

Promoting Communicative Competence within EFL Contexts: A UAE Case Study

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Abstract—Upon university graduation, under-graduate students studying in the United Arab Emirates are expected to acquire adequate communicative competence in English as a foreign language. Despite the efforts made within the area of teaching English to university students majoring in subjects other than English language and literature, the outcome as reflected by students' skills and competencies in English is still below expectations. Believing in the essential role literature can play in promoting communicative competence on the part of EFL learners; the current study introduces a literature-based course: LEARN AND GAIN. Adopting an experimental design, the research project involved two groups: experimental and control. To examine treatment effectiveness, the researcher set and administered a pre-posttest. The pre-posttest aimed to measure subjects' communicative critical reading competence and subjects' communicative critical writing competence in English. Based on the statistical findings, the experimental group students' achievement on the communicative critical reading competence pre-posttest and the communicative critical writing competence pre-posttest was significantly better than that of their counterparts of the control group students. In the light of findings and conclusions, a number of recommendations have been made.

Index Terms—English as a Foreign Language (EFL), communicative competence, literature within EFL contexts

I. INTRODUCTION

Upon university graduation, undergraduate students in the United Arab Emirates are required to acquire sufficient communicative competence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). In spite of English language practitioners' efforts within the field of teaching university students, the outcome as represented by students' achievements in English could still be better (Al Alami: 2013).

What could be some of the major factors that inhibit EFL university students' progress within the area of acquiring adequate communicative competence? According to the author, it could be a number of reasons one of which is lack of exposure to literature in the foreign language. Excluding students majoring in English, it is General English and in some cases ESP courses that students are taught, with little reference to literature (Al Alami: 2013). The author, as such, advocates utilising literature in the EFL classroom to promote students' communicative competence, amongst other factors. This belief is supported by some specialists' studies and recommendation which argue for utilising literature to enhance foreign language proficiency. For instance, McRae (2008) explains that using stories within teaching contexts will have a positive impact when considering skills such as reading for pleasure. Speaking of utilising novels within EFL contexts, Shaw (2007) explains that novels have the power to engage readers both cognitively and emotionally. According to De Naples (2002), when students learn how to understand fiction in the form of drama and poetry and engage in characters' lives, asking questions about the worlds authors create, they very often ask questions about their own lives and issues they encounter. Vocabulary, sentence structure, and patterns of organisation offer students many points from which to learn or to broaden understanding.

It would be reasonable then to conclude that, utilising literature may contribute to enhancing communicative competence within EFL learning contexts. The present research, therefore, aims to examine the validity and creditability of this viewpoint through teaching *novels and short stories* to university students majoring in subjects other than English language and literature. The *novels and short stories* course adopts the idea that literature is not an object but rather a main resource which can be actively utilised within EFL/ESL (Baba 2008).

For the purpose of the present research, acquiring adequate communicative competence has been defined in terms of sufficient acquisition of four components; namely, linguistic competence, discourse competence, strategic competence, and socio-linguistic competence. Linguistic competence refers to acquisition of sufficient knowledge of the norms and conventions of language elements such as syntax, spelling, pronunciation and so on. This type of competence ensures accuracy in terms of language use and usage. Discourse competence refers to skill in manipulating both spoken and written language in stretches of discourse, thus resulting in fluent use of language. Strategic competence refers to skill in employing strategies which a language user can resort to when communication breaks down; hence ensuring communication is not hindered. And socio-linguistic competence refers to adequate knowledge of the target culture, which normally yields in appropriate use of language.

As well as Section One, the current paper includes the following sections: literature review, research questions, research hypotheses, study variables, research conduct, the proposed course at a glance, statistical treatment, statistical treatment, research findings, recommendations for EFL practitioners to consider, concluding word, as well as references. It is worthwhile mentioning in this context that, even though the current research project has been conducted in Dubai, the research topic, methodology, conclusions and recommendations can still be of use and interest to foreign language researchers and practitioners working in different parts of the world.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

As mentioned earlier, the current paper discusses how to promote communicative competence through utilising literature in the EFL classroom. Hence, the *literature review* section of the paper discusses two areas of relevance to the study: theories and approaches relating to literature teaching within EFL contexts, and teaching in the communicative classroom.

A. Theories and Approaches Relating to Literature Teaching within EFL Contexts

Language acquisition is a complicated human process whereby a variety of variables are involved, contributing either positively or negatively. Amongst the most prominent variables is the quality of instruction offered to learners. This part of Section Two seeks to delineate a number of related theories and approaches within the field of EFL literature.

A number of specialists recommend employing a stylistics approach in the EFL classroom. What does a stylistics approach mean and entail? Busse (2010, p. 6) explains that stylistics in its most general sense refers to 'the study of style in language and how this results from the intra-linguistic features of a text in relation to non-linguistic factors such as author, genre, historical period, and so on.' Busse proceeds to propose that new historical stylistics should be considered as a combined discipline of linguistic description and literary interpretation, which is characterised by being functional and formal. A new historical stylistic analysis of a text presumes an adequate knowledge of the context, the period, and the language in which the text is/was produced. Some context-related information guides our reading of a text, generic knowledge for example. According to Leech (2010, p. 17), stylistics can simply be defined as a 'way of using language.' When we examine language style, we talk about the style used in a certain textual domain, corpus for example, or the style of a particular text or an extract from a particular text.

Depicting stylistics in today's world, Carter (2010) thinks that it has a significant role to play in relation to methodology in the instruction of literature, and accordingly, in pedagogy developments in both first and second language teaching contexts. Amongst the most prominent developments is focus on 'textual transformations' whereby comparative text analysis can be used through rewriting a literary text from different positions, hence translating the text from textual to dramatic, verbal to visual, or spoken to written. Looked at from Prieto's point of view (2010), a stylistics-inspired pedagogy of both literary and non-literary texts has the advantage of providing learners with genuine chances for enhancement. Speaking of real-life language functions, such genuine chances are of great benefit in relation to enriching/expanding knowledge: creative, analytical and critical.

Warner (2010) discusses how pragmatic stylistics-an interdisciplinary branch of literary linguistic study that deals with literary texts as social acts of interactive communication- can function as a methodological basis for a pedagogical strategy of what can be referred to as contact pragmatics. Contact pragmatics stresses the relations between linguistic function and form, and as such, can be employed to promote learners' sensitivity to the use of linguistic choices, enabling them to recognise interpretation in certain social and historical contexts. Zyngier and Fialho (2010), on the other hand, explain that one of the problems with literature instruction and pedagogical stylistics is their divorce from theories of education. Of great importance for instructors to consider are both the instructional content and the context in which it is conducted; the social conditions in which they teach. Critical pedagogy is likely to help enhance literary awareness in an EFL stylistic context. What is more, the relationship between instructors and learners has to be based on mutual understanding and respect rather than superior to inferior relations. Thus, there has to be some intimate bonds between both parties. Lastly, the class has to be a healthy environment encouraging autonomy learning of major types: cultural, critical, and emotional.

The role of emotion in education has taken on more and more importance in the field, particularly as it relates to the teaching of literature in English in different cultural contexts, where the experiences recounted in novels, short stories and poems can be far removed from the day to day experiences of students in a context such as that of the United Arab Emirates. Proponents of the importance of emotion in literature testify to an underlying universality of experience we all share, regardless of differences in cultural and social contexts (Dawson, 2007; Brearely, 2000). According to Dawson (2007), the four emotions people share regardless of any considerations are: happiness, anger, sadness and fear. When in class, focus should be made on the role emotions play in relation to students' response to a reading text, literary texts in particular.

This part of Section Two describes a number of theories and approaches which can be adopted in EFL contexts. It's the author's recommendation though that the approaches outlined above, should testify to eclecticism when it comes to choosing an appropriate methodological approach to take with a group of students.

B. Teaching in the Communicative Classroom

What features characterise communicative language teaching? Stating it in general terms, Gilmore (2007) emphasises that we need to present language which is solidly contextualised, as well as sensitise students to the ways in which the discourse presents its context. However, since each culture is unique, each classroom is also unique not only all over the globe but also within the same country. This requires the need to adopt an elective approach, in order to meet individual students' needs. Gilmore goes on to stress that practitioners need to promote all components of communicative competence on the part of EFL students. The component of discourse competence refers to the ability to produce unified, coherent and cohesive spoken as well as written texts. Pragmatic competence may come from the friction of students' daily interactions. It refers to one's ability to make himself/herself understood, as well as establish and maintain smooth relationships. EFL students' pragmatic awareness can be enhanced by increasing the amount of pragmatic input, along with placing a genuine emphasis on this aspect of communicative competence. Linguistic competence refers to the linguistic knowledge of grammar, structure, and so on.

In Hiep's view (2005), communicative language teaching can be applied through information gap activities, pair and group work, as well as a variety of other practices that are likely to suit each local context by itself. Depending on the cultural and even physical setting, a practitioner can use tasks set for small groups, or/and for a whole class format. Generally speaking, a combination of the two is usually appropriate. Whatever the task, it is essential that students are exposed to a variety of life-like situations whereby they practise English for communicative purposes whilst enjoying the task.

Disappointment with both grammar translation and audio-lingual methods, for their inability to prepare learners for fluent use of language for genuine purposes in real-life situations, has resulted in what communicative language teaching is and how it should be characterised by. According to Savignon (2005), communicative language teaching is not only concerned with face-to-face oral communication. The principles of communicative language teaching also cover reading and writing activities that involve learners in explaining, negotiating, and conveying meaning. With the notion of context of situation in mind, communicative language teaching can be seen as an approach or theory of intercultural communicative competence, to be stressed when developing methods and materials appropriate to a given instructional situation.

Savignon (2002) argues that communicative language teaching is not exclusively concerned with oral communication. The principles of communicative language teaching also apply to reading and writing activities that engage readers and writers in the interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning. Both Wesche and Skehan (2002) explain that communicative classrooms are generally characterised by use of authentic texts and communication activities requiring frequent interaction among learners, and learner-centred approaches prioritising above all learners' language needs. Generally speaking, communicative language teaching stresses provision of: opportunities for learners to focus on the learning process in contextualised settings, cooperative learning tasks for learners to exchange ideas in life-like situations, and substantive content for learners to learn as a means for language enhancement. Kleinsasser and Sato (1999), on the other hand, believe that communicative language teaching is derived from a multi-disciplinary perspective that includes; at least, language, psychology, philosophy, sociology, and education research.

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1993), the communicative approach is concerned with three sets: the nature of language, the process of learning, and the context within which learning takes place. Communication is usually based upon interaction, performance, purpose, and context. The language forms used in real-life situations vary in accordance with features of role, status, and formality. The following principles, as such, underlie a communicative approach to language teaching:

- (1) People learn best when they are interested in and can identify with the content of what is being taught.
- (2) A major role of education is to enable all learners to achieve their maximum potential.
- (3) No two learning situations are the same. The content of any lesson, therefore, is best negotiated between the teacher and the learner.
- (4) An essential aspect of any kind of teaching/learning a foreign language is the social context within which it occurs.
- (5) Integrating all four language skills should be emphasised.

In conclusion, language communication can be seen as a highly refined human process whereby a number of factors may contribute, either positively or negatively. It is, therefore, of great importance to investigate all the factors which may hinder and impede the communication process inside and outside the EFL class, and act accordingly.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present research seeks answers to the following questions.

Question One: What are the specifications and components of a literature-based course, designed for enhancing communicative competence on the part of EFL university students, studying in the United Arab Emirates?

Question Two: To what extent is the proposed literature course effective in enhancing communicative competence on the part of EFL university students, studying in the United Arab Emirates?

Within these two major questions, four sub-questions have been addressed to further investigate the main issue discussed throughout the current research. Sub-questions One and Two are related to performance differences between

the experimental and control groups, while sub-questions Three and Four are excluded to performance differences in relation to gender and college types amongst the experimental group students. The four sub-questions are:

- (1) Are there any significant differences between the two groups' achievement on the critical communicative reading pre-posttest?
- (2) Are there any significant differences between the two groups' achievement on the critical communicative writing pre-posttest?
- (3) Are there any significant differences between the female and male experimental group students' achievement on the critical communicative reading posttest as well as critical communicative writing posttest?
- (4) Are there any significant differences between the science and non-science experimental group students' achievement on the critical communicative reading posttest as well as critical communicative writing posttest?

IV. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

- (1) There are no significant differences between the two groups' achievement on the pre-post reading test.
- (2) There are no significant differences between the two groups' achievement on the pre-post writing test.
- (3) There are no significant differences between the achievement of female and male experimental group students, on the post reading as well as post writing tests.
- (4) There are no significant differences between the achievement of science and non-science experimental group students, on the post reading as well as post writing tests.

V. STUDY VARIABLES

The study includes two groups: experimental and control. Both groups include males and females; some of whom are science majors and some are not. The research variables are:

Independent variable: The suggested literature course set by the researcher: LEARN AND GAIN.

Dependent variable: Experimental and control groups' achievement on the pre-post reading as well as writing tests.

Moderator variables: Gender: male vs. female, and major type: science vs. non-science majors.

VI. RESEARCH CONDUCT

The research population is limited to EFL under-graduate students studying in the United Arab Emirates and majoring in disciplines other than English language and literature. The reason for excluding English majors is that such categories of students will normally acquire English language skills throughout their four-year study journey. The study sample is thirty-four students studying at a private university in Dubai where the researcher works. Piloting the study took place during the academic year 2008-2009 for one month, re-piloting the study took place during the academic year 2009-2010 for four months, and implementing the study took place during the academic year 2011-2012 for four months.

Seeking to emphasise quality conduct, the researcher implemented the research at the University she works for, in Dubai. The control group members were taught a general English course while the experimental group members were taught the proposed literature course. Involving both groups, the researcher administered a pre-posttest prior to and following research conduct. The test was comprised of two sections: reading and writing, in an aim to investigate whether the literature course was significantly effective whilst at the same time measuring the impact of the other variables identified for study purposes. For the purpose of gathering sufficient data about subjects' performance on the pre-posttest, both *Mann-Whitney test* and *paired data t-test* were conducted.

VII. THE PROPOSED COURSE AT A GLANCE

This part of the paper describes the proposed course in relation to the main aims and targets, organisation of the content, co-curricular activities performed throughout the implementation process, and points to consider when discussing novels and short stories within EFL contexts.

A. Main Aims and Targets

'Upon the completion of the proposed course, learners are expected to:

- (1) Read to find and handle information for a range of purposes, as well as read to enjoy and respond to a variety of texts.
- (2) Write for a range of purposes, to convey meaning in language appropriate to purpose and audience. Learners are required to develop their abilities in reading critically. In so doing, they should be able to:
 - (1) Distinguish facts, opinions and reasoned justifications.
 - (2) Grasp feelings, opinions and attitudes implied.
 - (3) Deduce meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context.
 - (4) Make judgments based upon personal knowledge and experience.
 - (5) Recognise the adequacy and effectiveness of employing literary devices.

Moreover, learners are required to improve their abilities in writing critically. In so doing, they should be able to:

- (1) Write coherent pieces of written discourse.
- (2) Utilise cohesive devices in a written piece appropriately.
- (3) Employ literary techniques in writing effectively.' (Al Alami, 2013, pp. 101-102)

B. Organisation of the Content

LEARN AND GAIN is comprised of seven main sections. These are:

Section one: *Warm up* including two activities-brainstorming and advanced organisers.

Section two: *Reading in action* including five sub stages-as you read find out, keeping track, close study, reader's response, and follow-up activities.

Section three: *Language practice* including three areas-word finder, grammar focus, and literary qualities.

Section four: *Oral production* including a variety of oral language activities such as debates, interviews, and role-play.

Section five: *Writer's workshop* including four stages: brainstorming, drafting, proofreading, and editing.

Section six: *Self-evaluation* including self-assessment checklists.

Section seven: *Building up your portfolio* including project work activities. (Al Alami, 2013, p. 102)

C. Co-curricular Activities Used throughout the Implementation of the Proposed Course

This part of Section Seven presents the co-curricular activities performed throughout the implementation of the proposed course, followed by some recommended websites which can be of use to EFL learners.

(1) **Movie making:** Make a thirty-minute movie based on a story you have read recently.

(2) **Make a jolly postman book:** Write different types of letters to stories' main characters.

(3) **Develop point of view by thinking like one of the main characters:** Write a specific event or quotation from the story you have chosen, and then depict what the character(s) is/are thinking at that time by either writing the thoughts or drawing pictures inside the outline of the head.

(4) **Compare/Contrast using graphic organisers:** After reading two different versions of the same story, create a *Compare and Contrast Diagram*, highlighting both similarities and differences.

(5) **Write acrostic poems:** Choose a key word from one of the stories you have read and write it down the left hand side of a blank paper. Then, you need to write a poem about the key word in which each line begins with a letter of the key word.

(6) **Write limerick poems:** Limericks are humorous poems which begin by introducing a person and a place. Limericks rhyme A A B B A, and have a strong rhythm. Write a limerick based on a story you have read recently.

(7) **Write riddles about main characters:** Having chosen some of the stories you have read recently; write a number of clues about story characters in a *Guess Who*.

Recommended websites

Pre-reading tasks

(1) Read-before-you-read

Socio-historical and literary background of author and text:

Web Quest: WebQuest.org

Wiki (PB works): <http://pbworks.com/using-pbworks-individual-classrooms>

(2) Write-before-you-read

Write some ideas or events based on your experience.

(3) Speak and listen-before-you-read

Record personal experience *Voice boards*: <http://clear.msu.edu/teaching/online/ria>

While-reading tasks

(1) Conversations: <http://clear.msu.edu/teaching/online/ria>

(2) Audio assignments: <http://clear.msu.edu/teaching/online/ria>

Post-reading tasks

(1) Multimedia project: <http://clear.msu.edu/teaching/online/mashup/index>

(2) Collaborative non-linear story writing: <http://www.novlet.com/>

(3) Communication and interaction: <http://www.english-corner-online.com>

D. Novels and Short Stories in EFL Contexts: Points to Consider

For a language/literature course to *function* effectively, EFL instructors are advised to provide students with stimulating tasks to practise language in a variety of contexts. Provision of such tasks involves the following:

- (1) **Thinking:** for example, speculating, hypothesising, discovering.
- (2) **Feeling:** for example, describing, reflecting on and describing their feelings.
- (3) **Communicating:** for example, receiving and expressing ideas and information.
- (4) **Making:** for example, stories, letters, projects.

It is the researcher's profound belief that sufficient comprehension of a novel/short story would require adequate discussions of the following areas:

- Language.** Does the language strike readers as unusual in any way?
- Repetition.** Is anything repeated again and again? What is the effect?
- Literal vs. metaphorical.** What literal details are given? What is the effect of that?
- Silence.** What relevant information is not given? What is the effect of that?
- Setting.** What use (if any) is made of the physical setting?
- Narrator.** What kind of narrator is used? Is the narrator a character in the story?
- Perspective.** Through whose eyes is the story told? What is the effect of that?
- Characterisation.** How is a character portrayed?
- Speech.** Does the narrator use direct speech, indirect speech, or some other method?

The researcher as such advocates exposing learners to as many purposeful reading tasks as possible. Whilst exposing learners to a reading experience, it would be helpful for practitioners to use the inherent power and natural flow of the story itself as a guide to teaching it; identify and drawing in students' past experiences through discussion; encourage students to seek and observe interconnections between aspects of the story; provide preparatory background before approaching difficult vocabulary and allusion; and stress the enjoyment of reading and discussing short stories and novels as a goal. Relating the discussion to pedagogical activities, it is essential that practitioners are aware of what activities to perform, when, why, and how. Speaking of the language elements of syntax and grammar, activities which can be conducted to improve students' control of syntactical patterns through short stories include amongst many others: dividing sentences into shorter ones followed by recombining the smaller sentences and comparing the result with the original, and having students rewrite parts of a story in another tense. Speaking of the language element of vocabulary, activities should not be excluded to explaining unfamiliar words and phrases. Highlighting denotations and positive / negative connotations is no less important. As far as oral activities are concerned, creating pre-discussion activities such as listing is expected to guide student discussions. Conducting a micro-teaching discussion activity would be helpful as well. Encouraging some story-club discussions would also be beneficial. For these story-club discussions to be functioning effectively, a practitioner is advised to observe students' participation in their discussions, recording both successful and less successful instances of involvement in their discussions.

VIII. STATISTICAL TREATMENT

As previously mentioned, four hypotheses have been formulated in accordance with research sub-questions. To test the first study hypothesis, both paired samples *t*-test and *Mann-Whitney test* were conducted.

TABLE ONE:

T-TEST EXPERIMENTAL GROUP-COMMUNICATIVE CRITICAL READING COMPETENCE PRE-POST TEST

Paired Samples Statistics

Test	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
pretest	14.0000	17	4.86056	1.17886
posttest	18.0000	17	2.85044	.69133

Paired Samples Correlations

Test	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pre-test & post-test	17	.645	.005

TABLE TWO:

T-TEST CONTROL GROUP-COMMUNICATIVE CRITICAL READING COMPETENCE PRE-POST TEST

Paired Samples Statistics

Test	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	13.4118	17	4.75735	1.15383
Post-test	15.4706	17	7.30683	1.77217

Paired Samples Correlations

Test	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pre-test & Post-test	17	-.128	.624

Paired Samples Test

Paired Samples Test								
Test	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pre-test Post-test	-2.05882	9.21595	2.23520	-6.79723	2.67958	-.921	16	.371

TABLE THREE:
COMMUNICATIVE CRITICAL READING COMPETENCE PRE-TEST & COMMUNICATIVE CRITICAL READING COMPETENCE POST-TEST COMPARISON
PRE-TEST

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The medians of score are the same across categories of group.	Independent-Samples Median Test	.731	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of score is the same across categories of group.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.946 ¹	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

¹Exact significance is displayed for this test.

POST-TEST

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The medians of score are the same across categories of group.	Independent-Samples Median Test	.493	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of score is the same across categories of group.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.946 ¹	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

¹Exact significance is displayed for this test.

Based on the statistical results, both groups could achieve progress towards the end of the academic semester, as indicated by their performance findings. However, the experimental group students could achieve a significant progress. As the *p-value* for the experimental group (*Sig.* = .000) is less than 0.05, while the *p-value* for the control group (*Sig.* = 0.371) is greater than 0.05, then it is evident that there is a significant difference between the performance of the two groups on the communicative critical reading competence pre-posttest, in favour of the experimental group students.

To test the second hypothesis, both paired samples *t-test* and *Mann-Whitney test* were conducted to gather sufficient statistical data. Tables four, five, and six below reveal the statistical results.

TABLE FOUR:
T-TEST EXPERIMENTAL GROUP-COMMUNICATIVE CRITICAL WRITING COMPETENCE PRE-POST TEST
Paired Samples Statistics

Test	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	13.0588	17	5.16715	1.25322
Post-test	16.7794	17	5.58659	1.35495

Paired Samples Correlations

Test	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pretest & Post test	17	.864	.000

Paired Samples Test

Paired Samples Test								
Test	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pre-test Post-test	-3.72059	2.83516	.68763	-5.17829	-2.26288	-5.411	16	.000

TABLE FIVE:
T-TEST CONTROL GROUP-COMMUNICATIVE CRITICAL WRITING COMPETENCE PRE-POST TEST

Paired Samples Statistics

Test	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	5.2647	17	5.90846	1.43301
Post-test	7.5000	17	1.69097	.41012

Paired Samples Correlations

Test	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pretest & Post test	17	.376	.137

Paired Samples Test

Paired Samples Test								
Test	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pre-writing Post-writing	-2.23529	5.50033	1.33403	-5.06331	.59272	-1.676	16	.113

TABLE SIX:
COMMUNICATIVE CRITICAL WRITING COMPETENCE PRE-TEST & COMMUNICATIVE CRITICAL WRITING COMPETENCE POST-TEST COMPARISON PRE-TEST

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The medians of score are the same across categories of group.	Independent-Samples Median Test	.016	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of score is the same across categories of group.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.001 ¹	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

¹Exact significance is displayed for this test.

POST-TEST

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The medians of score are the same across categories of group.	Independent-Samples Median Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of score is the same across categories of group.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000 ¹	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

¹Exact significance is displayed for this test.

Based on the statistical findings, both groups could achieve progress towards the end of the academic semester, as indicated by their achievement findings. However, the experimental group students could achieve a significant progress. As the *p-value* for the experimental group (*Sig.* = .000) is less than 0.05, while the *p-value* for the control group (*Sig.* = 0.113) is greater than 0.05, then it is evident that there is a significant difference between the achievement of the two groups in favour of the students belonging to the experimental group.

To examine the third hypothesis, *Mann Whitney U test* was used. Table seven shows the results.

TABLE SEVEN:
MANN-WHITNEY TEST FOR HYPOTHESIS THREE

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The medians of prereading are the same across categories of gender.	Independent-Samples Median Test	.620 ^{1,2}	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of prereading is the same across categories of gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.525 ¹	Retain the null hypothesis.
3	The medians of postreading are the same across categories of gender.	Independent-Samples Median Test	.644 ^{1,2}	Retain the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of postreading is the same across categories of gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.961 ¹	Retain the null hypothesis.
5	The medians of prewriting are the same across categories of gender.	Independent-Samples Median Test	1.000 ^{1,2}	Retain the null hypothesis.
6	The distribution of prewriting is the same across categories of gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.961 ¹	Retain the null hypothesis.
7	The medians of postwriting are the same across categories of gender.	Independent-Samples Median Test	1.000 ^{1,2}	Retain the null hypothesis.
8	The distribution of postwriting is the same across categories of gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.301 ¹	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

¹Exact significance is displayed for this test.

²Fisher Exact Sig.

Examining the *p-value* (*Sig.*) from the table, we cannot reject the null hypothesis. In other words, we have insufficient evidence to conclude that the performance of male subjects is significantly different from female subjects', on the communicative critical reading competence post-test and on the communicative critical writing competence post-test.

To examine the fourth hypothesis, *Mann Whitney U test* was used. Table Eight shows the results.

TABLE EIGHT:
MANN-WHITNEY TEST FOR HYPOTHESIS FOUR

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The medians of prereading are the same across categories of college.	Independent-Samples Median Test	.620 ^{1,2}	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of prereading is the same across categories of college.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.383 ¹	Retain the null hypothesis.
3	The medians of postreading are the same across categories of college.	Independent-Samples Median Test	.593 ^{1,2}	Retain the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of postreading is the same across categories of college.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.130 ¹	Retain the null hypothesis.
5	The medians of prewriting are the same across categories of college.	Independent-Samples Median Test	1.000 ^{1,2}	Retain the null hypothesis.
6	The distribution of prewriting is the same across categories of college.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.442 ¹	Retain the null hypothesis.
7	The medians of postwriting are the same across categories of college.	Independent-Samples Median Test	.294 ^{1,2}	Retain the null hypothesis.
8	The distribution of postwriting is the same across categories of college.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.104 ¹	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

¹Exact significance is displayed for this test.

²Fisher Exact Sig.

Examining the *p-value (Sig.)* from the table, we cannot reject the null hypothesis. In other words, we have insufficient proof that the achievement of science majors is different significantly from non-science majors on the reading as well as writing posttests.

IX. RESEARCH FINDINGS

As mentioned earlier, question one has been stated as follows: What are the components and specifications of a literature course, proposed for promoting communicative competence on the part of EFL university students, studying in the United Arab Emirates? To adequately answer the aforementioned question, the researcher went through the pertinent literature, seeking the expertise of specialists and researchers within the field. Accordingly, LEARN AND GAIN has been designed and implemented for the sake of the current study. Question two, on the other hand, has been formulated as follows: To what extent is the proposed literature course effective in enhancing communicative competence on the part of EFL university students, studying in the United Arab Emirates? To thoroughly investigate the second question, four questions have been formulated (Refer to Section Three for details). Both *paired samples t-test* and *Mann-Whitney test* were conducted to gather sufficient statistical data. Based on the statistical tests conducted for the current study's purposes, the following results have been arrived at.

(1) As far as enhancement of communicative critical reading competence is concerned, both groups could achieve progress towards the end of the academic semester, as indicated by their achievement on the communicative critical reading competence pre-posttest. However, the experimental group students could achieve a significant progress.

(2) In relation to promoting communicative critical writing competence, both groups could achieve progress towards the end of the academic semester, as indicated by their achievement on the communicative critical writing competence pre-posttest. However, the experimental group students could achieve a significant progress.

(3)Based on *Mann Whitney U test*, the *p-value (Sig.)* indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the achievement of female and male experimental group students on the reading as well as the writing posttests.

(4)Based on *Mann Whitney U test*, the *p-value (Sig.)* indicates that there are no significant differences between the achievement of science colleges' students and non-science colleges' students, on the reading as well as writing posttests.

As proved by the findings of the current study, therefore, utilising literature to enhance communicative competence on the part of EFL university students studying in the United Arab Emirates has been significantly effective. Excluding the discussion to the experimental group students, no significant differences have been located between the performance of male and female students or between the colleges of science and colleges of non-science students, as a result of utilising literature to promote communicative competence on the part of study subjects.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFL PRACTITIONERS TO CONSIDER

Having discussed study findings, the current paper proceeds to present a number of recommendations which EFL practitioners can take into consideration. To begin with, equipping EFL university students with adequate communicative competence through utilising literature in general and novels as well as short stories in particular, would be of genuine support. Accordingly, literature should be approached as a valuable resource and a fruitful opportunity for an EFL student's growth.

To ensure quality outcomes whilst utilising literature in the EFL classroom, practitioners should first seek to identify EFL learners' needs, considering each and every learner's language proficiency level. Upon identifying needs clearly, careful selection of appropriate literary texts has to be stressed. Practitioners may argue over the issue of what it is that makes an appropriate literary text. Seen from the researcher's point of view, factors such as language complexity, age group, variety, cultural appropriateness, length, authenticity, relative contemporariness and human values should be considered throughout the selection process (See 8.3 for details). Whilst selecting literary texts for teaching/learning purposes, practitioners need to bear in mind that a literary text should appeal to students' interests, concerns and age. In so doing, a literary text has the potential to arouse motivation and instil in learners a love for literature which goes on beyond class and lasts for long. Speaking of teaching methodology, EFL practitioners should acquire a repertoire of pedagogical methods and approaches, adopting an eclectic approach when in class. Adopting an eclectic approach will then be based upon a genuine pedagogical wealth, ensuring wise selection of what may work most efficiently under different teaching/learning circumstances.

Mention of teaching methodology should not be made without mention of language assessment which also needs to be conducted properly. Characteristics such as reliability, validity, practicality, and credibility should be what a practitioner's assessment is characterised by. Assessment does not merely entail practitioners' assessment of their students. A student's self-assessment of his/her progress in the foreign language is no less important and should, as such, be an integral part of EFL curricula as it serves a number of purposes. Some of these concern self-assessment as being a pre-requisite for self-directed learning, for raising learners' awareness of language, as well as for increasing learners' motivation and goal orientation. Self-assessment, however, should not be excluded to learners. Instructors are also recommended to self-evaluate their teaching performance on a regular basis in order to ensure quality performance.

Last but not least, it is essential for all parties involved, whether curriculum designers, instructors, learners, examiners, or researchers, to bear in mind that the key solution to any single problematic issue within the field of EFL

can be summed up in two key words: *exposure* and *practice*. The more EFL students are exposed to adequate input as well as have meaningful practice, the better the outcomes will be. To maximise the effectiveness of both exposure and practice, *involvement* has a significant role to play. In the author's view, three components make up the construct of involvement: *cognitive* involvement involving thinking skills, *affective* involvement involving a spirit of motivation, and *interactive* involvement involving some action of appropriate reaction and purposeful performance (Al Alami, 2013).

XI. CONCLUDING WORD

The communication process begins when a writer/speaker has an idea. The form of the idea may be influenced by complex factors such as one's background, mood, culture, physical surrounding, and the context of the situation itself. Relating the discussion to EFL contexts, it would be helpful to use literature as an effective device which practitioners can utilise to promote communicative competence on the part of learners.

To end with, it is worthwhile mentioning that even though the current research project has been conducted in Dubai, the research may still be of use and interest to foreign language researchers and practitioners working in different parts of the world. What makes an exciting and productive learning experience for foreign language learners could be universal in a number of ways.

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