device. That is, it is not, as would be conducive to a Cartesian tradition on the notion of the subject, a unifying center of texts and meanings, but it takes to consider the own gesture's device of the analyst in interfering with the syntactic and enunciative mechanisms of production of meanings.

In the course of the analysis, the theoretical device is taken up and reshaped according to questions differently brought up by each entry into the corpus. The analytical device, in turn, is the result of cuts (derived from the analyst's own issues), arising from acts of interpretation committed to a position of strangeness towards the naturalization of meanings. It is from these gestures added to the new issues, which were not available in theory before, that new analytical devices arise (Gallo, 2008).

The Concept of Authorship

This leads to review Tfouni (2010) who distinguished the subject of writing from the subject of literacy. For the author, the subject of writing is dominated by an omnipotence, whose explanations mainly interwove ideological bases, through which the illusion of completeness and transparency of the text produced are reinforced (discourse of writing and effect of closure, cf. Gallo, 2008). The subject of literacy, which is not necessarily literate, is located within a heterogeneity of various discursive practices, materialized in many text holders.

The author's research is part of this contradictory relationship between subject of writing and literacy, from literacy practices, or even orally, crossed by the discourse of writing. With these notions, the author points out the possibility that the subject has to emerge from oral or written text production. This is disputed by the meanings and returns to the already said, which indicates the relationship between the saying and its externality.

This indicates that there are several positions that the subject can occupy as an author. However, they are not unlimited, on account of their submission to the determinations of the unconscious, language, and history. Moreover, as we intend to propose (even without having analyzed the various strategies possible yet). It is to be considered the role of the individual myth that alienates the subject to some places of the symbolic structure (and its indirect support of enigmatic points of myths, in the sense of their impossibility to access the "real").

Considering also that point of the debate, in concern of the possibilities of interpretation, we see that narratives have a narrow field to show positions of authorship, because they pass almost unnoticed in the midst of a coincidence between the notions of writer and author.

Chartier (1998) pointed out that this coincidence was required for the consolidation of an order of discourse articulated by the relationship between the order of the books and the role of interpreters and copyists. This fueled

the belief in the notion of authorship related to the notion of the individual writer.

For Chartier (1998), the assumption of the individual is added to the function of the author as “unity and coherence of the discourse” (p. 48). This argument he took from Foucault (2006) to discuss the strengthening of places of individual authorship, especially when he shows that there are several resources coupled to the books taken as objects of consumption, such as the illustration in the book’s frontispiece and the picture of the “author”. At this point of discussion, Chartier (1998) conversed again with Foucault (2006), especially when the latter recognized the authorship of some manuscripts from the Middle Ages.

Dosse (2001) commented that, in this founding text of Foucault’s work, we see the disappearance of the copyist. More important than this, Dosse (2001) noted that, since Foucault, the authorship is indicative of movements of knowledge, which forces us to examine the intertextuality of the statements, which go beyond the writers’ names.

Dosse (2001) also commented that it was Foucault who drew attention to the remarkable role of scientific discourse, which created the figure of the author. Foucault (2006) pointed out that the author is a function performed by an absent place to be filled up and added that, it is linked to a sort of transgression. After pointing out that, in ancient times, narratives made up for death, he stated that the subject’s disappearance claimed to allocate the function of authorship as one among several ways of dealing with absence.

Among these, the appointment of the author ended up ensuring a discursive relation, characterizing a way of being that is neither located in the empiric figure nor in the fiction of the work, but in the disruption that this way of being made to prevail as a singularity, attending to the sense of unity and origin of meanings.

According to Foucault (1970), “The author, not understood, of course, as an individual speaker who spoke or wrote a text, but the author as a grouping of discourses, as a unit and origin of their meanings, as a centralizing focus of its coherence”² (p. 28). In short, for him, the function of authorship points to what is “outside” the text, it is to the absence that designates a place for the subject in the universe of discourse. And this relationship with the exterior means the mode of existence as a way of functioning of discourses in a society, or in other words, through various relationships with the absence. It means that the author is a function that emerges from absence and unity. Nevertheless, Foucault (1970) indicated that there was a blurring of individual characters of their marks, which occurred not only because of the singularity conducted by the absence, but also by the representation of the role of the dead and its place in discourse. This occurred either in detriment of the interpretive grid to cope with death imposed by the Christian exegesis, or the confluence of the author’s image as an individual unit to writing as a neutral object.

In the course of this debate, Furlanetto (2001) commented on Chartier’s (1998) statements, affirming that the disappearance of the author is encouraged by the advent of the printed text, which presents readers not authors. Thus, according to Furlanetto (2001), there is a concern in Chartier (1998) to reinforce the presence of the author, a “perspective of willingness”, which does not prevent him to continue “dependent” on the meaning that is not directly accessible to him, but “repressed”, it is hostage to the social spaces of literary organization (Furlanetto, 2001).

According to Foucault (2006), the concept of copyright, in turn, requires the signature as a legal

² In the original: “L’auteur, non pas entendu, bien sûr, comme l’individu parlant qui a prononcé ou écrit un texte, mais l’auteur comme principe de groupement du discours, comme unité et origine de leurs significations, comme foyer de leur cohérence”.

responsibility (Furlanetto, 2001). Using a metaphor for Furlanetto (2001), the discourse is a liable act to be punished, such as police controls violence, from where emerges the author, who also controls meanings via the outside.

Moreover, Pfeiffer (1995) commented on the above mentioned Foucault's (2006) classic text, pointing that, for him, the authorship is built on the dispersion of the subject, although it has strengthened the concept of unity and equivalence between author and writer.

Orlandi and Guimarães (1988), in turn, developed with this concept by Foucault a dialogue that shows the speech can be characterized by the dispersion of the text and the subject. Both authors commented that, for Foucault, the most important construction is the unity before the virtual one. It follows from this that the principle of authorship is the one among those which sustain the order of discourse, and it is in this sense that the principle of authorship is not true for all discourses.

Taking as a starting point, there is something else we corroborate, which is the fact that authorship is not a function, but a discursive position, as Orlandi and Guimarães (1988) highlighted when they said that "the unity of the text itself is a discursive effect that derives from the principle of authorship" (p. 60).

Pfeiffer (1995) also commented on Orlandi and Guimarães (1988) in a way that is appropriate to present here. For Pfeiffer (1995), these researchers consider dispersion as an effect³. For them, the socio-historical apparatus mobilized in this discussion already implies the effect of authorship, though the subject cannot position itself through it. Often, otherwise, it deals with this contradiction between the dispersion (its near disappearance) and the illusion of unity, by the consolidation of the link between author and writer.

Tfouni (2005; 2010) contributed to this discussion, considering the dilemma of the subject in an attempt to control the drift, what happens at the expense of a return to the previously mentioned (organized as a file). Differently, however, from these authors, to Tfouni (2005), the unit does not come before, as a principle of authorship, but emerges later through an imaginary effect of the feedback to what has already been produced. This retroaction occurs by movements of "recognition" of the words of the other, founded in interdiscourse, which is the act of authorship. Tfouni (2005) did not take into consideration, thus, an effect of a prefixed unit.

As Tfouni (2005) said:

Deter oneself, to stem the drift that is always about to install, under the insistence of the real (that is linguistically explained by Saussure's concept of value of the sign), are gestures that allow the subject-author to return to the already said; in a movement that will relocate the signifying chain in parts of interdiscourse and social memory (file), updating and reconfiguring it. (p. 133)

It should be noted that the notion of social memory included in this definition is closest to the investigation of the present work as well as Pêcheux's work (1999), which stated that "Interlocking meanings of mythic memory, memory inscribed in social practices, and memory built by the historian" (p. 50). This tangle of "various forms of memory" allows us to mark the event. From this, we know that the eruption of the meanings does not follow a single linear, unpredictable direction, since the meaning is "already there" mythically installed in "things to know" and only in an apparent beginning, since it does not have an origin.

As already stated, the definition of authorship that will be used in the analysis will be the one proposed by

³ Part of this process of individualization has been previously shown through Chartier's analysis (1998) on the discursive order of books and the strengthening of the author's figure as the individual scribe.

Tfouni (2005). The reason is that it is already considered in this work the role of the mythic dimension of memory, through the acceptance of drift by the subject, in face of this incidence of the real (in the sense of enigmatic points circulated in the correlation between structure and myths).

As we see with the definition of authorship in Tfouni (2005), the implication of what escapes (real) is not only in the subject's submission to the ideological operating mechanism as a structure, but in its contradiction with the event, from which it can emerge, by a drift of the meanings, the possibility of authorship. That is, provided there is a retroaction of interdiscursive places making use of symbolic equivocalty to join ruptures in another chaining level of signifiers.

With this in mind, Furlanetto (2001) also explained that, for the Theory of Discourse Analysis, there is a speaker's function and an enunciator, but not an author, in the sense of a tacit position of the subject. This is because the author assumes the work of the subject in the symbolic interpretation, which takes into account the cyclical conditions of each text produced, which means; the position of authorship may or may not be installed, depending on how the subject deals with the real.

From this possibility, the mythical origin of the saying derives; there is only authorship in equivocalty, in the case of space for refusal and contradiction among the discursive formations, and yet in the spaces of contradictory discourses of writing and orality.

This is how we consider the level of this relationship of alterity between orality and writing in the authorship position. Considering this alterity, Gallo (1995) discussed the concept of authorship questioning the interdiction of the author-subject and its independence towards school and spelling. That author previously discussed the role of institutionalization through schooling, of writing as an object of knowledge, within a mechanism that overrides the text to the process of textualization.

This disguise imposed by the text prevents the interpretive work of textualization, which restricts the possibility of installing the authorship. It is the process of textualization that, according to Gallo (1995), allows a text to be approached as an effect of completeness, and so, to consider authorship specifically within the limits of writing turns out to be a narrow view of the phenomenon.

Tapering the question of authorship position, for a brief but necessary discussion, we then must redirect to Pfeiffer's (1995) works. Pfeiffer (1995) emphasized the mechanisms of power towards the individualization of the subject, as a strategy through which the subject presents a contradiction between "be anyone" and "be somebody". Pfeiffer (1995) also added that such individualization aims to evidence the subject, this being one of the most demanded elements of authorship. In addition, this researcher has put "the fundamental characteristic of authorship as the negation of multiplicity" (p. 42).

For Pfeiffer (1995), the author assumed a position of historical repeatability (which presupposes the absence and silence of political language). This position is markedly different from that advocated by the school mnemonic repetition, because it supports the socio-historical thread that opens spaces for interpretation for the subject to re-construct meanings already affiliated to networks of discursive formations. This consolidates, to Pfeiffer (1995), the position of authorship, in this "passage from the formal repetition to the historical" (p. 128).

In addition, the positions of authorship can be included in a wider dimension than in the writing set. Recalling the definition of Tfouni (2005), we can say that the return of discursive memory reallocated to the signifying chain occurs on the insistence of writing by the real.

Conclusions

Therefore, the question arises: How to consider the authorship of oral texts, such as the narratives, to be analyzed, if the connection between authorship, writing, and individuality is so strong?

We want to add to this debate that the effect of ideological unity in authorship is also co-opted by the means of alienation to the individual myth. Among them, hesitations, vacillations, doubts, the substitution of signifiers, the attempt to separate the sayings of the other, and the discursive formula for what is not presented as an objective truth (Lacan, 1978) are all included. They constitute large forms that signal several imaginary formations, in which the recognition of the other's signifiers is formalized in imaginary formations, as well as discursive formations, go through the filter of linguistic marks.

Hence, this theoretical discussion considers that the effect of unity in authorship is committed to the interdiscursive places that restrict movement while broaden the knowledge of many, as exposed in the previous section. In the case analyzed here, it is the authorship as a place of the subject to position itself as an articulator of the individual myth in the re-signifying process that he over-exceeds himself in the amplitude of the socio-historical dimension, negotiated in the development of the narrative activity (Pereira, 2013).

Therefore, since the subjects of literacy and writing are not coincident, it is worth asking how do these refuges of the subject of literacy practices in the other's universe bring articulated knowledge to sustain the individual form of myth that is linked to authorship? How do the residual forms of myths (to use the words of Lévi-Strauss, 2004) guarantee a place of authorship within this knowledge? What relation does it have with the transmission of diverse knowledge?

For now, we can ensure that the subject of literacy, affected by the unconscious and ideology, is articulated to various types of knowledge that, through signifiers, supports the collective nature of literacy practices, although there are individual aspects intrinsic to their effects. This is an important point to consider when the scientist comes up with the problem of considering orality as a manifestation that includes the possibility of authorship.

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An Analysis of the Euphemisms in a Press Conference in the Light of Politeness Principle^{*}

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Euphemism, as a common linguistic phenomenon, has attracted attention of linguists and scholars for a long time. Many of them have studied euphemism from different perspectives with fruitful contributions and achievements. Euphemisms can be classified into different types according to different angles and standards. Diplomatic euphemism is one of them and is mainly classified according to register. Based on the others' research achievements, the paper, first of all, gives a brief introduction of Politeness Principle (PP). Then, it analyzes some of the euphemisms in a press conference in the light of PP. Finally, it concludes that in press conferences, sometimes, politeness is focused more on self because euphemisms are to minimize impolite expressions and maximize polite expressions of what the speaker says.

Keywords: diplomatic euphemism, Politeness Principle (PP), press conference

Introduction

Euphemism comes from Greek meaning "fair speech". It is the habit of avoiding an unpleasant or taboo reference by substituting some indirect words or expressions for the blunt and direct ones (Chen, 1990, p. 133). Euphemism, as a common linguistic phenomenon, has attracted people's attention for a long time. It exists in almost every known language, every speech community, or every social class, for almost all cultures seem to have certain notions or things that people try to avoid mentioning directly (Shu, 2008, p. 56). It is deeply rooted in social life and it strongly reflects social values and cultural values. A language without euphemisms would seem to be vulgar and rude, void of politeness and vividness to some extent.

Communication is important for human beings, especially to those diplomats or statesmen, because they deal with the relationships among countries or regions, so the words that they use are more sensitive than ours. So, the study of diplomatic euphemisms seems to be of great significance and it can help people, especially diplomats, avoid misunderstandings or mistranslations in communication and improve their intercultural communication competence and ability.

As to the study of euphemisms from the perspective of Politeness Principle (PP), former studies show that the use of euphemisms largely depends on the context and has a great effect on daily communication. So, it is quite important and necessary to do a pragmatic analysis of the euphemisms used in a specific field. Hence, the author chose one transcript of a press conference with diplomatic euphemisms used in the question-answer dialogue patterns. Based on the above mentioned, this paper is going to analyze euphemisms used in a press

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conference in the light of PP to see what is the relationship between diplomatic euphemisms and PP.

A Brief Introduction of PP

As we all know, “polite” means behaving or speaking in a way that is correct for the social situation you are in, and showing that you are careful to consider other people’s needs and feelings. In this theory, “politeness” means showing awareness of another person’s public self-image or the awareness of other’s expectations that their public self-image will be respected.

Leech (1983) associated illocutionary acts closely with politeness phenomena in languages. Drawing on both Grice’s (2002) conversational maxims and Searle’s (2003) indirect directives, Leech, in his *Principles of Pragmatics*, proposed the PP with its maxims. In Leech’s proposal, he gave six maxims and each maxim consists of two sub-maxims. He suggested that politeness concerns the relationship between two participants whom we may call self and other. In a conversation, “self” will normally be identified with a speaker, and “other” will typically be identified with a hearer. In making a conversation, a speaker shows politeness both to the hearer and to the third person who may or may not be present in the speech situation. In this sense, “other” applies not only to addressees but also to a third person(s). The PP may be formulated in a general way from two aspects: to minimize (other things being equal) the expressions of impolite beliefs and to maximize (other things being equal) the expressions of polite beliefs. The six maxims of Leech’s PP are Tact Maxim, Generosity Maxim, Approbation Maxim, Modesty Maxim, Agreement Maxim, and Sympathy Maxim (Leech, 1983, p. 123), and each maxim is accompanied by a sub-maxim, which is of less importance, because all of those sub-maxims “minimize the expression of beliefs which express or imply cost to other” (Leech, 1983, p. 124) and recommend the expressions of polite rather than impolite beliefs.

In press conferences, when the diplomats intend to make remarks, they have to consider whether what they will say is likely to maintain, enhance, or damage the interests of their countries or their own faces, as well as the consideration of the faces of others. If the diplomats breach the maxims of PP and use coarse, explicit, and offensive words, the hearers may feel insulted or injured. Diplomatic euphemisms are considerate of face-saving and using mild, agreeable, and roundabout expressions in place of the coarse, explicit, and offensive ones.

Generally speaking, speakers can show their politeness by using diplomatic euphemisms. Therefore, in communications, like press conferences, the diplomats usually use diplomatic euphemisms by the PP in order to be polite and keep face, or for some other reasons. In short, the diplomats and statesmen are supposed to understand how and when to use polite expressions in accordance with their status and to achieve the communication goal.

Examples of the Diplomatic Euphemisms in a Press Conference

The materials of this paper came from a joint press conference with South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung at the Blue House, Seoul, Republic of Korea, on February 20th, 2002 (All the following examples were retrieved from <http://www.China.com.cn>).

Example One

President Kim Dae-jung: President Bush and I exchanged views about the war against terrorism and future course of action. I praised President Bush for the success in the war against terrorism under his outstanding leadership and indicated that Korea as an ally would do its utmost to cooperate and provide full support.

President Bush and I agreed to work with mutually consistent objectives and strategies in close consultation in pursuing the North Korean policy. I greatly appreciate President Bush's staunch support for our sunshine policy, as well as the U.S.'s unconditional proposal to dialogue with North Korea.

According to the PP, the speakers should show their considerations and politeness to others by adhering to the maxims of the PP. In the above statements, we can see that South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung maximized his praise for President Bush, for the efforts he has made to fight against terrorism with the word "success" and "outstanding". In the meantime, President Kim Dae-Jung also made a very charming complement on President Bush's support the North Korean policy with wordings, like "staunch support", he observed the maxims of the PP and conveyed his views that they share common interests that they are against terrorism and intend to have a dialogue concerning the North Korean policy. The diplomatic euphemism "provide full support" adheres to Generosity Maxim and Sympathy Maxim of the PP. Actually, "provide full support" refers to "provide all forms of assistance, even military aids if possible". In this way, South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung showed his sincerity and generosity in the joint efforts to fight against terrorism that threatens the security of peoples of the two countries. "Namely, minimize benefit to self; maximize cost to self" (Leech, 1983, p. 121). Meanwhile, this diplomatic euphemism observes the Sympathy Maxim by arousing sympathetic chord between the addresser and the addressee and shows great resolution never to surrender to the terrorists. Thus, they share the same feeling that they are on the same boat in fighting against terrorism. Besides, the wording "mutually consistent objective" ensures that they make an agreement on the North Korean policy. The application of those diplomatic wordings helps to harmonize the international negotiation and make some diplomatic breakthroughs.

Example Two

President Bush: And, of course, we talked about North Korea. And I made it very clear to the President that I support his sunshine policy. And I am disappointed that the other side, the North Koreans, will not accept the spirit of the sunshine policy.

...

In order to make sure there is sunshine, there needs to be two people, two sides involved. And I praised the President's efforts. And I wonder out loud why the North Korean President will not accept the gesture of goodwill that the South Korean President has so rightfully offered. And I told him that we, too, would be happy to have a dialogue with the North Koreans. I have made that offer. And yet there has been no response.

The above comments were made by President Bush. As we all know that the relation between South Korea and North Korea is a quite acute issue to tackle with. By using the expressions like "sunshine", "two people", "two sides", and "gesture of goodwill" in his speech, President Bush held his views in a quite implicit manner. He hinted that dialogue and peaceful means are the appropriate ways to realize the win-win relationship and the prosperity for both South Korea and North Korea in the long run. Meanwhile, he conveyed his concern and worried about the reluctance of the North Korea to "accept the gesture of goodwill". By expressing his position in such an agreeable and implicit way, he obviously observed the Agreement Maxim and Approbation Maxim of the PP, that is to maximize agreement between self and other and to minimize disagreement between self and other. Because South Korea always intends to seek the peaceful means to realize their policy and the US holds the same position. Nevertheless, these diplomatic euphemisms maximize praise of other by mentioning the friendly image built up by the South Korean President. So, in the above context, President Bush skillfully applied the diplomatic euphemisms in the press conference and successfully maintained and enhanced the

relations of the two counters.

Apparently, the diplomatic euphemisms are the mild, agreeable, and indirect expressions used in place of the coarse, plain, and explicit ones in press conferences in order to show politeness to others by following the maxims of the PP, such as Tact Maxim, Approbation Maxim, Agreement Maxim, and Sympathy Maxim.

In sum, diplomatic euphemisms are fully in line with the PP, especially Tact Maxim, Approbation Maxim, Agreement Maxim, and Sympathy Maxim.

Conclusions

This article gives us a very brief analysis of parts of a press conference from the perspective of PP. Anyhow, from the above brief analysis, it can be seen clearly that the use of diplomatic euphemisms in press conferences basically observes the PP. Generally speaking, this reflects a more general law that politeness is sometimes focused more strongly on “other” than on “self”. On the other hand, in press conferences, we may also notice that, sometimes, politeness is focused more on self because euphemisms are to minimize impolite expressions and to maximize polite expressions of what the speaker says.

Although the author wants to have a sound analysis of diplomatic euphemisms from the perspective of PP, there are still some defects in this paper. The author’s analysis is only based on the transcript of one press conference, so the analysis can not reveal all the features and aspects of diplomatic euphemisms. It is necessary to collect more materials in the further study when we research diplomatic euphemisms, since diplomatic euphemisms leave spacious room for the further study and more efforts are expected to make in the field of the pragmatic study of diplomatic euphemisms.

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