

Perceptions of American Academic Discourse: Cases of Three Saudi Undergraduate Students

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Abstract

A qualitative study conducted with three Saudi Arabian undergraduate students over the course of summer semester 2013, explored their perceptions of American academic discourse. The focus was on the spoken discourse. The study was informed by the theory of Second Language Acquisition and considered activity and interaction with American faculty and classroom as the space for socialization into the new academic discourse. Students reflected on various activities in and out of classrooms that enhanced their English language learning. Implications for faculty are drawn.

Keywords: second language socialization, academic discourse, Saudi Students in the US.

Introduction

In order to succeed in the American academia, international students must understand and adjust to its discourse. Academic discourse is “not just an entity but a social, cognitive, and rhetorical process and an accomplishment, a form of enculturation, social practice, positioning, representation, and stance-taking” (Duff, 2010, p. 170) and it varies greatly from other vernacular variations of language. To partake in the academic discourse students coming from abroad need to learn the academic language and the rules and norms of the new academic culture, which often drastically differ from their native countries. For instance, in the US participating in class discussions or debates, giving presentations, leading small group discussions are common ways of learning. Speaking up and voicing ones true opinion in front of everyone in class can be an insurmountable task for students, who come from teacher-centered cultures. For instance, Alhmadi (2014) claimed that speaking (compared to reading, writing, listening in English) is the hardest skill to master for Saudi Arabian students.

This article reports on a qualitative study that was conducted with Saudi Arabian students to examine their perceptions of participating in the oral academic discourse in the US. Saudi Arabian students are the second fastest growing student population in the US (Open Doors, 2013). With each academic year their number in the US increases. It is vital to understand Saudi students perceptions on the academic discourse, of which they are becoming a part of, to facilitate their learning, and prepare the incoming students to better adjust to their new academic life. The study revolved around the following question:

What are Saudi-Arabian students’ perceptions about tasks in the oral academic discourse?

This research was informed by the theory of Second Language Acquisition (SLS). In the section to follow I briefly dwell on the tenets of the theory and report on research relevant to the problem of interest.

Theoretical Framework

SLS stems from the language socialization theory associated with Schieflin and Ochs (1986). The essence of both language socialization and SLS is in “socialization through language and socialization to use the language” (Schieflin & Ochs, 1986, p.163). The main difference between the theories of first language socialization and SLS lies in SLS’s “added complexity of dealing with children or adults who already possess a repertoire of linguistic, discursive, and cultural traditions and community affiliations when encountering new ones” (Duff, 2007).

SLS is a lifelong process, through which individuals gain communicative competence, legitimacy, and membership into a new culture or group (Duff, 2007). The most important tenet of the theory of SLS is that new language is acquired through interaction and communication with members of a certain group, society, or discourse (Duff, 2007, 2010). Secondly, SLS is situated within the context of particular meaningful activities and tasks (Duff, 2007, 2010). Duff (2007a, 2010) described the process of language socialization as bidirectional or multidirectional. According to Duff (2007, 2010), institutions or communities into which novices are being socialized strongly influence intellect, emotions, and social positioning of the newcomers (Duff, 2007, 2010). However, while experts introduce newcomers to the norms and rules of the society, novices respond by conveying, “to their more proficient interlocutors what their communicative needs are” (Duff, 2007, p. 311).

Finally, SLS into a new community does not entail absolute appropriation of all the conventions and norms of the new culture (Duff, 2007). In some cases newcomers might even reject practices and norms of the new culture (Duff, 2007, 2010). Often, the process of SLS

leads to creation of new or hybrid identities and practices and/or only partial acceptance of the norms and practices of the new communities. In the following section, I briefly dwell on SLS studies that aid in understanding how international students become part of the new academic discourse.

Background Literature

A large number of studies were devoted to socialization into oral academic discourse through academic presentations (Morita 2000; Kobayashi 2003, 2005; Wang, 2009; Yang, 2010; Zappa-Hollman 2001, 2007), as academic presentations are the most prevalent task in the North American colleges (Zappa-Hollman, 2001). Some of those studies focused on “behind-the-scenes” preparation for presentation and peer collaboration (Kobayashi 2003, 2005; Yang, 2010). Other research was devoted to socialization through whole-class discussions (Lee, 2009), small-group discussions (Ho, 2011), group work (Leki, 2001), and spoken interactions with peers (Seloni, 2012).

Studies on socialization into oral discourse exposed various difficulties that international students dealt with in North American colleges. Zappa-Hollman (2001, 2007) categorized them into linguistic, sociocultural, and psychological (e.g. nervousness, shyness, or insecurity). Among the named difficulties were unfamiliarity with academic tasks and unfamiliarity with the American pop culture (Leki, 2001), nervousness, shyness and insecurity (Morita, 2009; Zappa-Hollman, 2001, 2007), the need to translate back and forth from English to students’ native tongues (Lee, 2009), first language socialization (Wang, 2009), as well as the ESL speaker status (Leki, 2001). Such challenges prevent students from full participation in class. Students choose to refrain from speaking up in class (Lee, 2009). In some instances, students are forced to take on inferior roles (e.g. simply holding a poster versus conducting a presentation) within group work even when they can take on complex tasks (Leki, 2001). Ultimately, they feel incompetent and incapable compared to their American peers and classmates (Leki, 2001; Morita 2004, 2009).

Most of these challenges can be overcome through active instructors’ involvement and effective management of the class, and collaborative work (Kobayashi 2003, 2005; Leki, 2001; Seloni, 2012; Yang, 2010). Kobayashi’s (2003) research demonstrated an excellent example of peer collaboration, when together students were able to negotiate the expectations of their instructor, the objectives and purposes of the assignment by utilizing “a variety of available tools and resources including L1/L2 oral discourse and L2 written texts (e.g. course outline, field journal, and textbooks), electronic bilingual dictionaries, the Power Point Program and each other’s ideas and knowledge” (p. 354). Such active and engaged collaborative preparatory work led them to the successful negotiation of knowledge and consecutively to an excellent grade (Kobayashi, 2003).

However, other research shows that collaborative work alone is not always sufficient for successful language socialization. Yang’s (2010) study provides a perfect example for this shortcoming. Despite extensive and laborious preparation for a group presentation and active collaboration within the group, participants did not reach their goals and the results that they had anticipated. Students failed to follow the instructors’ instructions and delivered a presentation without engaging the audience. Ultimately, those students received feedback and a grade lower than they desired.

Research on SLS demonstrated that the instructor’s role is the most important factor in the successful socialization of international students into the oral discourse. Instructors can facilitate socialization in a number of different ways. For instance, successful socialization can

be achieved through ensuring participation of bilingual students, and thoroughly planning and modeling activities (Kobayashi, 2003, 2005; Yang, 2010). Modeling the activity is especially important as it helps students understand what is expected of them and how to prepare for the activity; and ultimately modeling can make a major difference in the outcomes (Kobayashi, 2003, 2005; Yang, 2010).

Additionally, instructors have the ability to create a friendly environment, where they are open and welcoming to various cultures and perspectives of international students, which leads to students' engagement in class discussions and group activities (Leki, 2001; Morita, 2004, 2009). Such pedagogy might also lead to expansion of the "narrow thinking system" of American students who often exclude foreign students from full participation in certain class activities (Leki, 2001). In the context where professors ask international students to share their experiences from their native countries, students feel valued and welcome (Morita, 2009). Consequently, if the instructor never asks for or acknowledges international students' culturally different perspectives, students may feel unappreciated and isolated (Leki, 2001; Morita, 2004, 2009).

Some research explored Saudi Arabian students' language socialization (Barnawi, 2009) and their language needs (Alqahtani, 2011). Barnawi (2009) focused on the process of socialization of two graduate students into the American academic discourse, namely on the questions of identity negotiation rather than on specific tasks or activities in written or spoken discourse, while Alqahtani (2011) inquired about the linguistic needs of Saudi-Arabian students at a University in Great Britain.

Findings revealed that Saudi students choose to stay silent in class. Several reasons were identified. Students in Barnawi's study (2009) felt less competent than their peers and sought out opportunities outside of the classroom to enhance their learning by studying with their peers in the library and visiting professors during office hours. This enabled them to feel more confident in their speaking and listening skills and become more competent members of their academic community (Barnawi, 2009). Students in Alqahtani's study (2011) chose to stay silent in class because "they have been conditioned to learn via rote learning and drilling and are unaccustomed to a framework in which students are expected to ask questions in front of the class" (p. 199).

Although the literature discussed in this section provides invaluable insight into the nature of the process of language socialization, challenges that students face, and support they require, more studies with Saudi Arabian students are needed. I aimed to add to the body of knowledge on international student socialization into American academic discourse, and in particular Saudi Arabian students as their numbers in the US colleges are large and increasing with each academic year. In the following section, I explain the methodology utilized in the study, specifically focusing on participants and setting, data collection instruments, and procedures for data analysis.

Methodology

Participants and recruitment

Participants for this study were three undergraduate students, Hala, Hamza, and Amir (all names are pseudonyms for anonymity purposes) from Saudi Arabia. Prior to the beginning of their studies at the University, they all studied the English language at an Intensive English School (IES, pseudonym). None of the participants had ever lived in any English speaking countries before they came to the US to pursue their higher education. All of the participants started

learning English in Saudi Arabia. Both Hamza and Amir started studying English in the first grade (approximately at the age of 6). Hala was 12 when she began to study English. However, they uniformly described their experiences learning English at their Saudi Arabian schools as mostly ineffective.

Hala (female), who was working on her medical science degree, had only been in the US for 6 months at the moment of the interview. She spent one month at the IES. Upon completion of her undergraduate degree, Hala was planning to obtain a Master's degree outside of the US for "a different culture, different experience".

Hamza (male) was studying pre-pharmacy at the time of data collection. Prior to starting his studies at the University he spent one year and eight months enhancing his English language ability at IES. He was planning on attending pharmacy school, and subsequently earning both a Masters' degree and a PhD in the field of pharmacology.

Amir (male), similarly to Hamza, was studying pre-pharmacy and was planning to apply to a pharmacy school after completion of his undergraduate degree. Amir studied at IES for eight months before he was admitted into the university.

Table 1. Participants

Student	Sex	Grade level	Marital status	Program of Study	Time at IES
Hala	Female	Freshman	Single	Medical Science	1 month
Hamza	Male	Freshman	Single	Pre-pharmacy	1 year, 8 months
Amir	Male	Sophomore	Single	Pre-pharmacy	8 months

Data collection methods

The aim of this study was to listen to the participants' voices and encourage them to explain how they understood their circumstances (Hatch, 2002). To meet this goal, I utilized semi-structured interviews to collect data. Qualitative interviews lead researchers "to uncover the meaning structures that participants use to organize their experiences and make sense of their world... and enable researchers learning how to learn from the informants" (Hatch, 2002, p. 91).

To triangulate the data, I also observed students during the classes that they were taking in the summer semester at a large Midwestern U.S. university. I limited my role to nonparticipant observer as my aim was "to capture naturally occurring" phenomena (Hatch, 2002, p.73). Summer semester was divided into Session One and Session Two. Participants were only taking one or two classes during the first session of the summer semester, because they wanted either to travel around the U.S. or visit their home country in the second part of the summer. The first session was 4 to 6 weeks long.

Hamza and Hala were observed during their biology class. The classes consisted of lectures and laboratory work. Students requested that I would only observe them during lectures. Hamza explained that I could not be present in the lab. Due to the scheduling conflicts with other students' classes, I was only able to observe Hala once during her biology class. However, she informed me that all of the other Biology classes were similar to the one that I observed:

standard lectures, where the instructor spoke most of the time, while students were occasionally answering questions with clickers.

I observed Amir during his Public Speaking class. Similarly to Hamza's and Hala's Biology class, Amir's class was divided into theoretical and practical parts. Tuesday meetings were devoted to learning about various types of public speeches through lectures; and on Thursday students presented their own speeches based on what they learned during Tuesday's theoretical class. I observed both types of classes several times. I focused on observing whether or not participants attempted to answer professor's questions in class and any other spoken interactions that might occur between participants and other members of the class (e.g. whole-class peer evaluation of presentations in Amir's class). Additionally, I was interested in observing the lecturing style of the professors: how fast or slow they speak, whether or not they clarify complex concepts, how they check for comprehension, etc. The summary of observations is described in Table 2.

Before or after observing students in class, I frequently had the opportunity to have short conversations about their personal lives, classes, and other informal topics, which helped build connections and rapport with participants. Such informal discussions also added to main data collected via formal interviews and observations and aided in interpreting the data.

Table 2. Observation summary

Student	Class observed	Number of times	Duration of each observation	Total time observed
Hala	Biology (6 weeks)	1	3 hrs	3 hrs
Hamza	Biology (8 weeks)	6	2 hrs	12 hrs
Amir	Public Speaking (8 weeks)	5	2 hrs	10 hrs

Data analysis

I analyzed the Saudi Arabian student interview and observation data according to Hatch's inductive analysis approach (Hatch, 2002). I read the data, highlighted specific elements in the data, and observed whether or not there were connections among them. Examples of specific elements are "nervousness during presentations", "pronunciation mistakes", and "time management". After highlighting and identifying various specific elements, I established my frames of analysis. For the specific elements named above, the frame of reference was "Challenges". Following frame of references analysis, I analyzed data for domains (Hatch, 2002). Domain analysis entails looking for semantic relationships in the data (Hatch, 2002). For example, "time management" is a type of "challenge". Next I reread the data and searched for themes within domains. An example of the theme is "challenges with presentations". At the end, I reexamined the data, noting the excerpts from interviews to support the themes that emerged. The observation data was analyzed more broadly than the interview data, framing around "complete interchanges between interactants" (Hatch, 2002). For instance, when I observed a situation where the professor posed a question and Hala did not respond, I coded it as "lack of response".

Findings

RQ: What are Saudi-Arabian students' perceptions about tasks in oral academic discourse?

In their interviews, participants explained that most of their content classes at the University are lectures. The main activity that students are engaged in during their lectures is listening to the professor. Naturally, opportunities for interaction and development of language skills during lectures are scarce. When questioned about tasks that benefitted the development of their academic speaking and listening skills, students vastly elaborated on their experiences at IES. Participants discussed giving and listening to presentations, conducting debates in class, and watching educational programs on TV, and the role of these activities in enhancement of students' speaking and listening skills.

Unlike many undergraduate lectures, that can be as large as 300 students, the classes that I observed included only 20 to 30 students per class. During these small-scale lectures, the professors would frequently pause and ask questions. In Hala's class, students were supposed to answer questions with a clicker and their anonymous responses were immediately displayed on the screen. Hamza's Biology professor did not use clickers; he posed questions and waited for students to respond orally.

Amir's professor's lecturing style differed slightly. As mentioned previously, I was able to observe Amir's both in his theoretical and practical classes. In general, Amir's professor's teaching style appeared to be more interactive and engaging. Often during the theoretical class, Amir's professor would bring the class to the whole-class discussion, ask them to provide examples and encourage students to ask questions. During practical classes all students were divided into two groups. One group of students presented their speeches, while the other group graded their speeches. Each student gave one speech and two evaluations for two speakers. At the end of the class, students discussed strengths and weaknesses of the presenters. Amir never spoke or otherwise expressed his opinion. At the same time, during the interview he verbalized a desire to have more opportunity for interactions, as the quote below demonstrates:

In class...it would help if we could like interact with people a lot, but basically because a lot of classes [we] are taking are basically lectures, so I don't get to talk that much, it's only like observation and like taking notes, and listening to the lecture. But it would help if there was more interaction with other students or the professor himself. (Amir)

Although participants did not respond to any of the professors' questions in class during my observations, they always appeared to listen attentively and took careful notes. At the end of the class, students came over to their instructors a couple of times to clarify material that they did not comprehend.

Hamza and Hala reported that watching TV as an activity helped them develop their academic speaking and listening skills, stressing the importance of selecting serious and informative shows and movies. Hala mentioned that she often used to watch various English programs on TV in Saudi Arabia, which prepared her for her life in the US. Hamza emphasized that the quality of the programs and shows on TV really mattered.

Actually since I was in Saudi Arabia watching movies... It's very helpful to improve your listening and speaking. Because also when I came here I have not that good English... I came here in the US that helped me, when I was in Saudi Arabia I used to watch American movies it was in English. (Hala)

Watching TV. Watching really good programs on TV...When I watch TV, really good programs about policy [politics], about people teaching other people, about sciences, shows, news, it gives you really good academic language. (Hamza)

Participants spoke extensively about presentation as one of the main activities for the development of their speaking and listening skills. Hamza pointed out that taking notes during presentation is something that helps him enhance his language learning.

Presentations, taking some notes...that definitely help, so much helpful for speaking and even for listening skills... See that's [taking notes during presentation] helping you for like listening and also speaking during the presentation, that's really helpful. Listen to one story [presentation] and then the next day you come up and give your presentation, that's really helpful. (Hamza)

Amir spoke of debate as an invaluable activity to improve their speaking and listening skills. He mentioned that incorporating debate in class could be a really engaging activity for students.

Debate really did help...Definitely. The exciting thing about it, the students gets engaged with that idea, so if they to debate, they want to prove their point, so they talk more and everything. (Amir)

However, debates were only help in his IES classes. Amir expressed his desire to include debate in his university classes. He even shared a way that professors could conduct them in science classes. He provides a specific example of how one could introduce debates into content university class:

Even with organic chemistry or biology, you can debate. If you give two proposals for an experiment, how would you like to proceed with the experiment...Each like make teams, and each one would come up with their own plan. But that's gonna take a while, that's gonna consume the class time, which is very short. (Amir)

One dominant theme throughout the interviews and observation data was the role of the instructor in students' socialization into the American academic discourse. Students spoke of the importance of instructors providing clear directions for assignments, focusing on the most relevant material, engaging students in the classroom, making learning fun, and demonstrating good people skills. Students expressed the need to know a clear purpose, for which they were doing certain tasks. Sometimes faculty was not explicit in their explanations of the assignment requirements and students were unsure of the instructors' expectations. For instance, because of the diligent work of the instructor, Hamza was able to understand the value of reading and invested much effort and time in it:

It depends from teacher to teacher. OK, I had one teacher...She asked us to read a lot of articles, a lot of things, thought articles and stories. That helped us. Compared to other teachers...She wasn't like that, she was specific with reading...We worked hard to deserve a lot...I think that helped me with my writing. (Hamza)

On the other hand, Hala's instructor failed to explicitly explain the value of reading, and Hala was left with the impression that reading in English did not benefit her in any manner. When I asked Hala what activities she considered irrelevant for her language development skills, she responded:

I think that reading. When I was in IES, the teacher always told me "You have to read to improve your writing when you read you know how to spell the word, you know how to create a sentence.... But cause I don't enjoy reading in English, so when I do I feel boring [bored].

Hamza dwelled on the importance of the professor's ability to focus on the most relevant and significant material. He explained that consistency and predictability of how the professor will present the material enhanced his learning:

Sometimes I cannot follow him point by point, but at least I know what he is gonna do. I know what's the important thing because he tells us the important things, writes the important study, the important things. (Hamza)

Hamza shared that he took the same level biology class with a different professor previously but he was forced to drop the class. He explained that the class was much larger (300 students), the objectives were not clear, and he felt overwhelmed by the amount of reading for that class:

He should have been more specific. Especially when you are reading like half a chapter every night. This was a lot of knowledge. And he made us read like half a chapter every day. Like it's a lot of information, we couldn't handle it. We don't know what's important and what's not important (Hamza).

Hamza and Amir expressed their wish that faculty had more empathy towards them as international students and as non-native English speakers. Amir thought it was important not to equalize Saudi-Arabian students with American students in the first year of their study in the US. He has mentioned that he can score poorly on a content test not because the lack of knowledge but because of the linguistic difficulties. Amir explained that even little things like allowing students to use an electronic dictionary could make a tremendous difference for them.

In the first year, I think it wasn't fair treating us the same like the American students with international students, like equaling us... I think that the professor thinks that it's not fair to other students to make exceptions for us, but it's not fair not making exceptions for us. For me the hardest thing was the test. If I didn't get a word in the question I lose the whole question, I don't know what to answer, I don't know what the question is asking. (Amir)

Last an interesting finding was unveiled from the interview with Hala. When Hala elaborated on her experiences in the Communication class that she took during the first semester at the University with only international students, she maintained that she felt much more at ease when she was presenting in front of the whole class. Hala added that having a professor from Korea also made her feel more comfortable:

They [international classmates] learn new language, so that makes me more comfortable, when I do presentations with them first...Also the professor was from Korea.

To conclude, participants perceived that IES classes played an important role in the development of speaking and listening skills. They all discussed their experiences in IES and learning language skills at IES. IES benefitted their socialization into American academic oral discourse more so than attending the lectures. Observing classes allowed me to see that occasionally students do have opportunities to respond to questions from the professor or participate in a whole group discussion. However, students remained silent and chose to listen. This indicated that whole group discussion and responding to questions in front of the whole class were not perceived as opportunities to enhance oral language skills. At the same time students expressed a strong desire for more interaction in class, including such activities as debates. Additionally, one student expressed that she felt more at ease, while working with other international students and an international professor.

Discussion and implications

This study inquired about spoken academic discourse SLS of three Saudi-Arabian undergraduate students in the US. The interviews with participants elucidated that they had little opportunity for spoken academic interactions, and consecutively little opportunity for academic discourse SLS. Unfortunately, I was only able to observe Hala's and Hamza's biology lecture classes, which confirmed findings from the student interviews. Unarguably, the goal of lecture is to deliver content, and unsurprisingly the opportunities for interactions are scarce. Therefore, it would be interesting to observe students in their practical or laboratory classes to obtain more concrete ideas about participants' SLS.

Curiously, when participants did have a chance to speak up or respond to professor's questions, they chose to stay silent. Although Amir had plethora of opportunities to participate in whole-class discussions during his presentation class, and both Hamza and Hala could have answered a question posed by their professors, they never spoke up. This finding illustrates the importance of instructors' and professors' awareness of Saudi Arabian and other international students' "silence" and the need to think of creative ways to engage students and allow them to express their "voice" because many of the Saudi Arabian students can bring valuable perspectives on issues discussed in class based on their background and culture. So, the mission is twofold: to allow Saudi Arabian students to be full members of the discourse that they participate in as well as to allow the American students to broaden their horizons by hearing new opinions, as Leki (2001) was also advocating.

The nonlinearity of the process of socialization is evident from discussions with participants where they elaborate on their experiences outside of the academic classroom, for instance learning English at home via educational TV programs. The realm of the classroom is not the sole space for socialization and academic language development. Similar to Kobayashi's (2003, 2005) research, this study demonstrated that socialization of the discourse is a non-stop process, whether it is through collaboration with students outside of the classroom, or through watching educational programs on TV and simply conversing with the native English speakers and gaining confidence in talking in the English language.

Similarly to findings from previous research (Barnawi, 2009; Leki, 2001; Lee, 2009; Morita 2004, 2009), participants felt that they were less competent than their American peers due to linguistic difficulties. Unlike in previous studies (Zappa-Hollman, 2001, 2007) participants did not report on any sociocultural issues. Although they chose to stay silent in instances where they could have spoken up, they didn't express feelings of inadequacy or discomfort due to a new academic cultural environment. This confidence could be explained by the fact that they spent a significant amount of time studying at IES, where they began their process of socialization into new academic culture.

The theory of SLS (Duff 2007, 2010) stresses the importance of the instructor's role in the process of international students' socialization. In line with the tenets of the theory and findings from previous research (Kobayashi, 2003, 2005; Yang, 2010), this study suggested the vital role that the instructor plays in Saudi Arabian students' socialization. Instructors must understand that these students are coming from a very different education culture and might have trouble with verbalizing their difficulties and challenges. This means that faculty should be made more aware of the needs of international students, specifically Saudi Arabian students. For instance, students expressed that often the objectives were not clear to them. Instructors could be more precise in setting expectations for international students.

Another interesting finding pertains to SLS with other international students. Hala mentioned that she felt much more uncomfortable when she had to present in front of American peers rather than in front of other international students. Hala's discomfort points to the importance of Saudi Arabian students' participation in ESL classes, where they might feel less intimidated and have more opportunity to practice speaking up or participate in the group discussions.

Limitations and further research suggestions

This research added to the body of knowledge on international students' SLS into oral academic discourse. It was especially important because no prior studies were devoted to SLS of Saudi Arabian undergraduate students. The study unveiled interesting findings on how Saudi Arabian students perceive their experiences of socialization into American academia. However, research is limited in two ways. First, this study investigated language socialization of Saudi Arabian students in the medical field. The process of socialization might be different for students in other disciplines, specifically in social sciences like business, education, history etc. This could be a worthwhile direction for research on undergraduate Saudi students' SLS.

Second, students' classes were only 4-6 weeks long. Conducting a more longitudinal study (e.g. throughout several semesters or years of study) would add more insight into Saudi Arabian student SLS. Perhaps, following up with the same research participants during their graduate studies in the US would allow us to determine whether the process of SLS during their undergraduate studies facilitates their socialization into graduate academic spoken discourse as it can greatly vary from undergraduate discourses.

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