English as a Foreign Language in Saudi Arabia: Learners' Evaluation of Their Language Experience

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Abstract—This study focused on the understudied emotional side of learning. Specifically, it aimed at understanding the quality of the English learning journey of seven Saudi Arabian college students. For this purpose, a survey was conducted first to collect personal data, sociolinguistic data, curricular and other experiences in the path of learning English. Then, this was followed by three qualitative instruments to collect data presented in narratives, journals, and interviews. Qualitative data were analyzed inductively and deductively by thematic analysis. It was found that participants evaluated their English language learning journey in college using more positive emotional states than negative ones. These states, both positive and negative, affected participants' reactions towards their English experience, with pleasant encounters boosting their motivation and unpleasant encounters decreasing their motivation. Moreover, results indicated that participants were dissatisfied with their English language skills, even though they seemed to focus more on their successes than on their failures. The resulting insights can assist teachers in understanding the importance of a positive and supporting English language learning environment and its impact on increasing learners' performance and motivation.

Index Terms—Saudi Arabian EFL learners, English learning experience, affectivity, positive and negative emotions

I. INTRODUCTION

English, being the world's the lingua franca, has attracted the attention of many educators and researchers, particularly in the learning and teaching of English as a second language (L2). Many of these studies have primarily focused on cognition (Imai, 2010; Pavlenko, 2005) while minimal research has been conducted on affective aspects of L2 learning and teaching (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012; Oxford, 1990; Schutz & Pekrun, 2007). Dörnyei (2009, p. 219) has stated that, "everybody knows that the study of a second language can be an emotionally rather taxing experience yet affect has been an almost completely neglected topic in applied linguistics." This has persisted, despite evidence that emotion-minded tutorship increases students' motivation and positive attitudes towards the tutored topic (Begin, 1971).

However, affect, cognition, and language should not be studied separately. Emotions are not an insignificant appendix of cognitive processes and language, but rather something that helps us grasp and shape (or construct) the very essence of the human cognitive universe (Vigotsky & Kasanin, 1934).

From the perspective of component models of emotions, cognition and affect are inseparable (Scherer, 2005; Smith & Lazarus, 1993). The component models of emotions have long included subjective cognitive appraisals of events and responses (Scherer, 1993) and their behavioral expression. According to Garret and Young (2009, p. 210), "It is through experiencing the world and conducting an affective appraisal of these experiences that individuals develop their unique preferences and aversions". In other words, cognition and language are closely interrelated, which recommends against reductionist dualisms and oversimplifications (Mesquita, 2013; Scherer, 2005). This standpoint was embraced in this study.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. English Language in Saudi Arabia

The only foreign language taught in Saudi Arabia (SA) is English (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015; Elyas & Picard, 2019). The Ministry of Education introduced English in a limited number of schools in the 1920s and into the general education system officially in the 1950s. At first, English was taught only in intermediate and secondary schools, as the government was concerned that it may lead to students having difficulty learning their L1. Nevertheless, with the increasing global importance of English, the government extended English education to the primary school curriculum in, 2010. This suggests the importance of teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in SA.

B. Research on the Context of Saudi Arabia

Past studies involving Saudi students generally focused on learning anxiety (e.g., Alrabai, 2014; Rafada & Madini, 2017) and less frequently on language learning enjoyment (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018). Little attention has been given to wider spectrums of affectivity, including motivation (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Scherer, 2005), interactions of emotions with the learning process, learners' motivation, and learners' "self-concept of ability and academic achievement" (Pekrun et al., 2011, p. 226). The present study aims to address this research gap and explore some of these generally neglected aspects.

This study inspected the longitudinal trajectory of Saudi EFL learners, quantitatively and qualitatively, paying close attention to a wide spectrum of emotions, particularly valenced experiences, while learning English. It is important to refrain from an "objectivistic" viewpoint in the context of identifying emotions. Like most elements of the human psychological and sociological universe, emotions are an element in the wider power-knowledge interplay (Foucault, 1961; McAvoy, 2015, p. 8) and are ultimately subject to change as power-knowledge relationships change.

The dynamics of learning EFL in different contexts (classroom and elsewhere) are taken into account in this study. Additionally, the terms "emotion" and "affect" are used interchangeably in their non-academic meaning of lay or folk psychology.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A. Sample

This study included seven young male Saudi Arabian college students in the first year at the same Saudi Arabian community college. Their average age was 19.71 (SD=1.18). They all had been born in towns other than the one where their college was located. Their majors were accounting (N=2), computer programming (N=4), and computer networking (N=1). They reported having started their EFL studies at a mean age of 11.57 (SD=0.54). Thereafter, they all had two English classes per week in primary school and four classes per week in intermediate and high school. Their last high school grades were, on average, 87.14 (SD=7.45). They were enrolled in their first three English-medium college courses.

This sample appeared homogeneous in terms of main demographic traits and institutional English learning journey. A summary of the demographic characteristics with some degree of variability is presented in Table 1, below.

TABLE 1
PARTICIPANTS' DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Number	Age	Degree Program	EFL Learning Onset Age	Last High School Grade
#1	20	Accounting	11	85
#2	19	Accounting	12	81
#3	18	Computer Programming	11	94
#4	20	Computer Networking	12	80
#5	18	Computer Programming	11	100
#6	21	Computer Programming	12	82
#7	22	Computer Programming	12	88

B. Design

This study aimed to examine Saudi students' evaluation of their English language learning experience in Saudi Arabia. The research design was exploratory in nature and provided a detailed description of the kinds of experiences Saudi students came across during their English language journey.

C. Sampling Procedures

Convenience purposeful sampling (Neuman, 2004) was used to select participants based on their knowledge, relationships, EFL level, and accessibility to the researcher. The inclusion criteria were: Saudi Arabia nationality and residence, attendance of the first year of the selected Saudi Arabian community college and being male. Therefore, any generalization of findings to individuals with different attributes should be done with care.

After the study was approved by the ethics committee, I personally contacted male students in three English language classes in different majors at one Saudi Arabian community college. The objectives and methodology of the study were explained in Arabic to each class, and the students were informed that their answers would be anonymous and confidential. Students were then asked to participate in the study. Ten participants agreed to participate; however only seven students completed every step, due to scheduling constraints. All participants gave their written informed consent to participate in the study.

D. Data Collection Procedures

Four purpose-built instruments were utilized: surveys, narratives, journals, and interviews. The face validity of each of the items and questions within these instruments was assessed by a peer and resulted in effective changes. The second, face-validated version of every instrument was piloted with three students during a three-week period. This

helped to refine data collection procedures. Data collection lasted eight weeks. The instruments were presented in Arabic, and their answers were transcribed and translated into English before data analysis.

The instruments were presented to participants in the sequence specified at the beginning of this section. Surveys included mainly closed-ended questions and were completed face-to-face, at the college, using paper-and-pencil versions. Following the surveys, the students were asked to write a narrative about their lifelong EFL experiences and submit it via email. In addition, the participants were asked to respond via email to forwarded journal questions every weekday (Sunday-Thursday) for four consecutive weeks.

Upon completion of the journaling phase, participants took part in interviews. Accordingly, four face-to-face semi-structured interviews were carried out. Every participant was asked the same questions in the same way; however, when appropriate, prompts were used to clarify or explore the answers further.

E. Instruments and Data Analysis Procedures

The survey was the only instrument subjected to quantitative analysis. It included 26 questions in five sections: personal data, sociolinguistic data, curricular English, other experiences with the English language, and evaluation of previous English learning experiences. Microsoft Excel 2010 and IBM SPSS Statistics v.25 were then used to analyze survey data.

Personal data questions included name, age, place of birth, nationality, current university, degree program, year of study, number of English courses taken, phone number, and email address. Sociological questions inquired about family language, friends' languages, and language with which they were most comfortable. The curricular English section had five open-ended questions: age at English learning onset, frequency of classes in primary school, frequency of classes in intermediate school, frequency of classes in high school, and last high school grade. The 'Other experiences with the English language' section asked three questions, on frequency of watching TV programs in English, frequency of correspondence in English, and frequency of reading long English texts.

In addition, participants evaluated their English learning experiences in primary school, intermediate school, high school, and college. Answers were provided based on a 4-point Likert scale, from "very negative" to "very positive", with no neutral position. Before completing the survey, participants rated their overall satisfaction with their English proficiency.

The quantitative analysis included averages, standard-deviations, minimums, and maximums. Closed-ended questions were used as indicators of nominal/ordinal variables and were transferred into mutually exclusive dummy variables. For questions about language preferences, new options were created, compliant with the mutual exclusivity requirement.

As for qualitative data collected from narratives, journals, and interviews, they were uploaded as an NVivo11 Pro file. Narratives focused on English language experience in the following circumstances: before school, primary school, intermediate school, high school, college, and outside school, such as reading, working, watching movies. The final item asked participants to evaluate their overall experience with the English language.

Journals focused on how participants felt about their day-to-day English language experience, how they evaluated such experiences, and how these experiences affected them. As for interviews, they inquired about participants' overall English language experience in school and college. Participants were also asked about their future English language goals and the strategies they use to improve themselves.

F. Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Data

Participants provided 650 answers to the queries posed by qualitative instruments, totaling 6653 words. Thus, on average, their replies were brief texts with 34.29 (SD=26.82) words. The length, in words, of these texts is represented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
NUMBER OF WORDS AND ANSWERS PER QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

Instrument	Journals	Narratives	Interviews	Totals
Total words	2168	2617	1868	6653
Total answers	560	48	42	650

Responses to narratives, journals, and interviews were analyzed using NVivo-aided thematic analysis (TA) (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Boyatzis, 1998). The TA process was mainly inductive or "data-driven" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 96). However, when participants' comments were deemed insufficient to make sense of the data, the process was deductive, guided specifically by Scherer's (2005) approach to affect.

TA consisted of five main iterative stages (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984): immersion, first-level coding, second-level coding, consistency check, and reporting. These steps were performed in sequence for each separate set of the qualitative data.

Immersion involved becoming familiar with the data by reading available material, as well as coding general structural aspects. First-level coding involved developing inductively descriptive *(What is it?)* and interpretative *(What does it mean?)* categories through a "process of comparative analysis" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 334-341).

Second-level coding involved establishing and refining the first-level categories' relationships and proprieties (i.e., operational definition). In addition, it involved forming subthemes and themes while organizing categories into a hierarchy, with a maximum of three levels: categories, subthemes, and themes. Two analytical processes were utilized: inductive, based on meaningful contexts and operations involved in the first-level coding, and deductive, based on Scherer's (2005, pp. 714-715, 720) word-stem and dimensional proposals.

Consistency checks involved revising the consistency of the remarks included within each level of the hierarchy. This was performed while revising and improving the thematic hierarchy's coding agendas (i.e., coding rules and examples). Finally, reporting involved integrating "into a [more] coherent explanatory model" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p. 126) the categories, subthemes, and themes for each separate data set.

Iterations suggested the importance of developing a single hierarchy for the three data sets. This integrated version is presented here. The data analysis process terminated when iterations started to generate fewer changes in the organization and meaning of categories, subthemes, and themes.

The names of themes, subthemes, and categories are italicized. Participants are identified by numbers, ranging from one to seven, preceded by the symbol #. The total number of the participants discussing each topic is numerically identified and preceded by the expression "N=". Similarly, the total number of the instruments discussing the topic is identified with a "Z=". These expressions ("N=" and "Z=") indicate the representativeness of categories, subthemes and themes, and how frequently they appear in the participants' narratives.

IV. RESULTS

The thematic analysis indicated an emotional side to the participants' evaluation of their English language experience. It included the static qualities of what was regarded by the participants as an 'emotion', capturing any psychological states experienced by the participants. Some of these states, as illustrated, could be understood as emotions in the classical sense (e.g., happiness and sadness). Nevertheless, many of these remarks seemed to refer to emotions as broad categories, indicative of neurophysiological states holding, potentially, an affective value (e.g., Scherer, 2005; Tracy & Randles, 2011). Examples included feeling tired, sick, active, or, as Khalid (#4, Journals) noted, "busy packing my bags".

There were long paragraphs describing that day's events without mentioning any typical or broader type of state (e.g., woke up, went to school, etc.). This was suggestive that an action as simple as waking up could, in potential, bear an affective value and thus, be regarded as an emotion. It is important to note that classifying how participants felt was quite complicated. As a result, the analysis focused on how frequently these emotions were experienced and how participants reacted to them.

A. Frequency of Emotions

Figure 1 illustrates the number of references to each emotion experienced. It shows that positive emotions were experienced more often than negative ones. This could be regarded as a crude indicator of how often the participants in this study discussed these emotions. One should note that categories most frequently discussed were, in descending order of frequency: happy; motivated; mixed and simultaneous valences; absence of negative emotions; a single state; relaxed, lazy; unwell; stressed; worried; hopeful; grateful; satisfied; sad; confused; and angry.
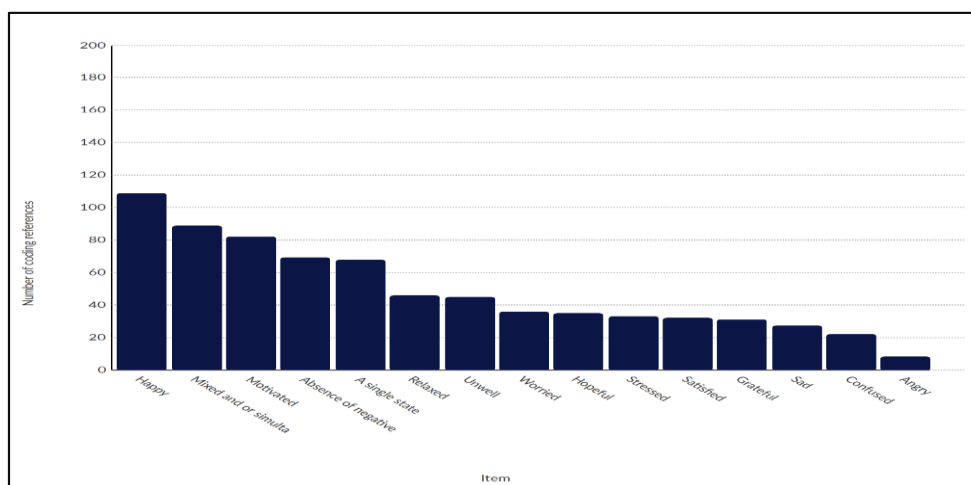

Figure 1. Frequency of Emotions

B. Frequencies of Participants' Reactions

Participants reacted differently to these emotional states. The most common denominators to the participants' reactions to pleasant and unpleasant experiences were described as types of motivational shifts. Their frequency is illustrated in Figure 2.

It can be observed that valence-congruent reactions were the most common ones. Participants' motivation was boosted in pleasant contexts (the boosted category), and it became weaker under unpleasant circumstances, as assessed by the dragged-down category. Some participants claimed that their emotional circumstances did not alter their motivation; they stayed afloat with negativity and stayed put with positivity. In more rare circumstances, they remarked valence-incongruent reactions; namely, they could become more motivated by negative emotionality and perceptions of failure, as assessed by the teased-out category. They could also become less motivated when experiencing positive emotions and perceptions of success, as assessed by 'spoiled by positivity', which was uncommon.
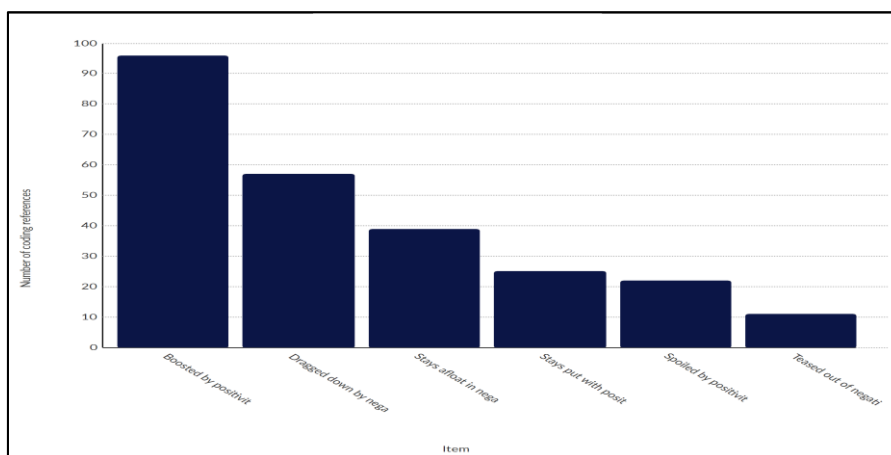

Figure 2. Frequencies of Participants' Reactions

C. Participants' Evaluation of Their EFL Experiences

The analysis of the survey provided exciting findings concerning the participants' EFL journeys and practices. It is important to note that these findings were not evidenced for or against specific qualitative observations. They could only be used as quantitative indicators of aspects that emerged qualitatively in the participants' journals, narratives, and interviews. The findings are detailed here based on the following items: First encounter with EFL, Quality of EFL classes, Language preferences, and English language activities.

1. First Encounter with EFL

The average age of first encounter with EFL was 11.57 (SD=0.49) years old, which is the age at which Saudi children finish primary school and start intermediate school. All participants acknowledged in surveys that they had two English classes per week while in primary school. Participant #4 stated that he had encountered EFL only at a qualitative level before primary school and reported no EFL in classes in primary school.

2. Quality of EFL Classes

Participants rated the intensity of their EFL experiences throughout the years. Their ratings are illustrated in Figure 3.
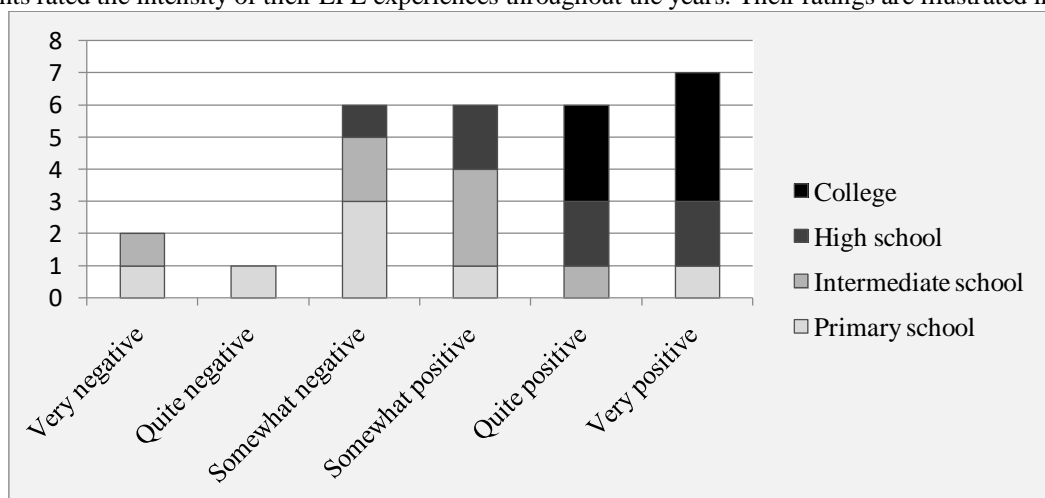

Figure 3. The Quality of EFL Classes Grade-by-grade

These findings suggested that the quality of English classes became increasingly positive as students progressed through the school grades, with the number of students giving positive ratings (four or above) being as follows: two for primary classes, four for intermediate classes, six for the high school, and seven (all) for college.

Participants' evaluation of their grades did not show a rising positive trend. However, the findings revealed that students were more pleased with their EFL classes in college than any other school grade. This was observed through all findings, as participants felt that college was the only period during which EFL learning was practical. It was also found that English was more valued personally and socially by some participants in college than at any other stage. Therefore, it could be concluded that EFL encounters in college were generally viewed as emotionally positive, which was not the case with EFL encounters in school.

3. Overall Satisfaction with English Level

Participants were inquired to rate their satisfaction with their skills. Only #2 was "quite satisfied" with his English level. The majority were displeased with their proficiency, with four claiming to be "only partially satisfied" (#3, #5, #6, and #7) and two "not at all satisfied" (#1 and #4) with their current skills. These students generally felt that their skills were poor or expected much improvement. Findings also showed a trend in participants' journals and narratives, in which some comments were made regarding success rather than failure. Even though almost every participant was dissatisfied with their skills, they seemed to focus more in the journals and narratives on their successes than on their failures.

4. Language Preferences

Every respondent reported speaking Arabic while socializing at home and most felt more comfortable speaking in Arabic (N=5) than in English or any other language. Moreover, the majority claimed to speak only Arabic (N=5), while two (#5 and #7) claimed to speak both Arabic and English while socializing with friends. The survey also found that two participants who only spoke Arabic among relatives and friends claimed to feel more comfortable than before in speaking both Arabic and English (N=2).

Qualitative findings did not detect language preferences or habits. There were some instances when things were inconsistent. Specifically, four participants (#1, #3, #4, and #7) claimed to have relatives who helped them with their English at home. Thus, at least in certain circumstances, to develop their EFL skills, participants spoke English at home. Additionally, five respondents (#1, #2, #4, #6, and #7) mentioned speaking English with their friends, peers, and other casual acquaintances, and three used the term, "friend" (#1, #4, and #6) to describe the interlocutor. Note that none of those who acknowledged using English with friends quantitatively used this term in their qualitative narratives, and only #7 acknowledged speaking English with friends in both approaches.

5. English Language Activities

The participants were asked about the frequency of their engagement in the following activities: watching English TV programs, written correspondence in English, and reading long English texts. Figure 4 illustrates the results.
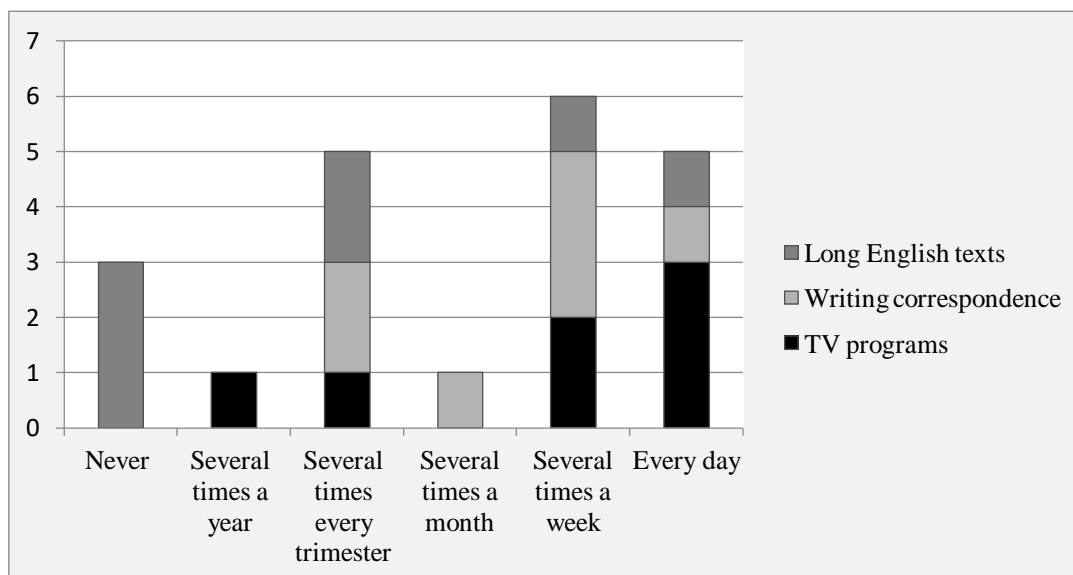

Figure 4. English Language Activities

As can be observed, the most common activity was watching English TV programs, with five participants doing so several times a week (N=2) or daily (N=3) and none claiming to never do so. Findings relating to this category were congruent with these quantitative results, with participants discussing the use of audio and audio-visual resources for boosting their study motivation and skills.

Quantitatively, four participants, #3, #5, #6 and #7, claimed to read long texts in English more often than never. In addition, #3 and #7 mentioned reading books and long texts in both parts of the study. However, #1 acknowledged reading qualitatively, but claimed to "never" read long texts in the survey, while #6 did not mention reading qualitatively but did so in the survey, and #5 acknowledged reading long texts in the survey. As such, the results were not congruent for this activity.

V. DISCUSSION

A. EFL in Saudi Arabia

As expressed by participants, English was undervalued socially and personally during some school grades. However, all students agreed that English was valued as a necessity in college and effectively and pleasantly learned. Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) suggested that Saudi students viewed English as a futile requisite within a system that placed little emphasis on mastering the language. Present findings limit the generalizability of this claim to the college environment. Themes such as *the value of English* refer specifically to this conclusion. The necessity of English was supported and contextualized in the college environment (Al-Saraj, 2014a, 2014b; Dewaele & Al-Saraj, 2015).

The implication is that social circumstances affected how participants felt about their English language experience. It was found that EFL classes in college were more pleasing and effective than classes in school. EFL education in Saudi educational institutions has changed considerably in the last decade. We may expect to see significant improvements, particularly in light of the Saudi Ministry of Education's decision to introduce English from the first grade of primary school (Bhuiyan, 2016).

All participants identified positive English experiences unrelated to official education. Moreover, *unpleasant encounters* did not include any activity which was exclusively performed outside the school context. These findings supported Piniel and Albert's (2018) conclusions that negative emotions such as anxiety were more common inside the classroom, rather than positive ones such as enjoyment and relaxation.

Piniel and Albert (2018) did not posit the existence of any cause-effect relationships. Similarly, in the present study, the situations associated with positive and negative emotional states, which corresponded to *pleasant* and *unpleasant encounters*, could be claimed to be the causes of positive vs. negative emotions. Participants most often did not establish causal links between their states and different situations. Therefore, these subthemes were offered as only one of many descriptions of participants' experience with EFL.

The themes and corresponding circumstances echoed previous findings on the relationship between EFL performance and subjective evaluation of EFL that suggested that students' amusement or joy improved EFL performance, particularly when compared with anxiety. Conversely, negative emotions are prejudicial to EFL performance, as noted by various other authors (Al-Saraj, 2014b; Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018; Ismail, 2015).

Götz and Hall noted that "Pleasant emotions (e.g., enjoyment, pride) are positively related to achievement, whereas unpleasant emotions (e.g., anxiety, boredom) are negatively related" (p. 192). This means that the pattern outlined in this study may be generalizable to cultures other than Saudi Arabia. As such, positive emotions seem to impact learning trajectories and performance more markedly and extensively than negative ones. Therefore, encouraging *pleasant encounters* through experiences could be an efficient pedagogic strategy, more beneficial than attempting to minimize aspects of *unpleasant encounters*. Finally, positive aspects, which facilitate learning and performance, should be explored together with students.

B. EFL Learner Experiences

The Saudi Arabian students expressed their dissatisfaction with their English level. The majority of students (6 students) were unsatisfied with their level and generally perceived that their skills needed to be promoted. These findings are compatible with those of Hung et al. (2016), who showed that it was surprising for Asian students to present their language skills with relatively lower satisfaction ratings than others, due to their willingness and cultural norms. Regardless of this, most respondents preferred to speak Arabic only as their mother tongue (N=5), while some reported being bilingual in Arabic and English (N=2). Also, five respondents claimed that the most common activity was watching English TV programs, doing so several times a week (N=2) or daily (N=3), and none of them reported "never". Findings related to this category are aligned with arguments in the paper by Al-Athwary and Laslom (2021) and proved that audio-visual inputs assisted students and teachers in crafting their English quality, especially in listening comprehension.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

A. Summary

English learning experiences of the participants differed when recollecting what had been learned in each grade. The exceptions were primary school and college. Both at quantitative and qualitative levels, participants mentioned that first encounters with EFL happened during primary school through acquiring passive skills, such as the alphabet.

In college, due to English becoming a mandatory subject, every participant started to value EFL. All believed they had developed both passive and active skills during college and noted that language classes had a superior quality.

Quantitative findings supported the latter observation by showing that participants felt that the quality of their EFL classes increased over time, reaching a maximum in college. Among language activities, watching English TV programs was the most popular activity among the respondents and establishing *audio and audio-visual resources* aided them to promote study motivation and skills.

B. Limitation and Trustworthiness Considerations

The findings of this study have to be seen in the light of some limitations. The first is that there were instances in which the findings did not converge so neatly. For example, when participants were asked about writing in English, it was found that they engaged in this activity, and four did so rather frequently, either several times a week (N=3) or daily (N=1). However, only two participants discussed the importance of written English correspondence in the survey. #7, Narratives, mentioned one occasion when he talked to people online and #3, Journals, described reading (as opposed to written correspondence) once: "My granddad helped me read some letters in English". Nevertheless, these references were not frequent enough to accept them as a new category.

Another example can be found concerning reading in English. Respondents #1, #3, and #7 discussed the usefulness of **books** (Z=2; N=3) (gathered from our qualitative data). Quantitatively, four participants, #3, #5, #6, and #7, claimed to read long texts in English more often than 'never'. #3 and #7 mentioned reading **books** and one **long text** in both parts of the study. However, #1 mentioned reading English texts in the qualitative part of the study but claimed to "never" read long texts in the survey; #6 did not mention reading qualitatively but did so in the survey, and #5 acknowledged reading long texts in the survey. The results across these approaches were not entirely congruent when it came to English reading and writing.

These findings raised questions about the study's trustworthiness. There may be explanations for these disparities, which would involve a closer examination of participants' issues that may have arisen during the study. Inconsistent responses in the context of self-report surveys may arise due to a plethora of factors, such as the lack of motivation, higher age, lower education, etc. Even such data as age and gender are often misreported (Akbulut, 2015; Coste et al., 2013; Huang et al., 2012).

C. Implications for Teaching English in Saudi Arabia

Learning English in Saudi Arabia has become essential, particularly in light of the country's 2030 Vision. It is a necessity nowadays, as it equips learners with numerous opportunities in the higher education, business, communications, and media sectors. Even though the data gathered in this study are based on only seven students, the findings present valuable new insights into Saudi Learners' own evaluation of their English language experience, along with how they felt about this experience.

I hope the findings can be of assistance to teachers, researchers, and policymakers, enabling them to comprehend the role of emotions and motivation in language learning. Findings can help raise awareness of the key role that emotions play in learners' English language experience and motivation. It was clear from the findings that participants significantly improved in college because they experienced more positive emotions in a constructive and supportive learning environment. As a result, Saudi teachers must create a positive and supporting English language learning environment, which will enhance students' English language performance.

Moreover, findings will allow Saudi teachers to understand learners' emotions and attitudes and provide helpful information regarding their learners' needs and experiences. Teachers will be able to know how students feel about learning English and the kinds of emotions they experience in the classroom. They will understand what factors influence and strengthen learners' performance and motivate them to enhance their English language skills. This will help teachers identify appropriate teaching methods and materials which will enhance students' motivation to learn and improve their overall English language skills, allowing them to truly enjoy the process of learning English.

Finally, with positive changes taking place in the Saudi educational system, particularly with respect to teaching English from the first grade of primary school starting from 2021, there must be a greater focus on the classroom environment and the quality of English language exposure. Teachers must do their best to create engaging and positive learning environments and employ effective and interesting teaching methods. This will ensure that the learners' engagement with English will be optimal, and their motivation will be high, which will, in turn, allow them to master most language skills from an early age.

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