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The Impact of Teaching Approaches on Students' English Language Learning in Higher Education: A Case Study of a Saudi University

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Abstract:
This study investigates the effect of teaching approaches on students' English language learning at King Abdulaziz University (KAU). Moreover, it is an endeavor to know the difference between students' interaction with the teaching approaches used by Non-Native English Speaking (NNES) lecturers and those used by Native English Speaking (NES) lecturers. A documentary review, observations, and semi-structured interviews with lecturers and students served as the data sources of this study, as per the qualitative case study approach. The interactions with students and teaching approaches of the lecturers varied in accordance with their native tongue— NNES lecturers and NES lecturers. The findings have revealed that the level of students' interaction was less during the lectures delivered by NNES lecturers due to the adoption of a teacher-centered approach. Significantly, the level of students' interaction was high during the lectures delivered NES lecturers. This is due to the fact that NES lecturers adopted a learner-centered approach.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language, Higher Education, Saudi EFL learners, Teaching Approaches, Teacher-centered Approach, Learner-centered Approach, Saudi Arabia

Introduction

Society places a special onus upon higher education. Newman and Couturier (2002) state that not only does higher education sustain the welfare of society but it also serves as the driving force of the economy, the generator of future leaders, and the disseminator of knowledge. Modernisation and development are widely acknowledged to be inextricably linked with higher education worldwide. Skills development, quality, curricular and social relevance, global competitiveness, and equity are addressed in part, as Altbach et al. (2009) state, by higher education which, in turn, is subjected to significant demand. Saudi Arabia, like many other countries, perceives the role of higher education in enhancing national prosperity.

Moskovsky and Alrabai (2009) observe that increasing attention is paid to English language learning and teaching in the nation's educational system within the context of enhancing education quality. Anteriorly, English was the sole foreign language taught in the country, formerly only being learned at secondary and intermediate levels. Darling-Hammond (2006), Al-Seghayer (2013), and Al-Shannag et al. (2013) highlight that English learning is prioritized in the present, reflected by its teaching in the first grade. Nonetheless, Syed (2003), Alrabai (2010), and Albousaif (2011) note that at each level of learning, Saudi students generally display a low level of English aptitude, as per the consensus of language researchers.

Research Questions:

This study is an attempt to answer the following main question:
- How do the teaching approaches affect students' English language learning in King Abdulaziz University (KAU)?

It also seeks to answer the following sub-questions:
1. How do the teaching approaches used by Non-Native English Speaking(NNES) lecturers affect students' interaction?
2. How do the teaching approaches used by Native English Speaking (NES) lecturers affect students' interaction?
3. Is there a significant difference between students' interaction with the teaching approaches used by Non-Native English Speaking (NNES) lecturers and those used by Native English Speaking (NES) lecturers?

Research Objectives:

The present study attempts to achieve the following main objective:
- To know the impact of the teaching approaches on students' English language learning in King Abdulaziz University (KAU).

It also seeks to achieve the following sub-objectives:
1. To know the effect of teaching approaches used by Non-Native English Speaking (NNES) lecturers on students' interaction.
2. To know the effect of teaching approaches used by Native English Speaking (NES) lecturers on students' interaction.
3. To know the difference between students' interaction with the teaching approaches used by Non-Native English Speaking (NNES) lecturers and those used by Native English Speaking (NES) lecturers.

Literature review:

The available literature on higher education EFL learners reflects the importance of the teaching approach used in English classes. In this context, many studies like Prosser (1999), Entwistle and Smith (2002), Muller et al. (2012), Ahmed (2012), and Cochran-Smith et al. (2015) hold the perspective that student learning experiences in higher education are substantially impacted by the teaching approach used when teaching. As Evans (2000), Norton et al. (2005), and Troudi et al. (2009) note, the perception regarding assessment procedures, teaching, knowledge, and students that the lecturers possess is reflected by the distinct philosophies behind the teaching approaches, such as constructivism or behaviorism. Javed (2017) uses the term teaching strategies to define the teaching approaches used by English language teachers in higher education, and she states that English language teachers in Higher education are not trained to use teaching strategies . In this context, Tang (2020) states that teaching of English as a foreign language is always a challenging task.

Teaching Approaches in Higher Education

Dall'Alba (1991), Martin and Balla (1991), Martin and Ramsden (1992), Samuelowicz and Bain (1992), and Kember and Gow (1994) numbered among the academics investigating the link between lecturers' teaching approaches and the same lecturers' perceptions regarding learning and teaching, in the 90s, within higher education programs. Other scholars like Entwistle and Peterson (2004), Kember et al. (2008), Ahmed (2012), and Alhawsawi (2013) note that student learning in higher education is impacted as a result of the teaching approach selected by the lecturer who, in turn, is influenced on the topic of assessments, students, and roles by their perspectives.

Various teaching approaches are used by lecturers in higher education. This is one aspect conveyed broadly in the literature, despite various academics diverging in their representation of the teaching conceptions (Kember, 1997; Prosser et al., 1994). Teaching as knowledge transmission and teaching as an engagement process are categorized as teaching at the lowest and highest levels, respectively. Irrespective of student needs, the syllabus is imparted literally alongside personal knowledge to the students by lecturers who view themselves as knowledge disseminators. Teaching approaches by such lecturers often involve monologues and reliance on textbooks.

Teacher-Centred Approach

The importance of reproducing lecture-transmitted knowledge in its precise form and other learned behaviors is elevated in this approach. It is linked to the principles behind behaviorist philosophies. Via the process of information retention by passive listening, the students play the part of an empty cup to be filled by the lecturer's knowledge, where the lecturer possesses absolute authority. Hence, as Hancock et al. (2002) and Ramsden et al. (2007) observe, the lecturer denies the students a chance to express their needs or views while presuming they know what the students should learn. The lecturers, in this case, are not only responsible for the knowledge disseminated to the students but also function as gatekeepers to the knowledge.

Student-Centred Approach

It is thought that as a response to the teacher-centered approach, the student-centered or student-focused approach came into being. Schweisfurth (2011, 2013) argues that the whole-class

instructive role that teacher-centred lecturers fulfilled is foregone in favour of a facilitative role where the creation of knowledge is shared between the lecturer and the learner, aligning with principles of constructivist philosophies. The focus is placed upon the learners rather than the curriculum or the lecturer themselves such as in the teacher-focused approach. High-quality learning is fulfilled via the constructive interactions between the content, lecturer, and learner being prioritised within the process of learning and teaching.

The principal elements of the teacher-focused and student-focused approaches are outlined in the table1.

Table 1. *Teacher-centred versus student-centred approaches*

Points to compare		Teacher-centred Approach	Student-
View of learning		Accretion of knowledge via rote learning and memorization	Helping practise skills.
Lecturers' roles		Authoritative role as a knowledge disseminator	Co-cons knowled
Views about students		Passive receivers of knowledge that is conveyed from textbooks and lecturers	With pre experien of knowl
Teaching strategies		Pedagogy based upon lectures	Group w classroor proactive
Assessment		Define and multiple-choice questions characterize the assessments that evaluate the students' recollection of behaviors and the accretion of knowledge	Open-en assessme impleme learned t

Note 1. Developed by the researcher

Distinct Studies Regarding EFL Teaching Approaches in Higher Education

Multiple academic works have studied EFL learning and teaching in higher education and the teaching approaches used in such a setting. With particular attention placed upon Asia and the Gulf area, various academic works are examined in this section. Within a public university in Pakistan, the extent to which students' learning experience was impacted by distinct pedagogical approaches was studied (Ahmed, 2012). Within English classes, the effect of distinct teaching strategies adopted the impact of such approaches on engagement, the perception of lecturers' teaching approaches and attitudes held by the students were demonstrated by the results of said study.

Inspiring students to participate in the process of co-constructing knowledge and motivating them to become proactive actors is perceived to be a primary part of facilitating learning by the lecturers that adopt a student-centered approach within higher education in KSA. Alhawsawi (2013) conducted a study on this topic and he found that students from poorer

backgrounds were less suited to the student-focused approach than those from a privileged backgrounds as the latter possessed more cultural capital.

Within the context of higher education in KSA, the challenges EFL lecturers experience was examined in a separate academic work (Ansari, 2012). The findings revealed that student-focused approaches cause a significant portion of Saudi students to struggle in the learning process. The lack of preparation in the pre-university education system to learn in such a manner was attributed as the principal cause. Melibari (2015) notes that active involvement and participation by students in the class are not promoted or stimulated by the education system, in KSA, which usually tends toward authoritarian and prescriptive teaching methods. Thus, teaching approaches reliant on textbooks and teachers are considered the norm for Saudi students.

Methods
This study analyses the impact of the teaching approaches on students' English language learning in King Abdulaziz University (KAU), Saudi Arabia. It used qualitative methods, which provided the opportunity to collect detailed data that would otherwise be difficult to obtain by quantitative methods.

Participants
Twenty students were chosen via purposive sampling. Moreover, seven EFL lecturers that taught in distinct semesters and of distinct experience levels and ages were interviewed. Four of the lecturers were from Saudi Arabia while three were NES from the United States and the United Kingdom.

Research Instruments
A documentary review, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews with lecturers and students served as the data sources of this study, as per the qualitative case study approach. Printed documents, such as the EFL objectives and programme design, gathered from the administration of the university's Department of English Language, KAU policy documents regarding higher education and the Saudi educational system, and open access electronic documents released by the Saudi Ministry of Education-Higher Education division (MoE-HE) served as the two primary sources of documentation.

Research Procedures
Interviews were carried out in English or Arabic, as per the respondent's preferences, and they took place in the department. Interviews that were spoken in Arabic were transcribed after being translated. Classroom observations took place to cross-reference the interview data. On certain occasions, we were asked to engage in classroom activities after being allowed to observe lecturers and students in the classroom. The actual social reality of the students in the classroom was better conveyed via this inclusion. The data was analysed after one month of gathering. The data was organised into a singular primary theme—pedagogic tactics employed by EFL lecturers in class and their impact on student learning—via the NVivo software.

Findings

Overall, a teacher-focused approach is implemented by most NNES lecturers, as per the analysis of the data. The lecturers' conception of their role and the students' role influence their selection of teaching approach. Furthermore, large class sizes and deficient cultural capital, which often stems from an altogether lack of English language background, are among the structural problems that lead to such a teaching approach being implemented. On the other hand, student-focused methods best describe the teaching practices implemented by the NES lecturers, in contrast to the NNES lecturers. The teaching responsibilities NES lecturers are given by the department and their perspectives on the role of students and lecturers elucidate the aforementioned premise, as discussed below.

Discussion

NNES Lecturers' Perspectives Regarding their Roles, Students, and Teaching

The significance of the textbook in the teaching method of NNES lecturers, is elevated as they comprehend their role as knowledge disseminators. Thus, they perceive their function to be conveying to the students the contents of the textbook. The mentioned teaching technique is predominantly teacher-focused. The role of the students and the lecturer is communicated by Lecturer 2 (L2). Conveying the contents of the syllabus is seen as the principal role of the lecturer. In this case, the students are the receptacles of the knowledge imparted by the textbook and lecturer that act as the sources of knowledge. The knowledge disseminated by L2 is expected to be understood and recalled by the students as attention focuses on the lecturer's own knowledge which is supplemented by the textbook. Furthermore, L2 opines in the same interview that the syllabus can only be changed by the lecturer, thereby denying the students any participation in the decisions of what they are taught. (NNES Lecturer 2, Interview). This result supports Melibari (2015) who stated that the education system in KSA usually tends toward authoritarian teaching methods.

Similar to L2, Lecturer 5 (L5) conveys his viewpoint that all lecturers should follow the textbook as students that acquire its knowledge have the best chance of passing the test. Moreover, L5 views the textbook as the principal source for the course and that it must be followed upon teaching the programme. This demonstrates how L5 is reliant on the textbook for class-based activities and lesson preparation as well as the necessity to absorb the textbook's contents to pass the final exam. The textbook must be followed precisely and thus, the opportunity to have a say in the learning process is denied to the students (NNES Lecturer 5, Interview)

Another point of contention is the negative attitude many NNES lecturers hold towards the EFL program students, as revealed by the interviews. In this respect, students that lack cultural capital as they come from lower-middle-class families, make up a significant portion of the EFL program students. Such students encounter significant difficulty meeting the linguistic and academic demands of the program as they presume that the program will teach them English without prior knowledge of the language. Lecturer 4 (L4) highlights the complete mismatch in English language levels, where as few as ten are prepared to operate at the expected level or higher while roughly 90 would have zero prior knowledge of the language and expect to learn English from zero. L4 states that this unversed majority come with erroneous expectations about the

programme and that the vast majority wouldn't pass the programme despite the lecturers' efforts to give them a chance by teaching the basics (NNES Lecturer 4, Interview)

The large number of students per class is an additional issue negatively impacting NNES lecturers' teaching strategies. The total number of students played a pivotal role in how Lecturer 4 (L4) taught their classes, where larger classes, sometimes numbering over 30, would disqualify the chance of doing discussions, mini-presentations, debates, and other such speaking activities. L4 attributed this to such methods being ineffective given the skills of novice learners forcing the lesson plan to shift to teaching listening. This hindrance in teaching also impacted teaching reading where L4 conveyed that their usual practice of allowing in-class students to read aloud excerpts, and they would be corrected where necessary, was impossible in larger classes and often led to silent reading in class and further tasks to do so at home. This point is similar to that roved by Muchiri and Kiriungi (2015) who observe that the teaching strategies adopted by lecturers are impacted by large class sizes.

Thus, NNES lecturers circumvent the problems presented by larger class sizes by turning to teacher-focused teaching approaches, as L4 shows. First, the choice to teach listening was enforced as L4 could not develop the speaking skills of the students with so many presents in the listening and speaking class (NNES Lecturer 4, Interview). Hence, the vital language skill of speaking was given little to no chance of developing. Equally, English excerpts were read silently as in-class student reading was perceived to be impossible with so many students. The fact that group or pair work in such large class sizes was not proposed by the lecturer to address these challenges is most intriguing.

NNES Lecturers' Teaching Practices in the EFL Classroom

Teacher-focused strategies largely encapsulate the teaching practices adopted by NNES lecturers. A teaching strategy based on lectures was adopted by all NNES lecturers on top of the dependence on textbooks, per the data. A system of teaching that is not two-way communication but rather one, in large class sizes, is frequently seen in higher education systems in Saudi Arabia and is viewed to be a repetitive and bland teaching style. This style is employed by L5 who only provides the opportunity for students to ask questions at the end of their class while using the textbook and slides in a lecture format to convey to the students the concepts and topic of the lesson (NNES Lecturer 5, Interview).

Conveying instructions to the students when in class is an additional teaching practice adopted by NNES lecturers. This is exemplified by L2 outlining how they express to the students in the first class of each semester that if the students follow L2's instructions, they will pass the course, and if they don't, they will fail and only have themselves to blame. These stringent instructions imply that good learners are those that follow the instructions and bad learners are those that do not. Thus, the chance for students to negotiate their learning is denied by this teaching practice despite L2 stating that this method is to facilitate the learning of the students (NNES Lecturer 2, Interview).

Students' Learning Experiences of the Teacher-Focused Approach

Multiple students communicated their negative stance towards the NNES lecturers' teaching methods despite such strategies supposedly being more suitable for the English language background of most of the students and a majority of them are thought to come from lower-middle-class backgrounds. Given that the best opportunity to develop and practise their language skills and knowledge is in the EFL classroom, it is reasonable to suggest that most students find it worrying when such opportunities do not appear. Before entering the job market and graduating from the EFL program, the need to acquire the requisite knowledge and develop sufficient skills is known to the students. Worries about the progress of their skills and learning stemmed from the awareness that much of their future depends on it. Students 7, 12, and 15 convey such sentiments stating that a better job and a bright future are provided by the degree and learning the language, communication with diverse people and finding a job are enabled by learning English, and it's a severe issue if the requisite English writing and speaking skills are not attained at courses end as their future depends on it, respectively (Student 7, Interview, 2nd year; Student 12, Interview, 4th year; Student 15, Interview, 2nd year).

The inability to interact or take part in the construction of knowledge was perceived by multiple students from less privileged backgrounds within the teacher-focused approaches. Regarding the classes of a NNES lecturer, Student 2 (S2) expresses irritation at the overload of knowledge transmitted in the class. The restricted time to practice the language and the overload of theoretical knowledge left S2 discouraged. S2 conveys the desire for more actual language practice and that their personal interest in the class waned as too much information was crammed into a small time. After 20 minutes or so, S2 stopped absorbing the information (Student 2, Interview, 4th year).

The teaching strategies implemented in a reading class by a NNES lecturer are criticized by Student 3 (S3). The lecturer is said to tell the students they are wrong or must stop each time they make a pronunciation mistake when reading a textbook one by one. The correction of such errors, as Lightbown and Spada (2013) highlight, links to a behaviouristic comprehension of EFL learning and teaching whereby novel habits are reinforced. Nonetheless, self-confidence and motivational levels can be negatively impacted in the students by such methods. This ultimately causes students to be reluctant to participate, and this point is similar to that presented by Martínez (2006) who states that reluctance in participating or providing answers rises when negative or excessive feedback is given, at times discouraging students from developing their capabilities. Enjoying classes and having fun beneficially impact students' learning which is reflected by S3's desire for the classes to be more gratifying, educational, and fun (Student 3, Interview, 3rd year).

Resultantly, reluctance to engage and express opinions was experienced frequently by the students. This result is similar to that found by Allamnakhrah (2013) who notes that it is generally thought that a student could fail the course by questioning the content the lecturer disseminates and thus, it is not a common occurrence in Saudi higher education. This is evident in the case of Student 15 (S15) who highlights the risky nature of questioning or challenging the NNES lecturers. The students end up becoming risk-averse by not challenging the lecturer, especially as the lecturer could feel humiliated after being corrected by a student. Active, complete engagement in the EFL

classroom is deterred, as S15 highlights, in the case of a student who persistently disagreed with the lecturer before being told to be quiet (Student 15, Interview, 2nd year).

Additionally, Student 19 (S19) describes how students worry that their grades or ability to pass the course will be impacted by criticising the NNES lecturers' teaching practice and thus, refraining from doing so (Student 19, Interview, 3rd year).

Nonetheless, a small portion of the less privileged students conveyed that they preferred the teacher-focused practices. This is exemplified by Student 20 (S20) who values the guidelines provided by the textbook and prefers to depend on such content. As a result, S20 knows what knowledge and skills to acquire exactly, and this illustrates how such strategies benefit less privileged students in some cases (Student 20, Interview, 3rd year).

The teacher-focused practices adopted by NNES lecturers were criticized by many of the more privileged students. Such criticism stated that the unique needs and prior knowledge of the students were not considered by these teaching practices. In a reading class conducted by one NNES lecturer, Student 1 (S1) highlights the complete drain on interest provoked by overdependence on the textbook and a deficiency of classroom interaction. S1's perception of the lecturer was impacted by their frustration in not being able to read what they like. Resultantly, the lecturers' rigidity is viewed as a shortcoming and the teaching practice is used to cover it. S1 conveys their strongly held view that learning materials should be chosen by the students, which would occur when they become a teacher (Student 1, Interview, 2nd year).

Similarly, Student 14 (S14) stated that they were barely challenged by the materials used by the NNES lecturers. Thus, the prior skills and knowledge of the students seem to be ignored in the lectures adopting teacher-focused practices. Consequently, the teaching style is uniform as students are assumed to be at equivalent levels. The desire for novel materials to stimulate students looking to further their English Education was expressed by S14, particularly because the standard material offered subpar explanations (Student 14, Interview, 2nd year).

The formal manner of interactions between the NNES lecturers and their students was generally perceived by the more privileged students. Student 9 (S9) compares the NNES and NES lecturers of the EFL programme noting how the NES lecturers encourage the students to express their opinions and challenge what they say. Conversely, S9 and S3 alike describe how the NNES lecturers do not welcome or like challenges or acknowledge their errors, and the former even highlights that due to such lecturers possessing a post-graduate degree, they dislike being questioned. This demonstrates that the lecturers' attitudes are perceived by the students. Notably, the lecturers' aversion to being challenged could stem from the desire to maintain credibility as EFL lecturers and avoid displaying weakness. All in all, students end up preferring to remain quiet and are deterred from engaging completely in these classrooms. Arnold and Brown (1999) note that learning a second language is hindered significantly by such sentiments.

Overall, teaching practices adopted by NNES lecturers reflect the teacher-focused approach. Students should passively absorb the knowledge transmitted by the lecturer, and the lecturers are primarily knowledge disseminators, as per these lecturers' perceptions. Frequent

teaching practices include reliance on textbook usage, providing stringent instructions, and lectures. Large class sizes, deficient English skills and knowledge, and other such structural issues impact these practices, as per the findings. Moreover, the authoritative and formal style characterising the interactions between the students and NNES lecturers in the EFL classroom reflected the particularly asymmetric power relations between the two.

NES Lecturers' Perspectives Regarding their Roles, Teaching, and Students

The active involvement of students in the process of learning is considered vita by the NES lecturers who perceive themselves as facilitators in the learning process, as per the observational and interview data. The speaking and listening aspects of the course, named the communication language skill courses, are most likely wilfully placed under the purview of the NES lecturers by the department's administration, according to the data. As outlined in the department's documents, the mentioned courses are taught in the initial stages of the EFL program. This implies that the responsibility of helping new students acclimatise to the linguistic and academic demands of the EFL program largely falls upon the NES lecturers. This is exemplified by L1 who perceives his role as a facilitator of the students' learning process while also aiding their transition from secondary school students into professional university-level students that think critically. Teaching the students novel manners of thinking is an expressed aim and L1 also conveys the principles behind intellectual property so that the students can avoid committing plagiarism (NES Lecturer 1, Interview).

The significance of building good relationships with students is elevated by NES lecturers, thereby helping them facilitate the students' transition. When respect, interest in student progress, and empathy are shown by the lecturers, students' motivation to learn, attitudes, and sense of well-being are enhanced (Sánchez et al., 2013). This is reflected by the sentiments of L6 who advocates lecturers putting themselves in the shoes of the students and prioritizing them. L6 highlights the importance of fostering very positive attitudes toward the language by making them feel at ease (NES Lecturer 6, Interview).

The interview data reveal a shared theme among the NES lecturers, namely, a strong sense of empathy. Efforts are made by such lecturers to transcend the traditional cultural barriers, present in Saudi higher education, that pervasively impact interactions and the student-lecturer relationship. Therefore, attempts are made to build a rapport that goes beyond the classroom setting by NES lecturers with their students. This is exemplified by L3 who states that he takes the role of a father figure to the students, recognising their need for help and guidance. L3 undertakes his office hours in the University Park for the comfort of the students and also states that students are invited weekly to discuss literature at a restaurant close by.

NES lecturers' Teaching Practices

Presentations, discussions, group and park work, debates, and other teaching practices reflect the student-focused approach that NES lecturers implement, as per the data. To enhance the quality of their teaching, NES lecturers emphasise the significance of receiving student feedback. Active engagement and participation by students in the classroom are promoted by the adoption of the mentioned practices. Topics are discussed and debates take place between students organised into groups in the classes conducted by L1, as L1 outlines. L1 focuses on getting the

students to practise their English language skills, even with just simple phrases, as L1 views this as their biggest challenge. The issue of large class sizes is overcome by this teaching practice.

Enriching student interactions with more English content as a means to further develop the communication and language skills of the students is prioritised by L1. As a result, L1 disagrees with the practice of using Arabic in EFL classes, conveying that such a practice is detrimental to the students. While the difficulty is higher when explaining concepts in English, L1 believed that by providing sufficient examples and encouraging the use of English-to-English dictionaries, students could ascertain the meaning of concepts while expanding their vocabulary and language skills.

The individual learning habits and views of the students were deduced by L6 via the process of listening to students' feedback. L6 learns this by listening to what the students are interested in, what they aren't interested in, and how they learn. A focus on evolving the critical thinking of the students by broadening their perspectives is stated by L3 who views the lecturer as a facilitator of this. Moreover, L3 teaches an advanced literature course on top of the basic language course, and in the former course, L3 describes the challenge of aiding the students' comprehension of distinct literary themes as well as helping them analyse texts critically. The lack of knowledge of the diverse forms of critical analysis is thought to be linked to the students' cultural attitudes, as per L3 (NES Lecturer 3, Interview). This result agrees with Al-Sagoube (2009) and Kafe (2009) who state that the lack of any development and training of critical thinking skills in the students' previous education leads to the mentioned deficiency.

By focusing on the student, NES lecturers do not depend entirely on the textbook, unlike the NNES lecturers that follow it systematically. This is exemplified by L1's stance on the textbook, considering it to be a suggestion-based guidebook where L1 decides which topics to cover as per their student feedback, experience, and knowledge. Language is made comprehensible to the students as L1 simplifies novel ideas and concepts while verifying that the students understand throughout the lesson (NES Lecturer 1, Interview).

Students' Learning Experiences of the Student-Focused Approach

The student-focused approach implemented by the NES lecturers received widespread positive feedback from most of the students, as per the data. This is exemplified by the high activity and involvement of the students in the informal and interactive classes of the NES lecturers, according to the classroom observations. During the lesson, ideas and questions could be expressed or asked at any point by the students. Student 9 (S9) communicates that the ability to express their opinions was a right respected and given to the students, where disagreements are welcomed by the NES lecturers (Student 9, Interview, 2nd year).

The communication skills of the students were enhanced by the high quantity of English interactions that the interactive classroom environment facilitated. S2 conveys that their language learning was enriched and enabled by their introduction to non-Muslim lecturers that only carried out interactions in English. Furthermore, the chance to interact with more advanced peers through group and pair work as well as classroom discussions led S2 to feel that their language skills were positively impacted by the practice of only speaking English (Student 2, Interview, 4th year).

The sentiment that the teaching practices adopted by NES lecturers are tangibly developing the skills of the students is conveyed by Student 18 (S18). S18 is aware and excited by the continual development of his writing skills while also expressing enjoyment in the class. S18 notes their excitement in learning new things, noting the long-term benefits of their trajectory, and praises the NES lecturer for bringing about such development (Student 18, Interview, 4th year). Littlewood (2007) states that the student-focused approach is characterised by facilitating the enjoyment of students in the learning process.

As aforementioned, positive attitudes toward the target language are fostered in the students by the NES lecturers. These positive attitudes are generated in the students via the strong ties such lecturers build in their relationships with the students. Markedly improved grades and the sensation of loving the language were expressed by Student 20 (S20) who attributes these changes to the teaching ability of the NES lecturers. S20 describes how prior to this, they struggled with the EFL programme in their first year of the course where NNES lecturers were the sole teaching source (Student 20, Interview, 4th year).

Nonetheless, the student-focused practice implemented by NES lecturers received some criticism from certain less privileged students. Nevertheless, unease with speaking English in class and the heightened awareness that all other students are paying attention to the language used and errors made is conveyed by Student 10 (Student 10, Interview, 2nd year).

To conclude, student-focused teaching practices are adopted by NES lecturers. The active participation and engagement in the classroom by students is a primary objective of such lecturers who perceive themselves to be facilitators of the students' learning process. The teaching practices of these lecturers include presentations, debates, group and pair work, and other such pedagogical strategies. The learning needs and process were topics that the student felt they were free to express their views about which was enabled by the less formal and comfortable environment generated in such classrooms.

Assessment

In the case of both the student-focused or teacher-focused approaches employed by NNES and NES lecturers alike, the standard practice of assessment in the EFL programmes is not so clearly demarcated as in the previous sections. This section is discussed independently as assessments occur in line with policy. The practices and policies of the university substantially impact the assessment practices in the EFL programme. The assessment practices adopted by both NES and NNES lecturers are principally influenced by large class sizes, negative attitudes toward students, and students' low levels of English language proficiency. Resultantly, the diverse courses within the EFL programme are assessed via written exams that are primarily content-based and multiple-choice questions.

Thus, the assessment process of the lecturers did not appear to adhere to the teaching approaches implemented by the lecturers, despite assessment practices usually taking place per such approaches. The large class sizes in the EFL programme are a significant factor influencing assessment practices alongside the institutional influence exerted upon the EFL programme. As a consequence, a majority of lecturers use multiple-choice questions in the exams and the fact that little time and too many students are attributed to be the cause is seen as an excuse by NNES L5.

NNES L5 further details how essay-type questions disappeared some years ago and lecturers preferred to not waste time marking papers. Similarly, the complexity of supervising and assessing 40 students in each class is expressed by NES L6. Given the time-consuming nature of the assessments that take time away from teaching, NES L6 favours multiple-choice questions to aid in the process of assessing so many students while remaining time-efficient (NNES Lecturer 5, Interview; NES Lecturer 6, Interview).

Hence, assessments that principally evaluate the knowledge recollection and memorisation skills of the students regarding the course's contents are the principal forms of assessment. Less privileged students with less developed language backgrounds are more likely to pass the course through such assessment practices, despite the general negative impact on students' language skills that these practices exert. The study technique of memorising as much as possible before the exam is a tried, tested, and successful method that S5 employs. This demonstrates that passing the course at times only required that the students memorise the textbook's contents before the exam. Similarly, replicating the information of the key points of topics likely to appear via frequent revision and memorisation of the textbook is a favoured technique adopted by S7 (Student 5, Interview, 3rd year; Student 7, Interview, 2nd year).

Notably, various NES lecturers outlined how the learning and teaching process was supported by the assessment practices that fuelled their continuous assessment of the students. In contrast, other EFL lecturers employed such practices solely as a means of evaluating the achievement levels of the students. The former perception of the assessments is embodied by NES L1 who views such assessments as an integral component of the teaching and learning process. Via a mix of summative and formative assessments, where the latter takes place through the semester and the former occurs at the end, NES L1 learns of the strengths and weaknesses of the students in a continuous stream of feedback. Presentations, quizzes, and assignments make up the formative assessments and the teaching-learning process is enhanced by the reception and results of such practices, as per NES L1. NES L1 conveys that whether the intended learning outcomes of the course have been achieved is reflected by the summative assessment (NES Lecturer 1, Interview). The student-focused approach is embodied by this form of teaching that enacts continuous assessment.

Conclusion:

This research has investigated the effect that the teaching approaches have on students' English language learning in King Abdulaziz University (KAU). The results have shown significant effects of these approaches on the students' language learning. It has also been revealed that the interactions with students and teaching approaches implemented in the classroom differed between the NNES and NES lecturers. Moreover, large class sizes, students' lack of English backgrounds, and the perception of the roles of students and the lecturer were among the factors leading to Saudi lecturers implementing a teacher-centred teaching approach. The study has revealed that NNES lecturers have used the teacher-centered approach since they prioritised disseminating the knowledge from the syllabus to their students. Consequently, stringent instructions were expected to be followed by the students and formal lectures characterised their classes. Passive learning through near-silent listening and note-taking typified the learning process in these lessons. On the other hand, a student-centred approach was implemented by the NES

lecturers. This has led to most of the students expressing positive attitudes toward the student-focused approaches adopted by NES lecturers.

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