The Relationship between the Egyptian English Teachers’ Practices and the University Students’ Motivation

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Abstract—This paper investigates the relationship between the Egyptian English teachers’ practices and university students’ motivation. A qualitative method including interviews to students has been adopted in this study to measure the extent to which the Egyptian English teachers’ practices affect the students’ motivation and their academic performance. Interviewed students discussed their perception about their Egyptian English teachers’ practices and the different situations where their teachers have demotivated them concerning their work. The results showed that students suffer their teachers’ lack of appreciation towards their assignments and exams and as a result they lose their motivation and engagement towards learning English. In addition, all the interviewees agreed that English teachers’ encouragement is one of the main factors that push students to achieve good grades. Students also mentioned that English learning is hugely depending on their teachers’ practices since writing relies on motivation and creativity. Some recommendations are suggested at the end of the study which suggest that Egyptian English teachers’ should attend self-professional development trainings to improve their teaching abilities.

Keywords—Students’ academic motivation means their desire to learn and it determines also the extent to which they will be engaged in the process of learning (Ames & Archers, 1988).

I. INTRODUCTION

There are many factors that impact the students’ motivation towards learning in all the academic subjects. Therefore, teachers’ practices are vital concerns in Egypt as it shapes students’ motivation. Expert teachers’ practices are essentially the principle components which motivate the students to learn and study well. Caja & Weiss (2000) mentioned that, a suitable instructional method or practice plays a crucial role in molding the students’ inspiration and views about learning. One of the consequences of having expert teachers’ techniques is having students who have the ability to invent and innovate. Therefore, the solution to improve the level of education resides in knowing how university professors can deal with students to motivate them and to ensure effective methods of teaching that help to create successful students, therefore the nation’s economy (Caja & Weiss 2000).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a relationship between English teachers’ practices and students’ motivation. The results of previous studies showed the high correlation between professors’ practices in classroom and the extent to which students are motivated (Paz, 2000). Students suggested that professors have to enhance their academic performance by increasing their motivation (Mifsud, 2011). Other sources addressed the importance of a good relationship between the teachers and their students; the more the teachers get in touch with their students the more they will be able to guide and motivate them (Diane, 2011; Hatcher, 2000). As a result of establishing a good personal relationship with students, professors will be more able to evaluate the students’ abilities and help them to develop their weaknesses concerning learning English. (Diane, 2011; Northup, 2011). Some studies emphasized the importance of decreasing the hours spent in class in order not to lose students’ attention (Mifsud, 2011). Generally, all studies found out that students’ motivation is highly affected by teachers’ practices concerning their academic performance. Whereas, the present research will focus on investigating the effects of the Egyptian English teachers’ practices on university students’ motivation in Egypt. In addition, there was no similar research which was conducted in Egypt.

A study conducted by Larkin (2003) stressed on the issue of engagement in learning process and that students’ cannot be interested in a specific subject. Students also are affected by their professors’ performance which is a vital factor of shaping their ideas and their desire to learn. The end goal of the study is to increase the students’ motivation which can encourage them to learn. On the other hand, Students’ Practices which were observed may not tell the right story and that is why Larkin (2003) aimed at analyzing the students’ body language and relate it to their motivational level. Moreover, Larkin (2003) surveyed about 2,089 students to find out their attitudes on their classroom practices and the results showed that honors students tempted to be more intrinsically motivated and inspired to learn English more than the other students and that is because honors students always seek the pride of success that came out from the effort they do in their studies. On the other hand, students in regular classes are extrinsically motivated; they need their teachers’ to raise their motivation to learn. As a result they seek the outward reward and appreciation from their professors and they do not seek effort in learning to feel proud as the honors students do. The present research aims at finding out whether Egyptian students in general have same views towards education and learning English. In addition, the present research is going to interview university students not school ones to know the effect of their Egyptian English teachers’ practices on their motivation while holding their psychological issues as constant.

Another study by Northup (2011) investigated the effect of the relationship between the teachers and the students’ on the students’ engagement and motivation in class in three different secondary
schools. A sample of students and educators was selected in math and English classes in three urban nontraditional secondary schools. Students’ impression of their connections with their teachers was gathered by surveys measuring the teacher-student relationship conducted by both students and instructors. According to interviews with 5 teachers and 18 students, the results suggested a positive relationship between the students’ motivation and the teachers’ attitudes towards them. As Northup (2011) mentioned that the results of his research clarified that students who always get good grades are the ones who have motivating teachers in their classroom. The present study will interview university students only and go in depth with their answers to know the effect of their teachers’ practices on their academic performance. It also try to understand the extent to which Egyptian students are motivated by their teachers’ practices.

Another study made by Mifsud (2000) tested the effect of teachers’ practices on the students’ motivation in Malta’s schools. It was a mixed method research held in Malta secondary schools including surveys and interviews to both teachers and students. Many factors were found to affect the students’ motivation such as the school type and the students’ reactions to the fluent English speakers in Malta. The study was conducted in twelve state auxiliary schools in Malta. This study managed four forms of students (from 14 to 15 year-olds) and their instructors of English. The results showed up that there were other reasons than grades that can motivate students in Malta schools to learn English such as understanding the news in English, travelling, making new foreign friends. As Mifsud (2000) suggested according to the results, students’ motivation and teachers’ motivation affect each other in a direct way; teachers’ motivation have a direct effect on the students’ motivation then on their grades and academic performances in classrooms. However, this study did not investigate the reasons behind the relationship between students’ and teachers’ motivation it only tested if a relationship exists or not. However, the present study will go behind this relationship and will investigate how it could affect the students’ motivation. Moreover, it will be conducted to university students in Egypt.

Another study by Hatcher (2000) investigated the relationship between culture and students’ motivation in class and the effect of the teachers’ practices on the students’ motivation too. It focused on the students of a Japanese university as a new sample to investigate. The poll in the study was partitioned into three areas: Motivation, Learning Preferences, and Strategy Use. Concerning the motivation part, it included inherent, instrumental, and integrative inspiration in addition to enthusiasm toward remote dialect/society, individual objectives, and assignment esteem. Moreover, different explanations focused on aggressiveness, helpfulness, and capability assessment toward oneself, state of mind towards Western society and English, and quality of motivation. Students originated from six classes at a college in southern Japan. The results showed that Japanese students who learn English seem to be less confident due to their teachers’ practices. As teachers do not motivate them to go outside classrooms and talk English but they only push them to talk English in classes. This study is correlated to the present research as it assumed a vital relationship between students’ motivation and teachers’ practices but it was in a Japanese university and not in Egypt but in Japan. The present study will test the effects of teachers’ practices on university students’ motivation towards learning English by conducting interviews to students.

One last study by Paz (2000) stated the lack of new languages learners and he specifically picked the Filipino language as an example. He also tried to find out what affect the learners’ motivations towards learning Filipino. The research emphasized the difficulty of learning a second language as there are many factors that could affect it. Moreover, cognitive processes, personality, and psychological issues have also affected the students’ motivation and concentration within lectures. The examination utilized the joined methodology to investigate the research in Filipino language schools in USA. A sample of 180 respondents conducted the surveys in twelve schools and colleges. The results suggested that one of the reasons behind the lack of new languages learners is teachers’ practices in Filipino schools in USA. As teachers do not motivate students’ during their language classes which is related to the present study research question that suggest a relationship between English teachers’ practices and students’ performance. However, the present study won’t consider any psychological problem and will hold it constant. It will also test the relationship between teachers’ and students’ motivation concerning learning the English language in Egypt not in USA.

Over all, it has been suggested strongly that teachers’ practices have direct effects on the students’ motivation and their academic performance. (Paz, 2000; Northup, 2011). Moreover, Paz (2000) suggested the importance to qualify teachers to motivate students and encourage them to learn by arranging training sessions for them to raise their ability to deal with unmotivated students and enhance their academic performance that is strongly connected to their motivational level. He also stated that students’ get less motivated towards learning new languages because of their professors’ lack of motivation. As Larkin (2003) mentioned in his study that the students’ engagement in their classrooms activities’ only depend on their teachers’ practices within lectures; teachers can interest them in learning new things even if they are not motivated. It was shown that all of the previous studies emphasized the presence of a positive relationship between teachers’ practices or attitudes in classrooms and their students’ motivation and academic performance. However, none of all the previous studies took place in Egypt and that is why the present research will be conducted in Egypt and only university students will be interviewed holding their psychological state constant. Moreover, the present study is about the effects of the Egyptian English teachers’ on the university students’ motivation. Finally, all these previous studies give right to the question of the present research which is: “what are the effects of the Egyptian English teachers’ practices on university students’ motivation?”

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The present research design is qualitative. It allowed the interviewer to go in depth with each and every question asked to the candidates. As a result, participants’ answers were analyzed using a specific type of analysis based on categorizing data and arranging it into themes and patterns.

B. Research Participants

The participants of the present research were students in the American University in Cairo. Interviews were conducted to five Egyptian students in the American University in Cairo whose age range from 18 to 22 years old. They were from different majors, and they were also in different academic years. Female and male Students were interviewed. There was some descriptive information about the interviewees that should be known such as, educational background, and academic standard.

C. Research instruments

The instrument that has been used in the present research is an interview to AUC students.

D. Interviews’ questions

In order to investigate on the present research question which is “what are the effects of the Egyptian English teachers’ practices on
the university students’ motivation?” students were interviewed to explain in details the impact of their English teachers ‘professors on their academic performance. In addition, all the students’ responses to the interview’s questions were confidential. In order to make sure that the questions included in the surveys were suitable for the research question, this study was piloted by two students in AUC from different majors and schools in AUC. (See appendix C)As a result the interview questions were edited (See appendix A) according to the feedback received from the piloted students. The results that were obtained from the interviews were analyzed qualitatively in order to have deep details about the effects of the Egyptian English teachers’ practices on university students’ motivation.

E. Data Analysis

All the data that have resulted from the interviews was analyzed qualitatively. A certain technique of classification has been applied to analyze the results in the present study which is that the answers of the students interviewed were collected and categorized under many categories. Each category indicated a certain pattern or a result. In addition, the technique used facilitated the analysis process as it helped to collect data obtained from interviews through many patterns and themes related to students’ motivation, which is easier than considering each and every case separately.

IV. RESULTS

According to the interviews’ questions (See appendix A), results were gathered to investigate the relationship between the Egyptian English teachers’ practices on university students (AUC) motivation and academic performance (See appendix B) .The participants’ answers to the interviews’ questions suggested many ideas. Before explaining each and every notion behind the responses, an important observation about the results is that all the participants have approximately same answers in all of the questions.

Students’ motivation and their teachers’ feedback

The researcher investigated the teachers’ attitude that can destroy the students’ motivation. The students’ answers raised the idea of NFO, which is the negative feedback only; students explained that the thing that can definitely harm their motivation towards learning English is their teachers’ bad feedback without considering the students’ time and efforts. Students waste a lot of time on their papers and assignments to get good grades. As a result, if their teachers’ didn’t show their appreciation, students immediately get demotivated and they became desperate about their work as their teachers are their role models in class so they easily get affected by them.

Students’ motivation and teaching methods

An important theme in the results was concerned about the teachers’ techniques of teaching in classes (TOT) and their ability to increase the students’ engagement in class .There were many techniques that were suggested by the students such as: appreciation and encouragement. For example one of the participants answered this question as the following “an English teacher can motivate me by appreciating my ideas and writing then criticizing, because most of them give us the impression that we always have to start over.” This answer suggested that students are not annoyed with their teachers’ comments but they only want a constructive criticism to help them to edit what they have already done.

Students’ definition of self-motivation

Concerning the definition of motivation from the students’ point of view, there was only one definition suggested by all the students which is “the encouragement or the appreciation that push them to work harder”. Moreover, this definition showed how the teachers’ appreciation could play a crucial role in shaping the students’ motivation and academic performance.

Students’ desire to learn English

Investigating the advantages of learning English (AOLE) from the students’ point of view helped the researcher to know the real cause of learning English. The main cause to learn English was to be able to talk to foreign friends. As a result students don’t usually learn English for the sake of it but they seek learning it to make new friends and be able to communicate with them.

Teachers’ motivational skills

All the students answered this question saying that they have never met an English professor in AUC who had motivated them.

Students’ motivation and creativity in writing

This question reflects the idea of how important is the creativity in writing English (CIWE) and this is how the students’ answers connected between their motivation and their creativities in their English essays. As they elaborated that they couldn’t really write good essays unless they are motivated as writing is basically something creative.

Students’ motivation and academic performance

Students’ motivation has a direct effect on their academic performance (MEOAP). All the students have mentioned situations where they were best motivated by their teachers and therefore they got good grades in their courses. So that clarified that good grades depend on the motivation not only the hard work.

V. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

A. Discussion

The aim of the present research is to test the relationship between the Egyptian English teachers’ professors on university students’ motivation. The interviews that were held for students’ were designed to get the deep details behind the connection between their motivation and their teachers’ practices. The results reflect the close positive link between the teachers’ practices and the students’ academic standard as it was suggested by Mifsud (2000) in his study where he was investigating also the effect of the students’ on their teachers’ motivation. Moreover Northup (2011) suggested in his study that the more the students are motivated the more they get good grades which is also suggested in the present study as all the five participants ensured that when their get motivated by their English teachers’, they immediately get inspired then get good grades in their courses. Also Larkin (2003), added that the students’ academic performance depends on the teaching techniques that the English professors use during the class time. He also reached another result that the honored students tend to be less affected by their teachers’ practices than the ordinary students due to some internal factors in their personalities. Hatcher(2000) showed in his research that culture also shaped the students’ desire to learn English as something similar was found in the present research which is that students’ tend to learn English because most of the countries do as it is a lingua franca and they don’t learn it because they like so. Paz (2000) added that students tend to be less motivated to learn new languages because of their teachers’ practices as languages mainly rely on motivation and creativity. In the present study students also showed that motivation in learning English is something beyond important as writing English essays rely basically on creativity and enthusiasm. The present research’s patterns explain to what extent is the student affected by the practices of their Egyptian English teachers. In addition it was unexpected to have similar answers from the five participants which reflects the real problem that they always face with their English teachers’ practices on university students’ motivation.
teachers’ concerning motivation. Students strengthen on the idea of creativity in writing in any language and specifically the English language which ensure that they really want their teachers’ to give them the opportunity to show up their creative work and assignments. Another important issue is that the five participants have their GPA higher than 3.5 which determines that they have very good academic level and they are not lazy students who are trying to only blame their professors. However, they seek improvement concerning their English classes. Having all the students agreeing on that they never have been motivated in their English classes ‘suggest that their teachers’ couldn’t help them to be engaged in learning during their class. Furthermore, the participants mentioned some situations where their English teachers’ motivated them and as a result they all got good grades. This point reflected that students’ get affected by their English teachers’ practices in a positive way. Finally, the present research which was conducted in egypt about university students suggested the same results that were proposed by the previous studies. In addition, in the present study the researcher investigated also the effects of the teachers’ practices on the students’ motivation and not only the relationship. However, the present research had different conditions as it was conducted only for university students, and it was also for students from different majors in AUC.

B. Limitations

Many limitations took place in the present study, due to time constraints and other factors. One of the limitations is the sampling type itself as it is not a random sample as there wasn’t enough financial capabilities to do a random sample. In addition, the lack of accessibility as the researcher doesn’t have access to a wide data base of research. Moreover, due to time constraints the participants in this study were only five students. Moreover, Sources were few as they are only five sources also due to the time constraints. The method used in the research itself which is the qualitative method was a limitation because the research could have held a mixed method study if he had enough time in order to get more accurate results.

C. Conclusion

All the results that were obtained from the interviews, have suggested the same concepts that were proposed in the literature review. The results of the present study showed the high level of correlation between the English teachers’ practices and the students as it was showed by Northup (2011). The notion that only lazy students blame their teachers’ was proven wrong in the present research as the five participants had very good academic standard. However, hard workers blame their professors more as they always want to learn and work hard. The present study tackles a very crucial thing in today’s education that could have a huge effect on the education’s failure in a country. Many recommendations have been suggested throughout the present study such as giving all the Egyptian English teachers’ professional training sessions to develop their ways of teaching. Finally, many future researches should investigate more in this field to get out the exact things that should be fixed to build a successful educational systems worldwide.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Interview questions
1. Can any English teachers destroy your motivation?
2. What is something an English teacher can do to motivate you as a student?
3. How are you best motivated by your teacher’s practices?
4. How do you define motivation?
5. What are some of the factors of motivation to learn English?
6. Do you feel motivated when you are in your English class at AUC?
7. Does motivation affect English learning and in what sense?
8. Describe a situation where your English teacher at AUC hugely motivated you

Appendix B

Answers of the five participants
1) Can any English teachers destroy your motivation?
A) Participant one
Yes, by bad feedback and comments with no consideration to the effort put into the work.
B) Participant two
Yes, though not showing any support and not considering the effort I did in my work or assignments
C) Participant three
Yes, by giving me a bad feedback
D) Participant four
Yeah, he could especially in Rhet courses.
E) Participant five
Yes I believe that any teachers can destroy your motivation especially English teachers as with any other teacher you can study hard and get a better grade however, with English it more of a learning process in which the teacher teaches you techniques
2) What is something an English teacher can do to motivate you as a student?
A) Participant one
Encouragement, good feedback.
B) Participant two
Suggest improvements in a friendly and gentle way.
C) Participant three
Extra credit work
D) Participant four
Good feedback and appreciation
E) Participant five
She/he can motivate me to read or give a positive attitude in order not to shatter my confidence. An English teacher must also be very patient
3) How are you best motivated by your teacher’s practices?
A) Participant one
Work harder.
B) Participant two
Through suggesting interesting topics to learn about
C) Participant three
Extra credit work
D) Participant four
When I am compensated by extra credit
E) Participant five
When she/he is patient, has a positive attitude, is encouraging and not boring.
4) How do you define motivation?
A) Participant one
It is an encouragement that pushes you harder.
B) Participant two
Never underestimating the work and the potentials and appreciate the students work and encourage them to enhance their academic performance and motivation to learn English.
C) Participant three
The ability to continue my work with much passion
D) Participant four
Having the passion and the energy that ouch me to work.
Some teachers could motivate their students very well for example I had a Rhet teacher who would show us many video and open up discussions about very controversial issues and ideas that are very new and then would make us write a paper in any of the issues that we discussed that was interesting to us. This motivated me because I was very excited and wanted to actually research this specific issue and write about it.

Appendix C

1. Can any English teachers destroy your motivation?
2. What is something an English teacher can do to motivate you as a student?
3. How are you best motivated by your teacher’s practices?
4. How do you define motivation?
5. What are some of the factors of motivation to learn English?
6. What part does motivation play in effective teaching?
7. Do you feel motivated when you are in your English class at AUC?
8. Do you feel motivated when learning something new?
9. Does motivation affect English learning and in what sense?
10. In what way can English teachers help people to increase their motivation?
11. Why do you study English?
12. What do you do to keep your motivation?
13. How do your English teachers at AUC plan to motivate you to improve your English?
14. What do you do if you feel your English teacher is not improving your English language skills?
15. What role do teachers play in motivating students?
16. Have you ever tried to motivate someone else to do something? How did you feel after?
17. Can motivation of teacher influence competitive behavior?
18. Do you find that motivated people are more successful than unmotivated people?

REFERENCES