

Exploring English Academic Texts on Language Education and Pedagogy: Structural, Stylistic and Lexical Features

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Abstract—English academic texts on language education and pedagogy refer to texts that reflect features that pertain to educational discourse of language teaching and learning and to its functions in the system of academic and educational communications (Tuzlukova, Stashkova & Pushkina, 2006). These texts serve to construct a common platform for sharing knowledge and ideas in the global socio-cultural continuum. They also allow for presenting individual/local practice and experience of the pedagogical exploration of the world, educational communication, existing academic and language education discourse thus contributing to scientific value and social significance of the local educational communities. Indeed, English academic texts on language education and pedagogy reflect a complex and multifaceted system of the "common" language (Belchik, 1987) that is used globally in the field; nevertheless, their structural, stylistic and lexical constituents have individual/local features (Flottum, 2007). This paper discusses some structural, stylistic and lexical characteristics of the academic texts on language education. The discussion is supported by the examples from the corpus of academic texts on English language education and pedagogy in Oman that reveal both individual/local and internationally recognized common features of these characteristics.

Index Terms—academic texts, language education, pedagogy, Oman

I. INTRODUCTION

Globalization and internationalization of education have necessitated search for methods and procedures aimed at effective information exchange and cooperation between local and global educational communities. These are not limited to certain governmental policies, institutional arrangements and strategies. They also include unique ways in which this new "reality" (Knight, 2003) is represented, organized, processed and manipulated.

In the context of globalization language can no longer be seen as an isolated phenomenon. It becomes one of "the most important components of communication activity" (Crystal, 1970, p.215), an instrument that facilitates overcoming its seemingly chaotic character, and achieving accuracy and logic in naming, stating and generalizing as well as "in the production, maintenance, and change of social relations of power" (Fairclough, 1989, p.1). Moreover, accumulating cognitive and socio-cultural information, language becomes a source of social knowledge that is characterized not only by the local features of linguistic expression, but also by common internationally recognized features based on a common human nature of thinking (Volodina, 1997, p.120). To exemplify, in the world of academia and education, English is used, on the one hand, to communicate multi-level synthesis of educational concepts, practice and experience that construct local culture-inclusive models of education and recreate their linguistic interpretations. On the other hand, it is utilized as the "language of world communication" (LWC) and "academic lingua franca" which "secure and confident use opens up many possibilities" (Curriculum, 2012). To accommodate these two functions, the English language becomes an instrument for a) analyzing individual local "educational pictures of the world" and their synthesis in historical space and time; b) searching for the common grounds of individual local educational cultures and solidifying their links within the framework of the modern "dialogue of cultures" (Ter-Minasova, 2000); c) identifying and better understanding problems of "the other" (Bakhtin, 1994) and "actively assessing" (Bakhtin, 1992) them. In this context, English academic texts on education present research interest as a linguistic, communicative and discourse phenomenon and as a reflection of links between individual local and global educational cultures.

II. BACKGROUND

According to Al-Issa & Al-Bulushi (2010), writing pedagogical research has a pivotal importance for facilitating what Boyer (1990) describes as 'transmitting', 'extending' and 'transforming' knowledge about teaching and learning in general. (p. 42). And the situation with research on English language education and pedagogy in Oman is not an exception.

In spite of critical discussions and underestimation of the issues related to this area of research and research systems in Oman and its universities (Al-Issa, 2011), it has tremendously advanced in the recent decade with the goals of raising awareness about the potential for research in language pedagogy and education; promoting and sustaining its good quality and showing how research in English language education and pedagogy, keeping it current with developments in the field in order to raise the quality of teaching and learning in Oman; encouraging discussions among professionals interested in research in the different fields of English language teaching and learning; fostering communication and cooperation between language educators who are working in Oman's secondary and tertiary education institutions both in private and public sectors in the area of research and encouraging them to present and share their practice and experience. Acknowledging the importance of promoting research activity and creating a sustainable research culture, the Government of Oman and Oman's higher education institutions in Oman have provided insights into conducting and publishing research in language education and pedagogy by supporting research initiatives and publications, e.g. research projects targeting the educational sector from the public to higher education that were given assistance by The Oman's Research Council (see: <http://home.trc.gov.om/tabid/73/language/en-US/Default.aspx> for more information); publishing of *Forum*, regular professional journal of the Language Centre at Sultan Qaboos University, aimed at being a platform for exchanging professional knowledge of language practitioners and enhancing the effectiveness of language teaching practices; (see: <http://www.squ.edu.om/langcenter/tabid/15426/language/en-US/Default.aspx> for more information), etc.

Research on language education and pedagogy in Oman encompasses a wide range of theoretical and empirical topics and issues that aim to meet the existing global and local challenges in language learning and teaching (Al-Issa, 2011). Findings being reported in various locally and globally published journals, books, conference proceedings and web postings (see, for example, Al Issa, 2008; Al Mahrooqi & Tuzlukova, 2010; Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; El-Okda, 2005, etc.) are available for Oman's and international public scrutiny (Nunan, 1999 cited in Al-Issa, 2010, p.59). Addressing the importance of publishing research findings by the educators in Oman, Al-Issa (2010) cites Boyer (1990), comparing publishing at local, regional and international levels with genuine representation of the 'scholarship of discovery' and 'scholarship of integration' (Boyer, 1990, p.18). According to Boyer (1990), the 'scholarship of discovery' or 'scholarly investigation' is '... at the very heart of academic life ... as it is about the search for knowledge for its own sake due to its absolute importance (p.18). Boyer (1990) also believes that the 'scholarship of integration' "puts isolated facts in perspective and helps to make connections across the disciplines" (p.19). Both types of scholarship are reflected in a global "common" language (Belchik, 1987) that represents complex and multifaceted system of language education and pedagogy, and in its individual/local features. For example, in the context of Oman it describes and presents individual/local practices and experiences of the pedagogical exploration of the world, educational communication, existing academic and education discourse thus contributing to scientific value and social significance of the local community of language educators and pedagogues in the country.

This paper discusses some structural, lexical and stylistic features of the academic texts on language education and pedagogy - the genre of academic prose that is one of the missing or unrepresentative (Lee, 2001) in relation to linguistic investigation. The discussion is supported by the examples from the academic texts on English language education and pedagogy in Oman. These texts "are associated with particular, distinctive patterns of language use" (Language and literacy, 2010), and refer to the concept of academic information resource that supports teaching, learning and research on language education and pedagogy in Oman and in the world, and to the concept of modeling of local and individual cognitive activity (Alfeeva, 2001). They are also related to the concept of the academic text by Bazerman (1988) who argued on the importance of "considering the social and intellectual activity which the text was part in" (p.4).

In respect of methodology, according to Humes (2000), "discourses can be analyzed at various levels, from their basic constituents, statements to accumulated discursive formations" (p.36). As observed by Dannaher, Schirato and Webb (2000) these formations are "associated with 'games of truth' working within fields" (p. 45). The examples were retrieved from a corpus consisting of academic texts on language education and pedagogy published in Oman from 2010 through 2014, and "assumed to be representative" (Francis, 1992, p.17) for research and illustration in relation to sampling, representativeness and finite size (McEnery & Wilson, 2005).

For optimizing research procedures the original academic texts were converted into a database structure to compile a corpus (McEnery & Wilson, 2005). Academic texts that made the corpus were stylistically uniform and were represented by the chapters from the books and articles on language education and pedagogy published in Oman. As a piloting study, the compiled corpus was limited to statistically valid size of 200.000 words (Alekseev, 1973), and comprised 40 book chapters and 12 articles that included titles, abstracts and references. Computer programs Word Tabulator (<http://www.rvb.ru/soft/index.html>) and TextAnalystv2.01 (www.analyst.ru) were used for automatic indexing and tagging of the texts; automatic identification of the main topics (words and collocations) and frequencies and automatic reviewing of textual documents.

III. STRUCTURAL AND STYLISTIC FEATURES OF ENGLISH ACADEMIC TEXTS

English academic texts on language education and pedagogy refer to the type of texts that pertain to educational discourse that exists in the system of academic and educational communication (Tuzlukova, Stashkova & Pushkina,

2006), allowing for communicating ideas and thoughts, and figuring out challenges and complex problems of language teaching and learning. Structural, stylistic and lexical constituents of this system serve to pedagogically explore the world and describe specific situations of teaching and learning. They also assist in communicating adequately and precisely academic and educational knowledge, information and ideas. These constituents involve both global and individual/local nuances, functions, features and forms of communication. This relates to Bakhtin's dialogism (1986) who observed that

"Any concrete utterance is a link in the chain of speech communication of a particular sphere. The very boundaries of the utterance are determined by a change of speech subjects. Utterances are not indifferent to one another, and are not self-sufficient; they are aware of and mutually reflect one another... Every utterance must be regarded as primarily a response to preceding utterances of the given sphere... Each utterance refutes affirms, supplements, and relies upon the others, presupposes them to be known, and somehow takes them into account... Therefore, each kind of utterance is filled with various kinds of responsive reactions to other utterances of the given sphere of speech communication" (p.51).

However, the constituents of the academic texts firstly and foremost, reflect a complex and multifaceted system of their "common" language (Belchik, 1987), which is the language of language education and pedagogy. They also feature modern academic discourse and existing system of implicit and explicit rules and regulations that govern the processes of reproducing and exchanging academic knowledge, and, as a consequence, aim at consolidating the global academic community. For example, academic texts on language education and pedagogy are similar to other texts of the same genre and style and consist of a certain number of structural and semantic components or "macro texts" (Boguslavskaya, 2004), namely title, abstract, introduction, conclusion and references. However, according to Humes (2000), "discourses are constantly developing in response to internal and external pressures coming from ideological, economic, political, professional and institutional forces" (p.47). He further observes that "this means that the language in which educational policies are expressed is subject to constant adjustment and refinement" (p.47). To exemplify, the title of the academic text on language education and pedagogy "frames" (Castello, Banales, Inesta & Vega, 2009) what is explained in it. It reflects the topic of research, provides the most useful and interesting information, and serves as the most informatory structural and semantic component of the academic text. To exemplify, "Developing reading skills with the use of discourse analysis", "Professional development for the second language writing teacher" [Forum, 2014]. The characteristics that distinguish the title are maximum shortness, showiness and potential (Castello et al., 2009). These characteristics help to better address the readership and inform them, communicate knowledge and ideas. Due to the communicative potential of the internet, in digital environments these characteristics are distinctive for improving the access of the academic texts to the readers, simulating meaning transfer and bridging communication gaps (Diderichsen, 2006).

Creating a title that is perfect both in its form and content is not easy. Some titles are often long, for example, "Western teachers' cultural and linguistic challenges in teaching English language in the classroom" [Forum, 2014]. Others contain various artistic images, semantic associations, metaphors, abbreviations and rethinking of the meanings of the words, for example, "Practical criticism for the EFL practitioner" [Forum, 2014], "Credit vs. Foundation English Programmes: Putting cart and horse together", "The rest of the iceberg".

The most typical titles of the academic texts on language education and pedagogy in Oman are: a) titles of general character, for example: "Test-Taking Strategies" [Forum, 2014]; b) titles that in detail describe the educational issues that are investigated by the author, e.g., "CALL: Enhancing An Integrated Skills Approach", "Some Challenges In The Assessment of Integrated Skills"; c) titles that reflect some features and nuances of the author's individual approach or point of view, e.g., "Feeding back to make a difference with the help of Vygotsky, Krashen, Chomsky and a few other more knowing others", "Teach me if you can: Omani Foundation students and the story of autonomy"; d) titles, which consist of components that include the details of the local context of language teaching and learning, e.g., "Laying solid foundations: developing national standards for Foundation Programs in Oman" Being an essential part of academic texts, titles mostly focus on the subject of the reported research, e.g. "Cultural Considerations for Non-Arab Teachers New to Oman", which is sometimes separated from its attributes, e.g. "Listening skills for effective academic communication". Some titles, however, include the subject and the object that is fitted from the keywords of the reported research, e.g. "Reflective portfolios in Omani Foundation Programmes: Tools for developing learner autonomy", "Learner autonomy support in EFL classroom: Students' perspective". One of the essential features of the titles of the examined academic texts is that many of them include the components that establish the relevance of the examined topic (global or previously examined in a different context of language education and pedagogy) to the local context, e.g. "General Foundation Programme at Dhofar university: A case study", "A reflective socio-cultural view of identity construction in the Omani ELT context", "Omani editorial cartoons in EFL context in Oman".

Quite interestingly, the titles of the examined academic texts mostly avoid using so-called "ornaments", e.g., "The research on...", "The role of...", "An Introduction to...", "A Review of...", "Effects of...", "Focus on...", "Approaches to...", etc. (as in Halliday, M. A. K. (1967). Notes on transitivity and theme in English. *Journal of Linguistics*, 3(2), 199-244). Most of the texts in the corpus precisely establish the topic and announce the problem, the gap or the issue and contain sets of keywords with highly informative and communicative content, e.g. "Impact of empirical rating scales on EFL writing assessment", "Building Students' Reflection Skills", and can be described as

exemplary, and are followed by well-worded either descriptive or informative abstracts (Castello et al., 2009) that extend these titles. For example:

“English for the Workplace in the Omani Socio-cultural Context”[Abstract: “One major objective of Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) is to continuously develop its human resources by offering training programs of different types to ensure staff retention, motivation and job satisfaction. Since instruction in the English language for non-academic staff has always been considered essential in SQU, the Language Centre has been involved in offering English courses to staff at different periods in the history of the university. The aim of this paper is to describe the process of program and course design for a 3-proficiency level course offered to staff in spring 2009. The chapter will elucidate the history of the course, describe how the needs analysis was conducted, and how the information gleaned from the analysis was utilized in the course. This is done with the hope that the systematic process followed in the course design will guide other institutions which plan to offer English courses for their staff”].

This abstract contains 150 words that describe and accurately detail the content of the academic text and the subject of the research, thus increasing the chances of the accurate and precise recognition of the topic and the main ideas of the text by the readers. The structure is very clear and states the purpose of the research, describes its main ideas and presents “new” knowledge in a clear way. This “new” knowledge can be viewed as a set of ideas about innovative approaches to language education and pedagogy in Oman. These ideas reflect both educational values and traditions that have been established in the local academic community of language educators, and individual social and cultural experience (Tuzlukova, 2001) of the authors of the text.

IV. LINGUISTIC PREREQUISITES OF ENGLISH ACADEMIC TEXTS

From the perspectives of the academic discourse, academic texts on language education and pedagogy reflect values that transcend national boundaries, such as the creation of new knowledge, precision, honoring fellow members of the academy and persuasion in a very wide sense (Flottum, Dahl & Kinn, 2006, p.220). Nevertheless, cultural identities in English academic texts on language teaching are language and discipline specific (Flottum, 2007). Functioning as media of educational knowledge transfer, they serve to clearly and adequately describe the local educational phenomena, processes and experiences, to better communicate with each other in global educational space and, as a consequence, to make it possible for the local educators and researchers to acquire deserved scientific merit and social significance. In this respect, language plays a pivotal role in communicating information and experiences, regulating, organizing and adapting them to global and local educational contexts (Tuzlukova, 2001).

Language as a system of communication (see: <http://www.ldoceonline.com/Linguistics-topic/language> for more information) has a complex structure of interacting and interrelated elements and subsystems that have quite complex internal organization (Shvedova, 1988, p.153). Research indicates that academic texts use a variety of stylistically colored lexical units, for example, expressions that qualify what is said, identify the degree of the author’s attitude (strength/weakness), involvement, decisions about stances on a particular subject or claims made (Castello et al., 2009), e.g. “The third step is carrying out the change plan and the fourth is looking back at the offering and evaluating it but *most importantly to use the evaluation results to further inform and refine* the professional development design and process”. “This is reflected in their limited world knowledge and *may be accounted for in part* by being an oral culture rather than a reading culture”. “However, *one conclusion that may be drawn* is that none of the current teaching materials covers the learning outcomes mostly or completely”.

Academic texts on language learning and pedagogy also utilize words and phrases with metaphoric meanings that refer to sets of “correspondences between two distinct domains” (Herrmann, 2013) and can be enjoyed by the readers who are not professionally involved in education, e.g. “Pros and cons of *integrating* culture in EFL/ESL”. “Higher education institutions are also expected to have appropriate internal quality controls for assessment processes such as moderation, double marking and a *transparent* appeals process for students”.

Terminology is another feature of the language of the academic texts on language education and pedagogy. Similar to technical vocabulary in other specialized texts, that typically covers around 5% of the running words in texts and are of high frequency in specialized texts and subject areas (Chung & Nation, 2003), terminology on language education and pedagogy occurs frequently in the academic texts on language education and pedagogy. Flowerdew (1993) argues that some words which are typically high frequency words or academic words can function as technical words in certain fields (cited in Chung & Nation, 2003).

Terminology on language education and pedagogy features diverse structure. To exemplify: most of the terms identified in the corpus can be divided into five groups: root words (e.g. unit, approach, method, principle, test, error, mark, grade, etc.); derivatives (e.g. eclectic, cognitivism, behaviourism, self-assessment, self-evaluation, tester, etc.); abbreviations (e.g. basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), English language teaching (ELT), etc.); compound terms (e.g. suggestopedia, test-taking, audiolingualism, etc.) and terminological collocations, (e.g. computer-assisted language learning, culture-based educational approach, autonomous learner, etc.). These groups can be supported by the following examples from the corpus: [“One comes across recurring *errors* of interference at grammatical level when Arab learners speak or write English”. “These criteria are given to students at the beginning of the course and their intended purpose is to facilitate students’ *self-assessment* during individual meetings with teachers”. “Such a view, thus, considers the use of *test-taking* strategies as a sign of tactics to

go around proficiency deficiencies or test-takers' lack of skills or knowledge that the test is supposed to measure". "LC students have a Student Resource Centre at their disposal, which consists of a library with a variety of supplementary language activities such as graded readers and phonics-based reading kits, listening materials and computer labs equipped with *computer-assisted language learning* (CALL) programs open for daily access."].

Most terminological collocations are substantive collocations that designate a noun or noun equivalent and have an adjective as a dependent component (e.g. Approach: creative; initial; combined; hybrid; gradual; more reflective; current; effective; mixed method; consistent; theoretical, etc.). For example: ["An introspective review of the current strategy for English assessment at a few higher education institutions is attempted from a critical viewpoint to unearth how far it is in tune with the latest *theoretical approaches* to language testing/assessment and how far it is relevant to ensure the proposed learning outcomes"]. Another noun can also function as the dependent component of the terminological collocations as in, for example, *course design, program design, syllabus design, needs analysis, performance objectives, background knowledge, study skills, word association, jigsaw activities, information transfer, language education, true-false statement, problem solving, role play, lesson planning, classroom monitoring* ["This has led to standardizing English *language education* along with subjects like mathematics, computing and general *study skills* at all levels in university education by evolving a General Foundation Program by all Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs)."].

In the academic texts on language education and pedagogy the terminology appears to be dependent on a multitude of linguistic (e.g. interaction with other language subsystems: academic words, low frequency words, new terms, etc.) and extra linguistic factors (e.g. need to be consistent with local and global educational values and standards; need to be familiar with fundamental educational ideas and new approaches and paradigms in language education, e.g. computer-assisted language learning; mobile learning, etc.; need to insure the terminological support for the processes of educational communication (Ahmad, 1996). These factors have impact on how the terminology functions and develops.

The list of the distinct characteristics of the terminology is not constant either (Arzikulov, 1980, p.14-15). However, the analysis of the corpus of the academic texts on language education and pedagogy reveals that one of the most important features of the terminology is that they represent their meanings in the system of the educational concepts (Akhmanova, 1966, p.467) that are "important for the message of the text" (Chung & Nation, 2003). According to Flowerdew (1992 cited in Chung & Nation, 2003), the writers deliberately provide contextual clues to help readers manage new terminology. These clues "attach" the terms to the domain on language education and pedagogy. They also insure communicating new ideas and approaches, and bring individual local educational cultures closer together. For example, academic texts on language education and pedagogy published by the scholars in Oman include a wide range of terms on didactics and teaching methodology. Using the classification by Kolesnikova and Dolgina (2001), the following groups of terms on didactics and teaching methodology are identified:

1) terms that refer to methods and approaches of English language teaching (*approach, direct method, the silent way, natural method, the oral approach, etc.*), e.g. ["During Phase III, a hybrid *approach* was developed, entailing an initial emphasis on BICS, followed by gradual introduction of ESP and with it, the skills necessary for CALP." "The integrated skills *approach* adopted by the LC assumes that "the various skills components in a language curriculum are closely intertwined and complement each one another" (Al-Mahrooqi, 2008, p. ii)].

2) terms that refer to the development of standards and programs (*curriculum, content, threshold level, negotiated syllabus, course design, etc.*), e.g. ["As a consequence, the initial Foundation curriculum placed considerable effort on BICS, specifically on improving the general reading and writing skills of students, as well as reformulating speaking skills to those of spoken interaction." "At the same time, 24 teachers (64%) did not feel that the FPEL grammar syllabus was adequate in terms of students' grammar needs (Item 10)."].

3) terms that refer to different types of speech activities (*guided reading, speaking, interactional speech, writing, study writing, etc.*), e.g. ["At present, the majority of activities which complement those in the classroom are mainly reading and writing centered, for example, an independent study project, a newspaper article project, or readers". "There is a strong emphasis on speaking skills among the other skills, particularly on engaging in conversation, participating in discussions and making presentations."].

4) terms that refer to the typology of exercises, activities and tasks (*exercise, technique, lead-in activities, tune-in activities, split dialogue, etc.*), e.g. ["The intent of such exercises is to make the learner produce the sounds through imitation and drill". "This website has a collection of English vocabulary word lists and very challenging online activities."].

5) terms that refer to different stages and components of the educational processes in English language and pedagogy (*classroom management, authentic materials, course book, seating arrangement, etc.*), e.g. ["According to Tomlinson (2008), the selection of a suitable course book becomes complicated because a number of factors like finding units of similar lengths, finding a format make timetabling, teacher allocation and class preparation easier".] The teachers, who usually supplement the course they teach, use authentic materials, reading and/or listening texts, and explanations, and exercises."].

6) terms that refer to testing and assessment (*assessment, non-referenced test, criterion-referenced test, oral interview, test patterns, etc.*), e.g. ["The disparity in assessment patterns pose practical hurdles for those students who transfer from one institution to another, either in the middle/end of the course". "So measures may be taken to devise

and introduce an ideal framework and to outline it in OAS at the earliest as uniformity in testing strategies can unify and add productively to ELT practices in the country.”].

Each of these groups is not homogeneous in composition. For example, the terms on language education and pedagogy that refer to methods and approaches include several subgroups of terms (Kolesnikova & Dolgina, 2001). The terminology subgroups that were identified in our corpus include:

(a) “General concepts” (*approach, method, principle, etc.*), e.g. [“The principle inherent in the design and implementation of a language course is that language development involves active, purposeful, and realistic engagement of the learner with the language. Language is learned as it is used.”].

(b) “Language teaching approach(es)” (*behaviorism, cognitive approach, humanistic approach, learner-centered approach, top-down approach, product-oriented approach, integrated approach, process-oriented approach, eclecticism, etc.*), e.g. [“Though this controlled approach seems indispensable for students who are less eager to engage in independent learning, it should be viewed as a transitional temporary stage towards a more learner-centered approach”. “Thus, they may tend to practice teacher-centered approaches even though they still believe in the value of learner autonomy.”].

(c) “Language teaching methods” (*grammar-translation method, mim-mem method, structural-global method, mixed method, situational language teaching, audiovisual method, direct method, etc.*), e.g. [“One of the advantages of the mixed method is that using different approaches to focus on the same phenomenon allows the researcher to get superior evidence for the result”.].

(d) “Fringe/alternative methods” (*community language learning (CLL), counseling learning, suggestopedia, Lozanov method, the silent way, total physical response (TPR), etc.*), e.g. [“Students identified as needing English language support are taught in their subject-specific classes: the “push-in” or “team-teaching” method.”]. This subgroup also includes terms and terminological collocations on language education and pedagogy that support “learning in an environment that incorporates native language, culture and traditions” (Neally, 2008), e.g. *culture-based approach, culturally based teaching, etc.* The identified terminological collocations with the component “culture-based” have positive semantic prosody by associating with its strong connotation, “projecting their connotations and evaluating meaning on the surrounding context” (Boulten, Carter-Thomas & Rowley-Jouvet, 2012, p.7). To exemplify: “Even though a culture-based approach is becoming more popular in language education, the perception of this approach, which exists both among the teaching community and the community of learners in the context of English language teaching and learning in Oman, is still not clear”.

(e) “New developments in language teaching” (*computer assisted language learning (CALL), consciousness-raising approach (CRA), data-driven learning (DDL), task-based learning (TBL), etc.*), e.g. [“Part 4 of the book addresses the area of independent and computer assisted language learning in Oman”. “Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is an effective method of instruction for teaching pronunciation, making pronunciation sound clearer and better articulated.”].

Terms and terminological collocations serve to explore the local educational cultures and identify “locally specific educational values, traditions, paradigms and approaches” (Tuzlukova, 2001). Al-Issa (2011) argues that ELT education systems in the GCC States have suffered from various weaknesses and problems pertinent, but not limited to the following areas: male student teachers’ reluctance to embrace ELT as a career; rift between school outcomes and the labour market; time allocated to ELT on the national curriculum; teaching Maths and Science through English; material and textbook selection and design; computer-assisted language learning; teachers professional development; assessment policy and practice; teacher training and education; classroom management issues; content-based instruction; extra curricula activities; teaching the four skills; independent learning; teaching vocabulary; task-based teaching; teachers’ workload; student motivation; teaching grammar; nationalizing ELT; teaching spelling; critical thinking; culture in ELT; private lessons; error analysis; lesson plan; homework; class size, etc. (pp.66-67). However, they most of these concepts are represented by terms and terminological collocations that describe the existing practice of English language teaching in Oman. For example: [“These issues led us to believe that the current portfolio practices in the FPEL do not sufficiently engage students with reflective and *critical thinking* tasks”. “The purpose of semi-structured interviews was to elicit from teachers and students alike their views on the current situation, to identify the gaps the way they see it and to voice their concerns with regard to *teaching grammar* in the FPEL”. “The development of national standards for general English foundation programs in Oman and the requirements needed to meet those standards have had a significant implication for the *professional development of teachers*.”]. One of the extensively researched areas is related to culture in English language teaching in Oman. This can be exemplified by the terminological collocation with “culture” component that are quite frequently used in English academic texts on language education and pedagogy: a) cultural awareness that refers to sensitivity to the impact of culturally induced behavior on language use and communication; b) cultural integration that refers to increasing integration of the different cultures found throughout the world; c) culturally appropriate materials that refer to materials that are sensitive to the concerned culture do not offend or embarrass people who belong to that culture; c) culture-based approach that refers to an educational approach that aims to instill new cultural values and to give the students a sense of involvement and ownership in an environment, which incorporates native language, culture and traditions (Al-Mahrooqi et Tuzlukova, 2010, p.349). For example: [“To accomplish these objectives, L2 learners need a teacher who could build up their cultural sensitivity and cultural

awareness of the foreign culture”. “The Arabic language as the heritage language of SQU students is the essence of their national and cultural identity, while English, as the most widely used world language, is also important in the educational philosophy in Oman in general and at the SQU in particular.”].

In addition to describing the processes of language teaching and learning, terms and terminological collocations on language education and pedagogy also serve to explain the conditions under which these processes can be successfully implemented. For example, one of the most important recent educational reforms in Oman aimed at ensuring quality higher education was the adoption of the General Foundation Program (GFP) that included English language component. Hence, for example, the terminological collocation “*The Foundation Program English Language*” and abbreviation “*FPEL*” that describe the existing socio-cultural context of language education and pedagogy in Oman and communicate it to local and global educational communities as in [“They commented that the current FPEL portfolio format seems too restricted and does not give students enough choice with regards to the content”. “One of the most significant findings of the survey was that teachers in the FPEL prioritize student needs and motivation over other factors like outcomes, materials or the pacing schedule when planning lessons and teaching.”].

V. CONCLUSION

This paper discussed some structural, stylistic and lexical characteristics of the English academic texts on language education and pedagogy illustrated by the corpus of texts published in Oman. The discussion has emphasized that these characteristics reflect contemporary communications in the global educational space aimed at disseminating “different ways of seeing” (Humes, 2000, p.39); sharing experience, knowledge, ideas generated by the local educational communities and “appreciating and building on various elements of every text’s cultural potential” (Golubkins, 2002, p.5), and have both individual/local and internationally recognized common features. Further study of the English academic texts on language education and pedagogy could address issues which have not yet been clarified in local contexts of language learning and pedagogy, namely issues related to their extra-linguistic characteristics in terms of dialectic construction of academic discourse and knowledge production practices (Motta-Roth, 2009, p.333) and sharing these with the global community of educators and pedagogues.

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