

**An Investigation of the Impact of Task Complexity on
Spoken Language Performance in ESL learners**

دراسة عن مدى تأثير الصعوبة المتصاعدة على الأداء اللغوي الشفهي في اللغة
الإنجليزية لغير الناطقين بها

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DECLARATION

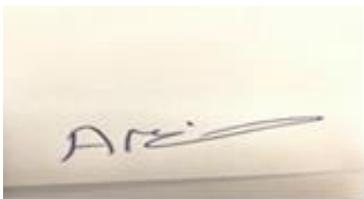
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Abstract

This study investigates the different effects of task complexity on language performance and production in ESL classrooms. The researcher adopts the qualitative approach which is very suitable for such a study in SLA to gain detailed insights based on the actual speech production by L2 learners in task based language production. The study measures the impact of increasing task complexity on students' oral production in terms of fluency, vocabulary, and grammar. The researcher used the IELTS speaking band descriptor as a reliable tool of assessment and a criterion of evaluation. The oral production of participants was evaluated by other examiners to ensure the high level of accuracy in terms of findings analyses that show positive impact on lexical resource in high achievers and a negative impact on grammatical range in mid-achievers.

الخلاصة

يقوم الباحث في هذه الدراسة بتقصي مدى التأثيرات المختلفة للصعوبة المتصاعدة في الأنشطة اللغوية الشفهية لدى دارسي اللغة الإنجليزية (غير الناطقين بها). يستعمل الباحث المنهج البحثي الكيفي لمناسبته لطبيعة الدراسة التي تتناول كيفية اكتساب اللغة لدى دارسي اللغة الإنجليزية مما يمكنه من التعرف على أبعاد وتفصيل مبنية على أداء لغوي فعلي من دارسي اللغة بشكل مباشر. تقيس الدراسة مدى تأثير زيادة صعوبة وتعقيد مستوى المهام اللغوية المكلف بها الطلاب على أدائهم الشفهي من ناحية الطلاقة والمفردات اللغوية والقواعد النحوية. استخدم الباحث معايير التقييم الخاصة باختبارات الأيلتس الدولية لتكون أدوات تقييم يمكن الاعتماد عليها. قام الباحث أيضا بتكليف ممتحنين معتمدين لتقييم الأداء اللغوي للطلاب لضمان أعلى نسبة من تحري دقة نتائج الدراسة والتي أظهرت تأثيرات إيجابية في جانب المفردات اللغوية لدى الطلاب المتفوقين ونتائج أخرى سلبية في القواعد النحوية لدى الطلاب ذوي المستوى المتوسط.

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Chapter One

1.1 Introduction

This study investigates the effects of task complexity on language performance and production in ESL classrooms. The introductory chapter will provide the foundational context of the research; it will cover the background of the study, and it will set the research questions as well as the limitations of the study.

The research will cover some important terminologies that are closely related to the subject of task complexity, for example, task based language teaching (TBLT), the cognition hypothesis, the limited capacity hypothesis, The Triadic Componential Framework for task classification, interactional competence, International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the constructivist approach.

1.2 Background of the study

Language is the means of communication and the platform on which all branches of science are established. The four main language skills are divided into two receptive skills, reading and listening, and two productive skills, speaking and writing. Speaking is the human's ability to transfer ideas and thoughts in his /her mind into vocally produced units or words that convey the meanings intended to be delivered and communicated. The fact that humans learn to speak before they write in terms of language production gives more importance to this specific skill. In addition, not all populations around the world enjoy literacy: the ability to read and write varies due to lack of education in some parts of the world for different reasons. Hence, speaking is considered to be the only productive skill shared among all humans.

Speaking as a language skill to be learned and taught in classrooms has been the main objective of ESL teachers and syllabus designers in recent years. Approaches like the communicative approach are replacing old and outdated approaches like the traditional grammar translation model. Also, speaking has been so crucial among other skills because it involves an evaluation of the individual's education level, social status, and professional expertise; speaking skills also play a major role in getting a job or applying for immigration. In today's English language classrooms, public speaking skills (also debating skills) are the trendiest and the most important

for students to acquire before they graduate from high school. In addition, speaking skills are a corner stone in major 21st century's skills like communication, negotiation, interviewing, and collaboration.

The relationship between task complexity and language performance has been much discussed in recent years. Some researchers find that the production or performance of second language (ESL) learners in terms of accuracy, fluency, and complexity varies according to many factors like their language proficiency level, age, anxiety, task's cognitive complexity, and task familiarity (Skehan (1998) ;Robinson, 1995; Rahimpour, 1997; Gilabert, 2005). Empirical evidence has shown incompatible results that support both claims as in some cases task complexity was found to decrease the accuracy and the fluency of learners while in other studies it was found that task complexity enhances the accuracy and the fluency.

In the process of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) program delivery, writers (e.g., Skehan, 2003; Van den Branden, 2006; Van den Branden, Bygate, & Norris, 2009) believe that syllabus designers and teachers involved should understand the nature of the tasks that students will perform in order to plan a lesson with effective instructions to support learning and second language acquisition (SLA). Task analysis is probably the most important part of instructional design for L2 learners as has long been argued:

If I were faced with the problem of improving training, I should not look for much help from the well-known learning principles like reinforcement, distribution of practice, response familiarity, and so on. I should look instead to the technique of task analysis, and the principles of component task achievement, intratask transfer, and the sequencing of subtask learning to find those ideas of greatest usefulness in the design of effective learning. (Gagne, 1962, p. 90).

Therefore, the measurement and analysis of task complexity is essential in designing tasks that promote learning.

Some researchers (Mackey, 2007; Mackey & Gass, 2006), believe that TBLT achieves important pedagogical objectives like helping learners to negotiate and comprehend the meaning of language inputs through task instructions or other classmates' interaction with the same task. Also, tasks provide a great opportunity for positive corrective feedback from teachers or task partners. ESL teachers gain a reflective benefit by observing the difference of the learner's language input and his/her output; that can help the teacher as a means of formative assessment to help stress the areas of weakness that need more reinforcement.

On the other hand, the cognition hypothesis explains the extent to which task complexity affects the language performance, interaction, and learning that underpin it. The main pedagogic objective of the cognition hypothesis is to know how to design and arrange tasks gradually in order to promote students' learning and language performance.

The cognition hypothesis, states that there are likely to be positive effects on speech production when tasks are made complex; learners will consequently have an increased accuracy and complexity in order to cope with the complex level of the task. The Cognition Hypothesis agrees with Charles Reigeluth's (1999) 'Elaboration Theory' of how to have a 'holistic approach' to identifying and 'sequencing' the units of instruction. Reigeluth says "The paradigm shift from teacher-centered and content-centered instruction to learner-centered instruction is creating new needs for ways to sequence instruction (p. 427).

The cognition hypothesis is also closely related to Piaget's belief that the emergence of language is dependent on the development of other, more general representational abilities (Piaget, 1955). In this view, the acquisition of certain concepts, such as notions of displacement in time and space (the There-and-Then), ushers in the need to express these linguistically, and so one sees in child language development the emergence of past tense morphology at around the age of two years when concepts associated with the past become available to the child (Robinson, 2011). Similarly, the cognition hypothesis is related to the constructivist approaches that propose that instruction should scaffold and support learning processes in such a way as to lead to autonomous and successful complex task performance. Merrill (2006) puts this claim well, in a way which is compatible with the Cognition Hypothesis:

Learning to complete a single task leaves the learner with only one view of the task... A progression of tasks that are progressively more complex during training with the student performing more and more of the steps to task completion on their own enables them to tune their schema so that when confronted with yet a different or more complex task from the same family they are able to move forward to task completion. (p. 277).

On the other hand, Skehan's (1998) 'Limited Capacity Hypothesis' claims that more cognitively complex tasks "consume more attentional resources...with the result that less attention is available for focus on form" (p. 97), therefore, language output like grammar rules, spelling ,and punctuation can be less accurate. Due to scarcity of attentional resources, tasks can lead either to

increased complexity, or accuracy of production, but not to both. Skehan (1998) therefore recommends that tasks should be sequenced by choosing those with characteristics that lead to fluency, accuracy and complexity, at an appropriate level of task difficulty, as determined by three factors: (1) code complexity, which is described in ‘fairly traditional ways’, as in descriptions of structural syllabuses, or developmental sequences (p. 99); (2) cognitive complexity, which is the result of the familiarity of the task, topic or genre, and the processing requirements; information type, clarity and organization, and amount of computation required; and (3) communicative stress, which involves six characteristics including time pressure, number of participants, and opportunities to control interaction. These characteristics, Skehan (2002) argues, can be manipulated during task design, and by teachers using tasks “to orient learners away from simply focusing on meaning, but also push them to extending and at the same time achieving greater control over the language” (p. 293).

1.3 The Purpose of the study

This speech-based analysis study explores the impact (whether positive or negative) of task complexity on the language production/performance. The present dissertation is set to answer three main questions:

- 1-What is the impact of task complexity on the quality of high achievers’ and mid-achievers’ speech production?
- 2-What is the relationship, if any, between learners’ proficiency and their performance on both monologic and dialogic tasks??
- 3-Does increasing the cognitive complexity of the task impact oral language performance?

The first research question regarding the impact of increasing task complexity on both high achievers and mid-achievers investigates the impact on all participants’ oral performance in term of fluency, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy.

the second research question investigates the correlation between learners' proficiency (high achievers vs. mid-achievers) and their performance on monological and dialogical tasks. The researcher investigates how high achievers perform compared to mid-achievers in both tasks. In other words, the research will show whether high achievers will utilize their high proficiency level to adapt to the linguistic competence required for complex tasks compared to mid-achievers.

the third research question regarding increasing the task cognitive complexity investigates the impact of increasing the cognitive complexity of the speaking task by including debating and more reasoning on the language production for all participants.

1.4 The significance of the study

Such a study about the effect of task complexity on the spoken language performance is of great benefit and importance to specialists and professionals in ESL, particularly teachers, syllabus designers and coordinators who can make use of task manipulation to adjust the level of tasks and instructions to suit the needs and levels of classroom students. It can additionally help to meet the needs of advanced students as well as beginners; tiered assignments and differentiated instructions can help benefit all levels of students. The study can be a good addition to the field of Task Based Language Teaching because it is all centered on the task complexity and its impact on teaching and learning of ESL.

The study will provide further insights into how grade 12 high achieving and mid-achieving students can perform in speaking during three varying levels of questions ranging between an easy-to-answer task of a monolog, a medium-level task of a dialog, and a high-level task of a mini-debate that requires reasoning, critical thinking or cognitive skills. These tasks are important speaking tasks in an ESL classroom and they are very common speaking activities in everyday life. Furthermore, the sequence of tasks is similar to that of the IELTS speaking test which consists of three tasks with an ascending degree of difficulty. IELTS tests are almost prerequisites for students of grade 12 who wish to enroll in universities.

The study will examine the responses of students with no prior preparation especially in the highly cognitive third task of debating as the focus of the participant may be directed more to the content rather than the form of the language; participants tend to think of a good argument

supported with enough evidence in order to prove their point of view during this debate. The researcher will look at various areas of language involving accuracy, like grammar rules, for instance the proper use of past simple tenses, subject-verb agreement, singular-plural forms, and misplaced modifiers. Another area that will be looked at is the use of lexical resource (lexical complexity) or vocabulary and how advanced or simple levels of vocabulary will be used by students under ranging complexity of tasks. In addition, the complexity of sentence structures (structural complexity) will also be examined in this study. The examination of these language areas will determine the impact of task complexity on language performance

Another area to be investigated is the fluency and coherence; in other words, how often participants pause to think of what to say and how well their ideas are organized and connected. To some extent, the experiment study is similar to the IELTS speaking exam as it has three tasks; one easy introductory part, a medium-difficulty task with questions from the examiner, and a third task of discussion. Students of grade 12 are required to take the IELTS exam and get a minimum of 6 to be enrolled in universities. A similar experiment study can be helpful to help students and teachers identify areas of weakness in students' speaking output and to help students overcome their common speaking errors. This study is significant in terms of its link to the most common standardized English proficiency test, IELTS as it can help test makers to understand participants' responses and insights regarding test tasks. Accordingly, they may have better understanding and rationale to modify tasks or their objectives.

1.5 Scope of the study

This study is conducted on four female participants; the participants are grade 12 students in an American curriculum high school based in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates. The number may not be enough to reach a clear-cut conclusion about the data analysis examined. This gap maybe bridged in the literature review of the study to provide further insights about higher numbers of students to support the study although the results maybe different somehow. Two participants are high achievers while the other two are mid-achievers; this will help gain more insights about the impact of task complexity on two different levels of students.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This section reviews the literature on Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) as it accounts for the theoretical framework of the present investigation. The section will also cover Interactional Competence which is related to the nature of task 3, the mini-debate. The literature will also introduce the general findings of studies about the effects of task complexity on language production or performance by students. The researcher will lay emphasis on two main studies that are examined here: “Manipulating task complexity across task types and modes” by Roger Gilabert, Julia Barón and Mayya Levkina University of Barcelona and “Effects of task complexity and interaction on L2 performance” by Marije C. Michel, University of Mannheim. These two studies are of great importance to the literature of this present investigation as they both are similar in nature, purpose and somehow in implementation; hence the comparison with them can be very indicating of certain linguistic performance.

The researcher includes these two studies with some details because they are similar in nature to the present investigation; accordingly, it will be a good area of comparison in terms of findings and interpretations

2.2 Task Based Language teaching

Bygate et al (2001) defines task as “an activity which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective.” In general, most researchers and linguist agree that the work task in SLA has the function of a vehicle to transport learners through stations of linguistics skills, and activities are in ascending level of complexity; meaning takes a priority over form and the completion of the task is the criteria for assessment.

Ellis (2003) provides this definition of pedagogical task in TBLT :

A task is a workplan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. to this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose a particular form.

However, some researchers believe that form and meaning are like two wings for the language bird to fly and soar high. Some believe in the marriage between form and meaning. Skehan (1998) and Long and Norris (2001) believe that task based language teaching is an attempt to harness the benefits of a focus on meaning via adoption of an analytic syllabus while simultaneously, through use of focus on form (not forms) to deal with its unknown shortcomings, particularly rate of development and incompleteness where grammatical accuracy is concerned (Long & Norris, 2000;599).

TBLT main objective is language acquisition and not only successful communication; language learning is a priority in terms of fluency, accuracy and complexity. There are some famous models of TBLT among which is Willis's model that includes a pre-task, a task, and a post task or language focus that focuses on the language objective. The task phase is mainly engaging for the learners taking advantage from the teacher being in a passive mode. Another model is Long's model which employs real life tasks to teach the language. The models include a needs analysis to identify task targets and accordingly task types. Based on these task types, pedagogic tasks are designed and sequenced (González-Lloret, 2015). The present investigation is very close to this model as it is a task based assessment of students' speaking performance through three tasks similar to IELTS speaking test.

2.3 Interactional Competence

Relevant to this present study is the work of Walsh (2011), who defines interactional competence as teachers' and learners' ability to use interaction as a tool for mediating and assisting learning' (Walsh, 2011, p158)

Walsh criticized the fact that teachers and examiners focus only on the individual performance in terms of accuracy, fluency, and lexical resource and neglect the importance of negotiating meaning and clarifying points of view; the interactive aspect of speech is not a priority.

The notion of interactional competence was first coined by Kramsch (1986, p:370) who argues that teachers' focus should be on interactional competence to enhance learners' ability of competent communication that involves mutual understanding between interlocutors.

Interactional Competence is relevant to ‘Confluence’ which was defined by McCarthy (2005) as the act of making spoken language fluent together with another speaker. Spoken confluence is highly relevant to the third task of this study, the mini debate which involves interaction by two interlocutors who express points of view and refute opposing ones.

As Markee says (2008, p: 3), developing interactional competence in a second language involves learners ‘co-construct[ing] with their interlocutors locally enacted, progressively more accurate, fluent, and complex interactional repertoires in the L2’. Young (2008, p: 100) offers this definition of interactional competence: Interactional competence is a relationship between participants’ employment of linguistic and interactional resources and the contexts in which they are employed

In language assessment circles, it is now widely predicted that interactional competence will become the ‘fifth skill’. (Walsh, 2012)

2.4 Task Complexity Studies General Findings

2.4.1 Monological Performance

Most of the studies conducted in this regard revealed that language learners tend to be slow when they produce language in response to tasks that are more complex (Robinson, 1995; Rahimpour, 1997; Gilabert, 2005). As far as lexical complexity is concerned, most studies show that language learners produce more advanced and varied levels of vocabulary when the language tasks are more complex. With narrative tasks, both Robinson (1995) and Gilabert (2005) exhibited an impact of increased task complexity on lexical complexity. Révész (2008) and Michel et al.(2008) confirm the same in their studies that added more elements required for reasoning like the number of features in mobile phones and the number of instructions in a task that focuses on decision making strategies.

On the other hand, structural complexity almost witnessed no impact of task complexity on L2 learners’ language production. Many researchers like Robinson (1995), Rahimpour (1997) and Gilabert (2005) found no significant effects for increasing task demands on structural

complexity. As for Studies manipulating the number of elements in the spoken language production (Michel, Kuiken, & Vedder, 2007) ,and in written performance (Kuiken & Vedder, 2007; Kuiken, Vedder, & Mos, 2005) ,researchers did not find any effect of increasing cognitive complexity on structural complexity. The latter two studies manipulated the task complexity in written tasks by increasing the number of instructions given to participants. There was only one exception to these findings; Révész (2008), who found substantial impacts for increased numbers of elements and amount of reasoning on the structure of produced language.

As for the accuracy, the studies found contrasting results; whereas Robinson (1995), Ishikawa (2007), Iwashita et al. (2001) and Gilabert (2005) have shown that learners tend to be more accurate, Rahimpour (1997) and Révész (2008), confirmed no effects have been detected for increasing task complexity on the accuracy of learners' production. Most of these contrasting results can be justified due to the different assessment criteria and tools in addition to the difference in setting and samplings

2.4.2 Dialogical Performance

There is a severe scarcity of literature on dialogical or interactive tasks. Michel et al. (2007) investigated the increase of task complexity on learners' individual and interactive performance by increasing the number of features in a task that required a decision-making process. The findings showed that learners tended to slow down the pace of their speech and they became more accurate; their linguistic complexity was not affected. In addition, substantially higher levels of fluency and accuracy were found in the dialogical interactive tasks than the individual tasks. Robinson (2007) used a series of three narratives from the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised (WAIS-R) which increased in the amount of intentional reasoning. Robinson found very few effects of task complexity on production as measured by general measures, while he found a significant effect with more specific measures such as the number of psychological state terms. Generally, most of the studies related to the impact of task complexity on monologic tasks have shown a strong inclination for fluency to become less, and for lexical complexity to rise, yet no effects have been found on structural complexity. As for accuracy, the picture was not clear as mixed findings have shown. On the other hand, dialogic or interactive tasks were shown to cause fluency to decrease while they caused accuracy to decrease. Both lexical and structural complexity have been influenced. The various proficiency levels of learners

participating in these different studies is one main reason for the differences in findings. Another reason may be the use of one single task type with some groups while using different task types with other groups in different studies. Finally, maybe the measures used to trace the impacts of task complexity were not reliable or accurate.

2.5 Study 1 “Manipulating task complexity across task types and modes” by Roger Gilabert, Julia Barón and Mayya Levkina University of Barcelona

This study presented here is formed by combining and comparing two other studies that investigate the impact of task complexity on self-repair (Gilabert, 2007) and on interactive moves (Gilabert, Barón, & Llanes, 2009). The participants in both studies were asked to perform a total of 6 tasks, three of which are simple and the other three are complex; study 1 consisted of individual learners while study 2 consisted of pairs (acting together to do the six tasks) the tasks were presented in a randomized order to eliminate the practice effect for participants.

Participants Background

A total of 42 university students whose L1 was Spanish and Catalan took part in the first study by (Gilabert, 2007). Some of participants were from a public university, university of Barcelona and the rest were from a private institution. In general, their proficiency level was lower intermediate to upper-intermediate,

As for the second study, (Gilabert et al., 2009), almost all students were from University of Barcelona and the participants had a higher proficiency level. A large majority of students were in their early twenties.

Materials

In the individual task performance, participants had comic strips to use as speech prompts and they had to narrate using the present simple tense while looking at the comic strips (simple version) and then again narrating using the past tense without looking at the comic strips. For the pair task performance, participants used 50% of the jumbled vignettes of the story and were asked to rebuild the story by describing story incidents. In the map task of giving directions, participants had to give directions to go from Point A to point B. In the first study participants left instruction via voice mail to a friend. As for the second study, they were divided in pairs; in each pair, one will give directions while the other would draw the map. In the decision-making tasks participants were asked to do problem solving to save residents of a building caught on fire. In the simple task, they were given more resources to help them.

Procedures

The collection of data for both studies took around 60 minutes and participants were asked to take a survey that asked them about difficulty, motivation, and stress in the tasks they performed.

Measures

Three measures were calculated for fluency: unpruned speech rate (Rate A), pruned speech rate (Rate B), and filled pauses per 100 words. While the first two measures are meant to capture the speed with which learners use their L2, the latter is intended to measure their pausing behavior. For lexical complexity, the Guiraud Index of Lexical Richness was used. For structural complexity, the number of sentence nodes per AS-unit, which is a measure of subordination, was used. For accuracy, the number of errors per 100 words and the ratio of repaired to unrepaired errors were used.

Results

In regard to the question of the correlation between learners' proficiency and their performance a very strong correlation was found; in other words, in terms of fluency, the learners spoke faster

due to their high proficiency level and the more proficient they are the faster they speak, regardless of the conditions surrounding the task. The study also examined the learners' pausing behavior by measuring the number of filled pauses, but it showed negative correlation with proficiency, so both higher level students and lower level students seem to have almost the same rate of pausing. In terms of structural complexity, learners' performance in the map task (both simple and complex) and the complex version of the fire task (decision making) confirm slight correlation between proficiency and performance.

Similarly, in lexical complexity and accuracy, performance on all tasks shows a moderately strong correlation with learners' proficiency in the language production.

In the second study, weaker correlations were found between proficiency and performance in all dialogical tasks (pairs). Lexical complexity for the narrative task and the decision making one showed weak correlations; no other correlations were found in other tasks or variables.

Regarding the question of the impact of task complexity on language production, the first study shows that task complexity had a substantially clear impact on the map task, while in the narrative task, increased task complexity had a similar effect on accuracy only. Task complexity had no effect on fluency, lexical or structural complexity. As for the map task, the task complex version brought about a slowdown in learner's performance, and caused higher lexical complexity and more accurate speech. The final task of decision making did not show any effect on L2 production.

In the second study, task complexity had a far less obvious effect in terms of fluency, complexity, and accuracy of learners. Only the narrative task of the comic strip had an impact on lexical complexity as students' performance was noticeably higher. Also, the fire task involving decision making showed a higher structural complexity. No other areas showed any impact due to increased task complexity.

Discussion

Second language learners rise to the level of complexity; they move from simple error-repairs to more complex ones at the level of discourse (Kormos 2006: 133).

Both lexical complexity in all tasks, accuracy and structural complexity, in 50% of the tasks, correlated with proficiency.

The study by Gilabert, Barón and Levkina provides an explanation for the disparity between monologic and dialogic performances; the researchers believe that the interactional nature of dialogical performance affects the speech of individuals through imitating their partners or using same lexical range and accuracy. Phenomena like priming (McDonough, 2006) and echoing (Svennevig, 2003) confirm the same conclusion. The researchers also believe that the broken nature of dialog in which interruption and overlaps decreases the structural complexity of utterances.

Research question 2.

Previous studies (Robinson, 1995; Rahimpour, 1997) have confirmed that fluency of learners in spoken tasks declines if participants are asked to perform a task involving narration without looking at a visual. On the contrary, in this study the levels of learners' proficiency absorbed the shocks of task complexity on fluency and the participants did not slow down much. Regarding structural complexity, the results confirm what previous findings claimed that task complexity had no impact on the structural complexity (Robinson, 1995; Rahimpour, 1997; Gilabert, 2005, 2006). The researchers of this study provide two explanations: first, learners sacrificed their lexical complexity for their accuracy because they had no pre-task planning time. second, asking participants to perform tasks in the past tense may not necessarily prompt them to use complex structures in their speech; in other words, telling stories from memory without having a visual may not trigger the complex use of subordinating and compound complex sentences.

As for the tasks done in pairs, task complexity had significant impacts on lexical complexity and not in the areas of structural complexity, accuracy, or fluency. The researchers explained the no impact on these areas by the trade-off effect; in other words learners preferred lexical complexity over accuracy. The researchers believe that increasing the task cognitive complexity had very positive impacts on lexical complexity of learners' performance because they had to form a certain message while holding information in the memory without seeing the visual.

This finding may also be interpreted according to the Cognition Hypothesis as the dialogic version of the narrative task in this study requires more reasoning skills which constitutes higher cognitive load on the learners during task performance and, accordingly they will be prompted to produce more complex utterances to express the same level of complexity in ideas and meanings. The learner's attention towards various lexical resources may have caused them to focus less on

form and accordingly ending up with no impact on accuracy. The findings of the map task in the 1st study of individual learners is in line with the Cognition Hypothesis and they are very evident, because participants paid more attention to accuracy and lexical complexity but they had to slow down their speech rate.

In line with those of Robinson (2001) and Michel, Kuiken, participants had to make precise references in the task and therefore had to slow down which affected their fluency in order to achieve the task with its cognitive demand.

2.6 Study 2: “Effects of task complexity and interaction on L2 performance”

Marije C. Michel, University of Mannheim

Experimental design

A total number of 108 participants took part in this experiment (44 native Dutch speakers as a control group, and the rest are Moroccan and Turkish). Participants’ speech performance was tested first and then it was examined in the experiment through 4 tasks varying between simple/complex and monological/dialogical (Michel, 2011). The tasks were argumentative about dating or studying couples and participants were given two minutes planning time and they were instructed to leave a recorded phone message in monolog (3 minutes) and to argue over the phone in dialog(6minutes). all tasks were controlled for the other cognitive and interactive factors named in the Triadic Componential Framework.

Discussion

Effects of increased task complexity

Manipulating task complexity with the factor ‘± few elements’ only affected lexical diversity which had high scores that were found in complex tasks when compared to simple ones. As for

native speakers, they slowed down and showed some effects on dialog fluency but not monologs. The results in terms of lexical complexity agree with the predictions of Cognition Hypothesis.

Consequently, the study did not find any support for Skehan model of Limited Attentional Capacity.

The researchers justify finding such minor effects of cognitive task complexity on task performance by the small difference between the cognitive load in the simple and complex task.

In the studies by Gilabert and colleagues (Gilabert, 2007; Gilabert et al., 2009), the increase of task complexity had no impact on language performance in the tasks that involved decision making or cognitive reasoning demands.

Considerable evidence corroborates this thought can be found in the works of (Robinson,2001) narrating a story based on a picture, (Gilabert,2007) giving instructions in map task, and the phone message task by (Michel et al.,2007). Also, participants confirmed this fact by expressing their perceptions regarding the slight difference in complexity in both simple and complex task.

Another justification was provided by Robinson (2007) who believed that criteria for measuring accuracy, fluency, and complexity are not sensitive and accurate enough. Although these measures have been used reliably in task-based research (e.g., Michel et al., 2007; Robinson 2001; Skehan & Foster, 2001) recent work corroborates the added value of using task specific measures. For example, Cadierno and Robinson (2009) and Révész (in press) evaluated L2 task performance by means of reference to psychological and cognitive state terms, number of wh-clauses, or clausal conjoinings.

In short, the findings of this study do not provide enough support or evidence for the claims of Robinson's Cognition Hypothesis in terms of the effects of task complexity on their own or in combination with interaction. Only the increase in terms of lexical complexity was evident, yet it can still be explained by the given input. The study therefore suggests that increased task complexity manipulated through the single factor '± few elements' does not affect L2 learners' attentional allocation and task performance.

Interaction and L2 performance

The second research question was about the impact of interaction on language task performance and the researchers hypothesized that interactive tasks raise the levels of fluency, accuracy but not lexical or syntactic complexity. Results were almost as the same as predictions because significant impacts appeared; in L2 learners' dialogs, learners were more accurate and diverse in lexical resource than their monologs. The only exception was the structural complexity which may be attributed to the nature of dialog and turn taking, interruptions, and repetition for clarification

In terms of accuracy, participants showed greater accuracy in dialogical more than monological tasks. Accordingly, in general the significant impact of dialogical tasks is the promotion of more fluency of L2 especially for the effects of pausing and repair

Many researchers assumed the positive impact of interaction in speaking tasks, dialogs; among these are (Long ,1990) Interaction Hypothesis, Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990) and Output Hypothesis by (Swain, 1985; Swain, & Lapkin, 1995). Certainly, as already stated earlier the Cognition Hypothesis also predicts higher accuracy measures in dialogues (Robinson, 2001, 2005, 2007).

The interactive nature of dialog and the shared or divided pressure of speaking reduce the stress during language performance because speakers get turns and accordingly time to plan during their partners' turns (Tavakoli & Foster,2008). When in a monological task, the speaker feels all the stress alone and hesitation is an element that plays a role in speech production. In dialogues, both interlocutors have higher chances of accuracy and fluency in terms of speed and repair.as they both have more attentional resources available (Levelt, 1989).

Costa et al., 2008; Pickering & Garrod, 2004 concluded that dialogues are cognitively simpler than monologues in what they called the Alignment Hypothesis. These findings were also confirmed and are in accordance with the model of Limited Attentional Capacity Model (Skehan, 2001), where the tradeoff effects between fluency and accuracy are decreased by increasing the time of planning in a task. These ideas were confirmed by the fact that L1 speakers reduced the number of pauses in the dialogical tasks; this is known as conceptualizing, a process that needs attentional resources in native speakers as well as L2 learners.

In general, the found results corroborate the assumption that when increasing the alignment and planning time in interactive tasks or dialogs, more attentional resources for speech are available for learners/speakers. The interaction during dialogs had great impacts in terms of linguistic complexity in both categories; L2 learners and L1 speakers. Both L2 learners and native speakers used less lexical complexity structures and less complex syntactic structures in monologues than in dialogues. It was worth mentioning that these above-mentioned impacts were more common in L1 speakers than L2 learners; maybe because using simple syntactic structures are common speech habits of native speakers in general. Another reason to explain this common feature is the effects of clarifications, checks for understanding, and overlaps that occur during interactive tasks and dialogs that create less periods of silence than monological tasks.

What was surprising and puzzling is the high lexical complexity of L2 learners' dialogs; L1 speakers showed less complexity in contrast. L2 learners in dialogs enjoy the advantage of more attentional resources in terms of accuracy, fluency, and lexical complexity. Pickering and Garrod (2004) believe that in dialogical tasks learners borrow and reuse the structures and lexis of each other; this linguistic behaviour is called alignment. The alignment behaviour includes routinization in which the speakers in a dialogue implicitly and indirectly agree on specific phrases and words to be used during their interlocution.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher provides a detailed description of the methodology used and the implementation of the steps in order to provide answers to the research questions mentioned in chapter one regarding the impact of task complexity on L2 learners' language performance, the relationship between learners' proficiency and language performance, and the impact of increasing cognitive task complexity on language performance.

The chapter will provide the background of the participants, the setting, and the researcher in addition to the researching tools and the data collection.

3.2 Research design

The researcher adopts the qualitative approach which is very suitable for such a study in SLA to gain detailed insights based on the actual speech production by L2 learners in task based language production.

Grounded in anthropology and sociology, the qualitative approach derives from social constructivism which contends that knowledge is constructed during interactions in the real world (Creswell 2013). Interest in this epistemological perspective led researchers to found the principles of qualitative methods compatible with research adopting the social constructivist philosophy. The goal of qualitative research is to explore certain human interactions in particular social settings. Marshall and Rossman (2011) recommend investigators access the real world of the participants, wherein they understand the meanings introduced by the participants to the settings during their interactions.

3.3 Research tools

The study was conducted in class rooms in the school premises. The researcher used a Sony Voice recorder (IC recorder) that has a capacity to record up to 90 minutes to conduct the speaking test with its three tasks that range and ascend in complexity from a simple monolog to dialog and finally to a mini debate between two participants. The researcher also conducted semi-structured interviews with participants to investigate their perceptions and attitudes towards different tasks they had to perform. The voice recorder has a built-in memory card that can transfer audio files to computers through USB ports. The interviews are short and specific and were conducted after few days.

The researcher also uses the IELTS band descriptor by the British Council and Cambridge University as an assessment tool of participants' oral speech production during the three tasks of the study. Because task 3 involves more reasoning and argumentation, the researcher used the debate evaluation form used in the school debate tournament which had been used for 12 years to evaluate debater performance during professional debates.

3.4 Setting

The research study was conducted in an American curriculum school in Dubai, Al Garhoud area in March 2017. The school offers the Common Core Standards to all grade levels from KG to grade 12 who, then obtain a high school diploma to enroll in university. The school has an American system of elective courses among which students of high school especially grade 12 study various courses to enable them to enroll in different university majors. The school permission is obtained to conduct the study as well as permission from parents. Students also have been very excited to participate in this study because of the similarity between the tasks and the IELTS speaking test that they must take to graduate and enroll in universities. The participants were tested in a classroom with the presence of the researcher; participants were individually tested in the monolog task and in the dialog/discussion task. The 3rd task ,the mini debate was conducted with the presence of two participants once and one participant and another non participant student once(the third participant had an outside partner in the mini debate).The

researcher was recording the speaking responses of participants ,at the same time he was asking questions and moderating the mini debates. The recording of the study took around 1 hour and there was no interruption during the recording time. Participants were briefed about the steps of the study and nothing was revealed about the purpose of the study in order to avoid any Hawthorne effect in the particular areas of investigation or the research questions at hand.

3.5 Participants

The participants in this study are students in grade 12 in the above-mentioned school; the number of students who participated in the study is 4 girls : two girls are high achievers with an actual IELTS scores of 7.5-8.5 and two are above average with scores of 6.5 each. Participants were informed that they will be asked to perform a speaking test similar to the IELTS speaking test with its three tasks: a monolog, a dialog, and a debate like discussion. Students levels range between mid-achievers to high achievers and they already know the IELTS test procedures and they are familiar with it as having the IELTS score is a requirement and a prerequisite to enrolling in any university they apply to whether in the UAE or abroad. Two of the participants were locals, citizens of UAE and two were expatriates who come from neighboring Arab countries. All students have been in the school for many years and they have been studying the same American curriculum. Their English course consists of British literature and grammar in addition to a vocabulary book of academic words that are found and used in SAT exams and IELTS tests. Also, participants had studied TOEFL from grade 9-11. The participants are already well acquainted with the researcher being their English teacher. This point is important as it reduces the tension or the examiner caused stress to almost zero, hence external factors of impacting their speech are greatly eliminated and focused only on the cognitive aspect and the linguistic complexity. For research ethics, permission was obtained from all four participants as well as their guardians. Participants showed willingness to participate and their guardians showed willingness to cooperate.

3.6 Data collection

Participants' speech and responses during the three tasks of the study were recorded and transcribed. The recordings were listened to several times in order to be able to evaluate each part of the speaking criteria. In addition, special attention was given to listening to and analyzing the arguments in the 3rd task, the mini-debate in order to evaluate the reasoning competence and cognitive skills when increasing task complexity. Furthermore, participants' interviews after conducting the study were audio recorded and transcribed; also to be analyzed by the researcher to gain more insights about the attitudes of the participants regarding the different tasks in the study and how they perceived them in term of difficulty or simplicity. Another examiners checks the recordings and makes another analysis to maintain more accuracy of participants speech analysis using the same IELTS band score criteria.

3.7 Procedures

The researcher conducted the study in the school premises in one of the classes in the high school building. Students were examined individually for the monological tasks and the interview task. They were assigned in pairs for the mini debates and they were observed and audio recorded by the researcher. Later, the researcher interviewed the students and asked them about the three tasks. All responses were recorded and transcribed to be processed for analysis using the IELTS band descriptor found in the IELTS official website and handbook. The researcher assigns another teacher who has experience in IELTS examination to analyze the speech responses again in order to insure a very objective and professional feedback and a high rate of interrater reliability. The second examiner of the data was not informed about the purpose of the study nor did he know about the research questions at hand; a high level of objectivity was maintained during the analysis of data to ensure the highest possible level of accuracy and objectivity.

3.8 Credibility

The research study depends mainly on the analysis of spoken discourse; Seedhouse (2005) identified some elements that are indispensable for the strength of the reliability of Conversation analysis (CA) research. They include good recording qualities, accurate selection of the data to be analysed, and transcript adequacy. Other factors involve the way data are presented and whether the findings can be replicated. In this dissertation, detailed transcripts will be included in appendices and the analysis rubrics will be attached to make it possible for readers to evaluate the analysis and replicate the data on other types of participants.

The researcher assigned two teachers who have experience in IELTS examination to analyze the speech responses again in order to insure objective and professional feedback and interrater reliability. The evaluation criteria used are internationally recognized, approved, and used by IELTS examiners around the world.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents all the findings based on the participants' speech recordings and transcription throughout the three speaking tasks. The 1st task was a monolog in which participants were asked to talk about their experience in the school celebration during the national day of the UAE, December 2016. The 2nd task required participants to describe an unforgettable travel experience that they had had. Both tasks 1 and 2 are based on past experiences and require the use of past tenses. The 3rd task is a mini debate between two participants who have to argue for /against wearing school uniform; participants were given a few seconds to think of good reasons to support their arguments. The 3rd task involves more reasoning skills and it includes more cognitive complexity than tasks 1 and 2. The chapter will introduce the findings of each task following the same order they were given to students.

4.2 Task 1 (The Monolog)

The first task lasted for approximately 3 minutes for almost all participants; they all spoke about the UAE National Day celebration that took place in their school.

4.2.1 The Two High Achievers

Both participants showed fluency in terms of speed and the number of pauses although the first participant pauses a few times in the last minute of her talk; in general, most of these pauses were content related and not language related as she seemed to have run out of ideas to say. It was also noticed that the 2nd participant had one long pause at the end but again it was content related and not language related. The second participant also digressed a bit to fill up more time of speaking. Both high achievers had the pauses in the last minute of their talk but generally they were both fast and confident in performing the task and mentioned many activities with details that corroborate the coherence of their speech. They were able to speak at ease while maintaining speed, fluency and coherence.

Both high achievers used a wide range of vocabulary words and many collocations in their speeches 'photo booth', 'media students'. In general, both achievers used the accurate vocabulary words in most of the task time and showed great flexibility in using words and

paraphrasing what they say. Inaccuracies were very few and there was no self-repair or error correction from their part except for one time by the 1st participant with the plural form 'horses' instead of 'horse'.

Both high achievers used various sentence structures naturally and appropriately. Their sentences varied from simple, compound, to compound complex and they used different cohesive devices or conjunctions like 'however' that show a high command of the language and a good academic background. Both participants used the past tenses appropriately and correctly except for one error by the 1st participant who used 'wear' instead of wore.

4.2.2 The Two Mid-Achievers

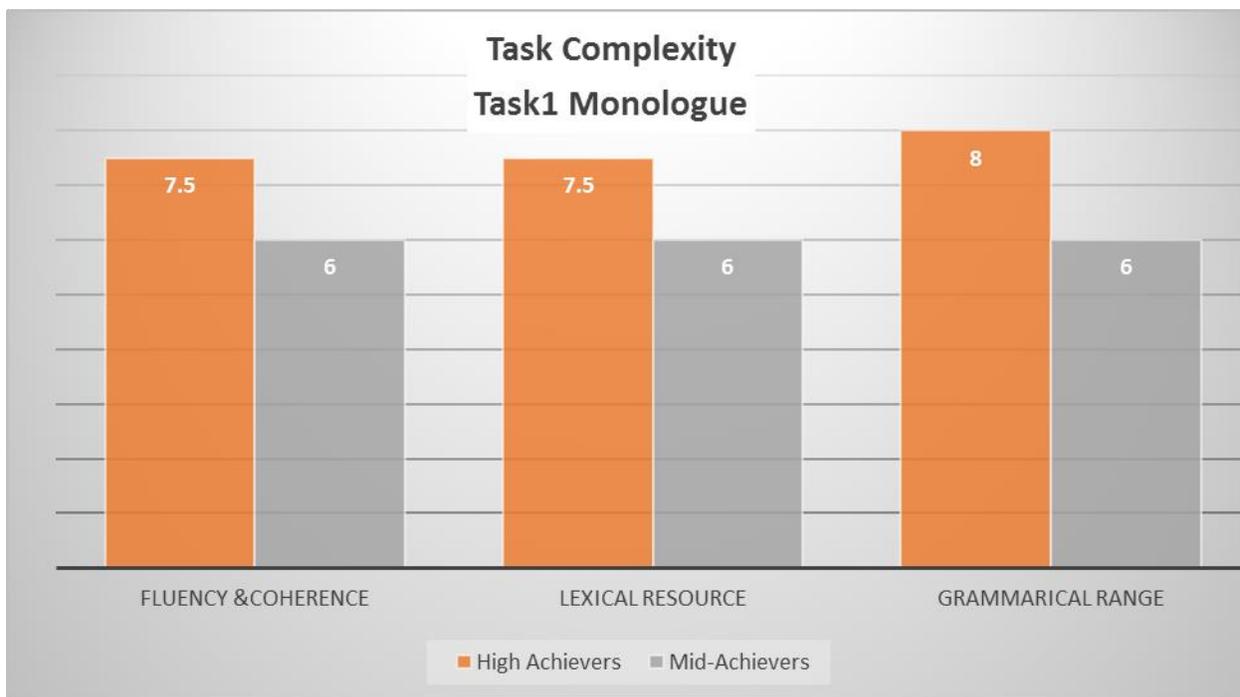
Both participants showed somehow less fluency in terms of speed and the number of pauses. Both participants had occasional long pauses that ranged between content related and language related; the pause would reach up to 4-5 seconds. The 3rd participant was considerably slower and hesitant to some extent as she was trying to search for the right language to use or trying to avoid potential errors in her speech; she used to have a short pause after every few words in addition to the 2-3 long pauses she had during the entire speech. It was also noteworthy that the 4th participant finished her speaking task in 1.5 minutes which is 50% of the time duration taken and used by the other three participants. Both mid-achievers were successful in maintaining coherence but struggled slightly with fluency in terms of speed and pauses.

In terms of lexical resource both mid-achievers used simple and average words like 'nice' and 'good'. They both used -to some extent- a wide range of words and they were accurate mostly because words choices were very simple and average for example the repeated use of 'good' as an adjective to describe the national day celebration.

Both mid-achievers used a limited variety of sentence structures, especially the 4th participant who used more simple sentences throughout her short speech which lasted one minute and a half. Both were able to produce a high percentage of error free sentences despite some major errors like the wrong conjugation of the verb cost in the past tense 'costed' which was used by the 3rd

participant. Another major error was found and it was in subject-verb agreement when referring to the national day celebration with the pronoun ‘they’ (3rd participant). The 3rd participant had an occasion of self-repair when she replaced ‘world’ with ‘word’. Both participants rarely used any compound complex sentences; almost no subordinating conjunctions were used and mostly they used coordinating conjunctions like ‘and’, ‘but’ to perform the task. It is noteworthy also that both mid-achievers had few inaccuracies in terms of pronunciation and intonation in words like ‘clothes’. There is a degree of L1 accent effect in few occasions.

Overall in task 1, the monolog, all participants were very good and they ranged between 6.5 for mid achievers, and 7.5-8 in high achievers. All achievers who spoke for 3 minutes had one occasion of unintentional code-switching as they resorted to use L1 in one or two utterances.



The evaluation of task1, the monologue

4.3 Task 2 (The Interview)

The second task lasted for approximately 4 minutes for almost all participants; they all spoke about an unforgettable past travel experience to a foreign country. The researcher asked a few questions during the interviews to put the participants under some pressure and to raise the complexity of the task.

4.3.1 The Two High Achievers

In terms of fluency and coherence, both high achievers spoke for more than 4 minutes; the 1st participant had occasions of repeating some of the questions after the researcher to avoid pauses and in fact she paused only once but overall, she had a fast pace of speaking and rarely showed any dysfluency. Her talk seemed very coherent and she used cohesive devices efficiently. As for the second participant, she was very fast in her talk with only two occasions of pauses that were not language related but rather content related; in other words, she was thinking of things to say and not words to describe her ideas. She was very expressive and confident and she developed her talk to be very coherent and detailed. The second participant had almost no occasions of repetition or self-correction unlike the 1st participant who had few repetitions and one occasion of self-correction.

In terms of lexical resource, both high achievers used a variety of rich vocabulary and showed flexibility and precision in almost all the speeches; they both showed ability to paraphrase and elaborate their ideas with almost no inaccuracies. They efficiently used collocations like ‘traditional dessert’, ‘scientific research’, and ‘cookie cutter’. They also used high level academic words like ‘gothic era’. In general both had appropriacy in their word choice that was germane to the topic of the 2nd task, the interview.

Both high achievers maintained a great level of grammatical range and accuracy; both produced a majority of error free sentences with only few inaccuracies by the first participant who, for instance, used the expression ‘before three years ago’. Both participants used a variety of complex structures and sentences with some subordinating conjunctions like ‘since’, and ‘however’. Also, both maintained the proper use of the past simple tense to describe their travel experiences; only the 1st participant had one inaccuracy of using a present tense verb in the context of her speech.

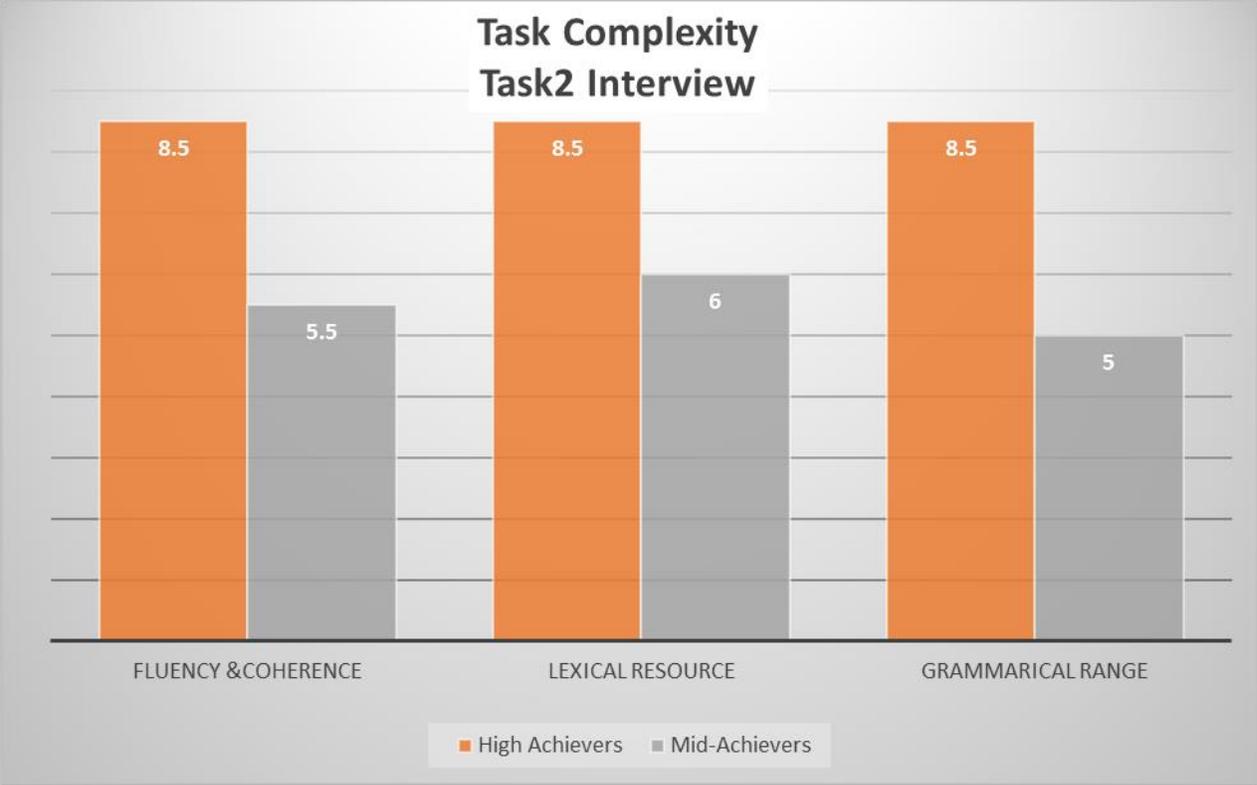
4.3.2 The Two Mid-Achievers

Both participants showed considerable fluency; the 3rd participant was a bit slow with few pauses but she was able to maintain a flow of speech with no repetitions or self-correction. On the other hand, the 4th participant was fluent in terms of speed; she efficiently maintained a flow of speech but she spoke for only 3 minutes which is less than all the other participants in this task. The 4th participant's speech production in the 2nd task was also coherent. She had no occasions of repetition or self-correction.

As far as lexical resource is concerned, both participants had a wide enough vocabulary to discuss topics at length and make meaning clear in spite of inappropriacies. Average words were used and no highly academic words were used. The 3rd participant resorted to answer some of the questions with few single words and not in full sentences; she also did not use any collocations in her speech. As for the 4th participant, she used some discourse markers like 'first of all'; she also managed to use some collocations like 'intensive care' and some academic words like 'therapy'. Both participants were almost precise with their choice of words as they already used simple diction in their speeches during the task.

The grammatical range and accuracy was less successful in the speech of the two mid-achievers; more mistakes started to appear. The 3rd participant made more grammatical errors in countable nouns 'a lot of nature' and also in subject verb agreement 'each level have'. The 4th participant had an error related to the use of definite articles 'I had unforgettable experience' and the use of prepositions 'after arriving by two hours'. Both participants had a very good control over the use of past tense to describe their travel experiences. It was noteworthy also that both mid-achievers used more simple than complex sentences; most of the conjunctions used were coordinating conjunctions like 'but', 'and' and sometimes 'also'. In general, both participants were accurate despite their grammatical mistakes and there were no occasions of repetitions or self-correction. Their level of structural complexity was not high and they resorted to using more sentences that are short simple.

In general, all four participants showed considerable to great level of fluency and coherence with appropriate use of lexical resource. High achievers achieved a band score of approximate 8.5 while mid-achievers achieved a band score of approximately 5.5-6



The evaluation of Task 2, the interview

4.4 Task 3 (The Mini-Debate)

The mini-debate was moderated and recorded by the researcher in the same session. The two high achieving participants debated against each other while the two mid-achieving participants debated against each other. The same debate topic ‘wearing school uniform’ was chosen for all participants; participants were given 1-2 minutes to prepare their arguments and support them with good reasons. The topic chosen is much related to high schoolers’ daily life and they can discuss it easily with no need for research before the actual debate. All participants were instructed to speak in turns to avoid any occasions of overlap. Participants were familiar with debate procedures as they attended some school debates before. The debate consists of two stages; one to introduce main arguments for the debate position (pros and cons) and a second stage of counterarguments where participants get time to reply to their opponents and refute the arguments. Participants do not get time to think of counterarguments; in other words, they have to simultaneously listen to opposing arguments and prepare a reply (counterargument). This task involves higher cognitive abilities and high thinking skills other than the ones in the previous tasks and therefore it is designed and chosen to be the most complex of all tasks.

4.4.1 The Two high-achievers

The mini-debate lasted for almost 9.5 minutes during which the participants had no breaks or time to think or read anything except their notes taken during the debate. The 1st participant was in favor of wearing the school uniform; she provides two reasons one of them is that it increases probabilities of bullying at school because some students may be judged for what they wear by others and not everyone is able to afford to buy some fancy clothes to wear daily at school. The second reason was about school identity and equality among students. The second participant had one argument based on individuality and freedom of expression; she corroborated her argument by some research findings she read earlier (she is already an avid reader). Each participant had one turn of counterarguments to reply to the other participant.

In terms of fluency and coherence, both high achieving participants showed an elevated level of fluency; both spoke in a faster pace and had very minimum number of pauses; the 2nd participant had only one pause while the 1st participant had none. Both participants had no occasions of

repetition or self-correction; even moments of hesitation were almost non-existent. Both participants spoke with coherence; no points were irrelevant and they both used cohesive devices like 'because' 'as', 'such as', 'however', 'first of all'. There was only one occasion of overlap which did not stifle the flow of speech or the overall fluency of spoken production for both speakers.

In terms of lexical resource and word choice, both high-achievers used more advanced and a higher level of academic vocabulary words such as 'individuality', 'characteristics', 'dress code', 'extra-curricular activities', 'creativity', 'identity', 'socialize', 'connectivity', 'oppressed' and 'public schools'. Both participants used highly rich and wide vocabulary resources readily and flexibly in addition to some idiomatic expressions to express precise meanings. A one time usage of the mother tongue was found during this task.

In terms of grammatical range and accuracy, both high-achievers naturally and flexibly used a high range of accuracy; slight mistakes were found like the use of inaccurate preposition 'judged from' by the 1st participant and the wrong use of If conditional rule 'would not it be easier if we can' by the 2nd participant. Both achievers used correct and accurate grammar rules with no occasions of hesitation or self-correction. They both varied their sentence structures with more complex and compound sentences in addition to very few simple sentences.

In terms of reasoning and argumentation skills, both high achievers provided valid arguments supported with good reasons relying on their personal points of view and some experiences based on their school life (taking into consideration that the topic is about school uniform). The 1st participant provided two reasons: students equality and school identity. While the 2nd participant stated individuality and freedom of expression as the main reason. The rebuttal stage was very successful and they moved in an argumentative sequence by providing one argument and a counter-argument. Refutation was smooth and effective on either side; many examples were used to express abstract ideas. Both high-achievers spoke in turns and there was only one occasion of overlap. In general, they used a smooth logical process by stating their general point of view then supporting it with premises or reasons to make their arguments valid and convincing.

4.4.2 The Two Mid-Achievers

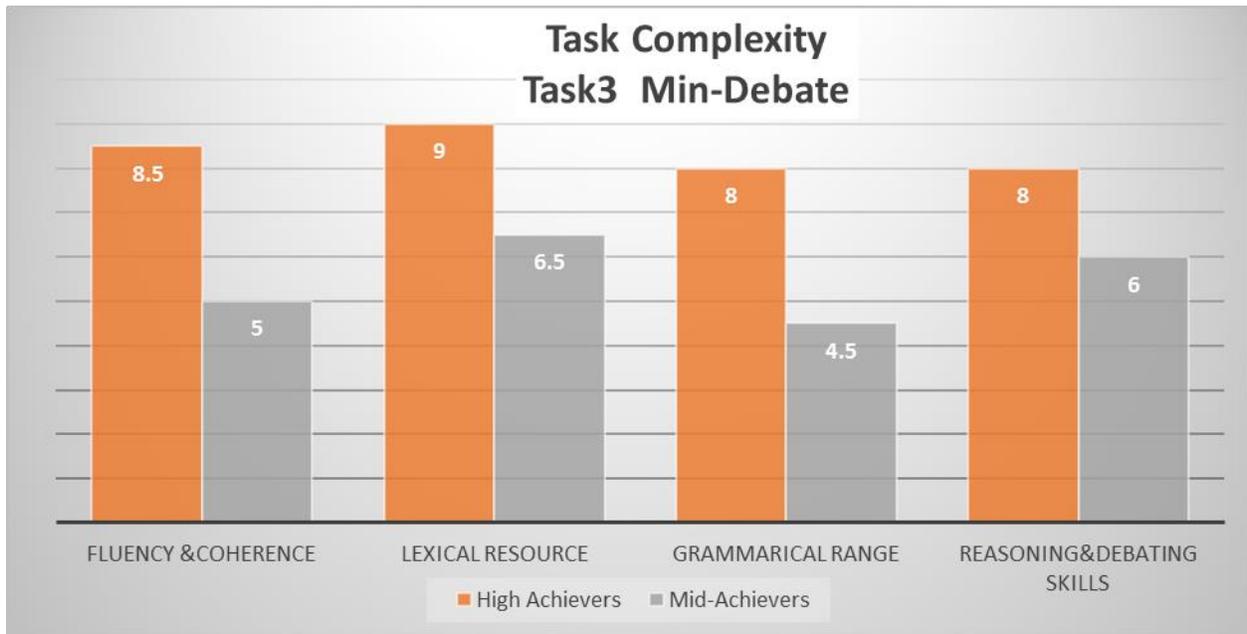
The mini-debate lasted for almost 5 minutes during which the participants had no breaks or time to think or read anything except their notes taken during the debate. The 3rd participant was in favor of wearing the school uniform; she had only one reason which related to the sense of equality (financial level) that students will enjoy as they all look the same in the same uniform. The 4th participant was against wearing the school uniform and she relied on one main reason; some students are allergic to the school uniform material.

In terms of fluency and coherence, both mid-achievers clearly spoke at a slower pace and they had many pauses during this task. The 3rd participant had around 6 pauses, one of which lasted for almost 10 seconds while the 4th participant had around 5 pauses, one of which lasted for 6 seconds. Each participant had one occasion of resorting to use L1 to express her ideas. Also, the 4th participant used ‘ah’ and ‘eh’ 3-4 times as gap fillers in her talk. The talks of the two participants were coherent and they never went off topic. They used a range of connectives and discourse markers; they used some repetitions and there was only one moment of overlap that did not stifle the flow of their debate. The debate ended shortly after 5 minutes because the 4th participant was unable to keep debating.

In terms of lexical resource, both mid-achievers frequently used average words that are not highly academic such as ‘jeans’, color, and ‘condition’. There was an occasion where the wrong collocation ‘school clothes’ was used. In general, they used a vocabulary wise enough to discuss the topic at length and make meaning clear despite some errors and inaccuracies. Both were able to paraphrase and express their points of view.

In terms of grammatical range and accuracy, both participants used mostly simple sentence structures with considerable accuracy. There was only one usage of subordinate conjunctions ‘even though’ throughout the debate. Grammatical errors were more frequent in this debate. Almost a consistent error is the use of the singular ‘student’ instead of the plural form ‘students’ by both participants. There were also a couple of mistakes regarding subject-verb agreement ‘she have’ and pronoun-antecedent agreement ‘person- his’. Some wrong structures were used like ‘judge from’, ‘wear like short dressed’ and ‘part of the students’. There was also a confusion between ‘clothes’ and ‘cloth. Both participants kept shifting tenses between present simple and future simple and sometimes it was not necessary.

In terms of reasoning and argumentation skills, both mid-achievers debated and provided somehow supported reasons for their points of view; the 3rd participant stated one reason at the beginning, but later she unconsciously stated 2 reasons: students' equality and uniform inappropriacy. The rebuttal and refutation stage by the 4th participant covered effectively and refuted only one reason, uniform appropriacy, but failed to refute the 1st one regarding the students' equality. The 4th participant ended the debate due to mental exhaustion as noted by her last remark in L1 'my mind is blocked'. The 4th participant provided only one reason for not accepting the school uniform; being allergic to uniform material. The 3rd participant provided a good point in the refutation part. In general, few examples were provided to support the abstract ideas.

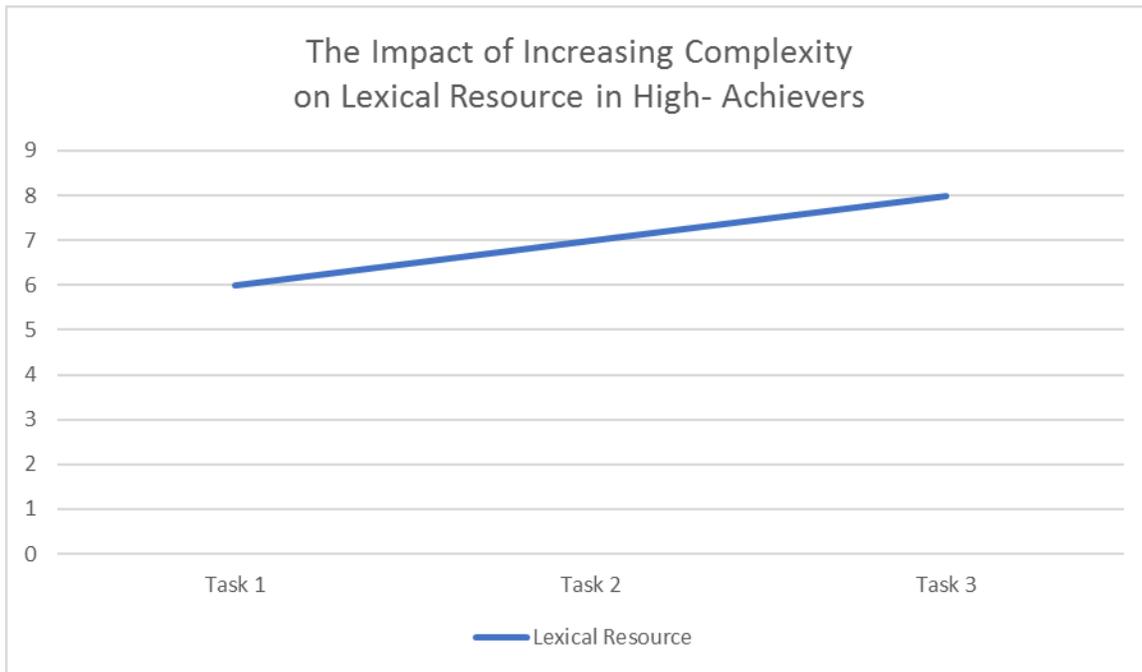


The evaluation of task 3, the mini-debate

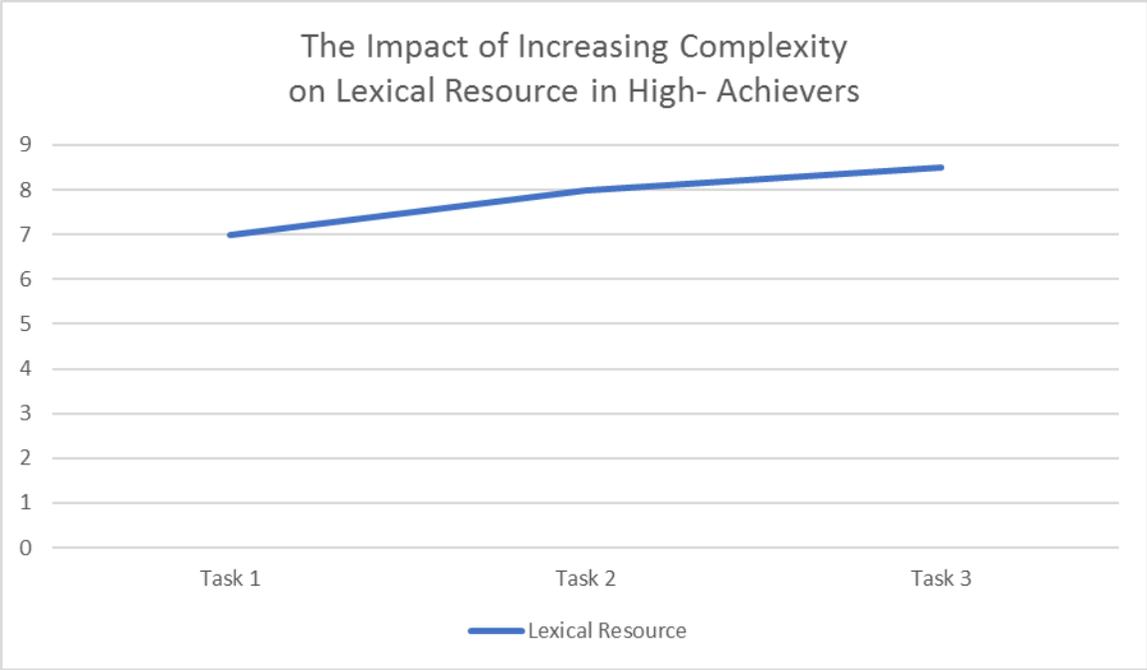
4.5 External Raters' Evaluation

One of the raters was a native English teacher from the UK while the other is a certified IELTS examiner in KSA. Although the descriptions and ratings of both raters slightly varied from the researcher findings and raters, the overall analyses were almost the same in terms of fluency, lexical resource, and grammar.

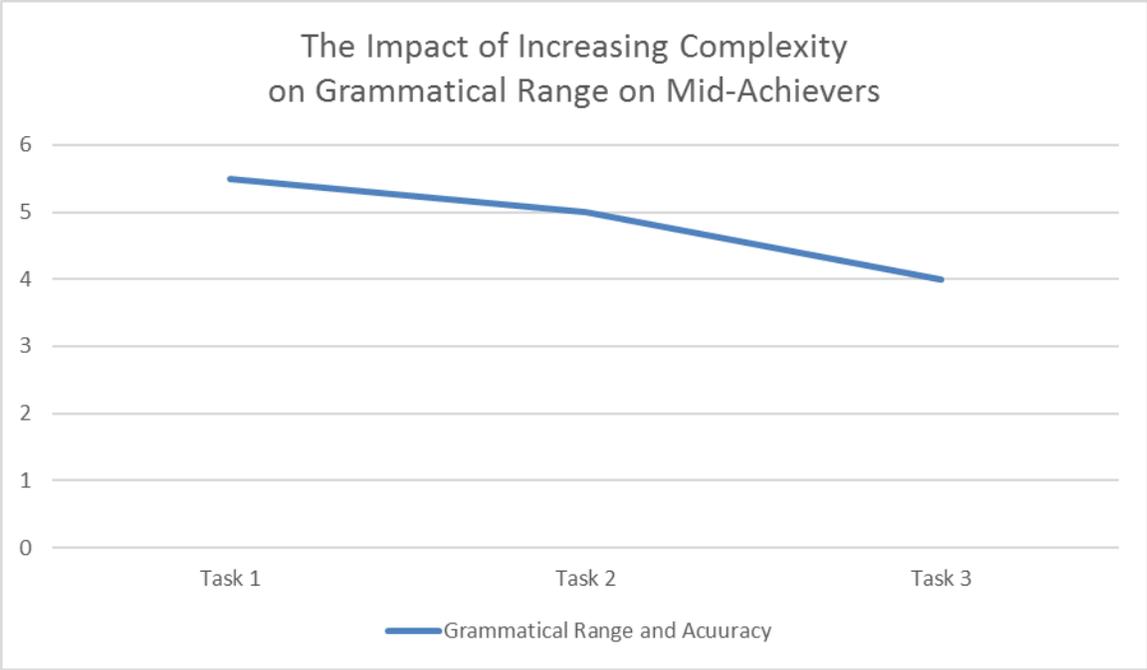
Both raters evaluated the recordings and rated them using the same evaluation criteria; The IELTS speaking band descriptor. The ratings and scores given by both examiners confirm the patterns found in the evaluation of the researcher. In other words, high achievers ascendingly received higher scores in terms of lexical resource across the three tasks while the mid achievers descendingly received lower scores in terms of grammatical range and accuracy across the three tasks.



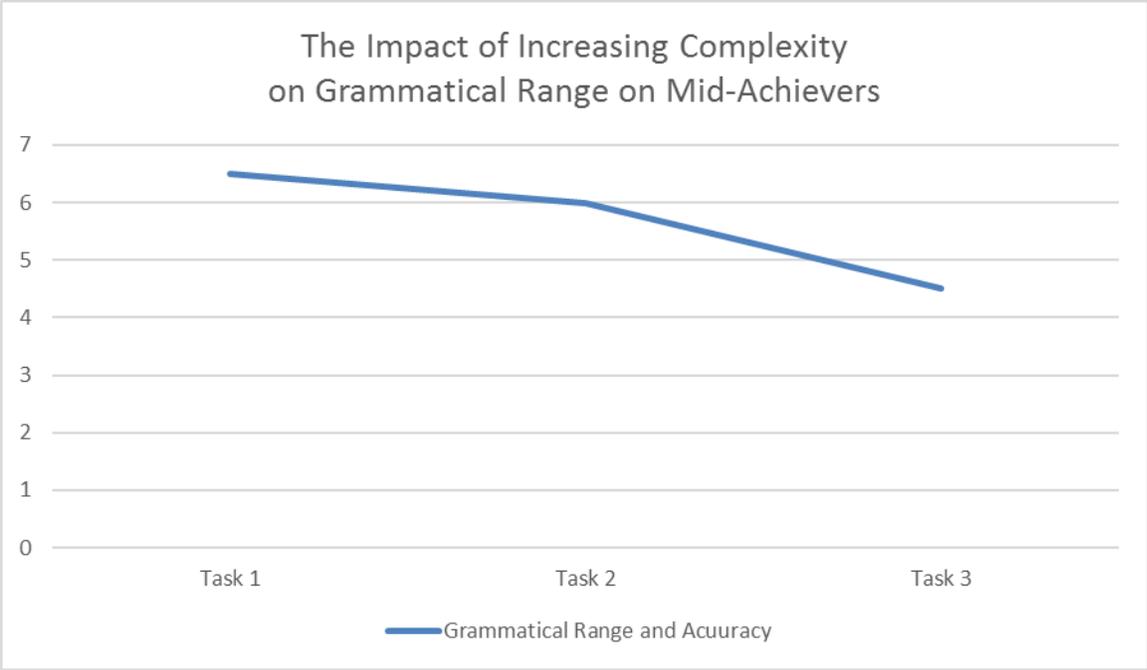
1st rater evaluation of lexical resource



2nd rater evaluation of lexical resource



1st rater evaluation of grammatical range and accuracy



2nd rater evaluation of grammatical range and accuracy

Chapter 5

Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides explanations and possible interpretations of the findings of this dissertation. The discussion will examine the findings in detail and it will provide more insights related to the interviews conducted with participants about their participation and experience during the three tasks: the monolog, the interview, and the mini-debate.

The monolog task is considered to be the easiest as it involves one question that requires narrating an event that was recent and participants have no pressure from an interviewer. This task is the baseline or the foundation on which the assessment of speech production will be built as the other two tasks are designed to be higher in complexity. Accordingly, this may be used as what the researcher calls a 'control task' as it involves a low level of complexity accessible to all levels of learners/participants.

In this task, as expected, the high achievers are evidently very fluent in terms of speed and the number of pauses. They are relevant and their speech production is coherent. Both high achievers spoke with a great deal of accuracy and flexibility in terms of vocab or lexical resource. Grammatical range and accuracy was another area they both scored high and their sentence structures varied to demonstrate their high proficiency level. As for mid-achievers, their level was evidently less in the monolog task as they showed less fluency by being slower and by making more pauses that are language related. Both mid-achievers used simple and average words and their structural complexity was very basic as they used mostly simple sentences and very few subordinate clauses. Also, the grammar mistakes by both participants are common in this level of proficiency unlike the high achievers who had almost no grammar mistakes. This general lower level of performance by mid-achievers naturally reflects their level and similarly it will serve as a good indicator to see how differently they perform in the other two tasks.

5.2 Research Question 1:

The researcher investigates the impact of increasing task complexity on participants' oral performance in terms of fluency, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy.

The findings of the interview task show that both high achievers were still very fluent and spoke even more in terms of task duration (more than 4 minutes) compared to the monolog task (almost 3). The pausing was limited to only one occasion that is content related. Both participants used more wider range of vocabulary and more highly academic words and sets of collocations. The level of performance of the two high achievers was higher than the monolog task (their band score as per the assessment criteria rose from 7.5 to 8.5 in these two areas of speech production.

As for the grammatical range and accuracy, their grammar was slightly affected as they produced very few errors (2 compared to 1 error in task 1) but maintaining a very high structural complexity kept their score at 8.5. These results confirm what (Gilabert, 2007; Gilabert et al., 2009) found before as high achievers naturally increased their lexical complexity level as well as their fluency; they rose to the higher complexity level. In addition, the results contradict what was suggested by (Robinson, 1995; Rahimpour, 1997) who have confirmed that fluency of learners in spoken tasks declines if participants are asked to perform a task involving narration without looking at a visual. Finally, these findings are in line with the cognition hypothesis which states that there are likely to be positive effects on speech production when tasks are made complex; learners will consequently have an increased accuracy and complexity in order to cope with the complex level of the task.

On the other hand, both mid-achievers, were slightly affected by increasing complexity in the second task. Their fluency was a bit less as the 3rd participant's speech was slower than that of task one and she had more number of pauses. As for the 4th participant, she was not able to speak as long as the rest of the participants although she was somehow fast; their score declined from 6 to 5.5 in terms of fluency and coherence.

Lexical complexity had almost no impact and both participants used precise and clear words to express their ideas, yet they did not increase the complexity; their score remained 6 on the IELTS band score.

The grammatical range and accuracy was less successful in the speech of the two mid-achievers as it was considerably affected negatively; more grammar and structure mistakes started to

appear; errors were various and related to the use of countable nouns, indefinite articles, plurals, and subject-verb agreement. It seems that participants had a trade-off of skills in this area as they focused more on content and not form. The increase of task complexity in this task forced mid-achievers to make more mistakes in grammar. The band score achieved in this area declined (from 6 in task one) to 5. The findings in this area of speech production assessed confirm Skehan's (1998) 'Limited Capacity Hypothesis' which claims that more cognitively complex tasks "consume more attentional resources...with the result that less attention is available for focus on form" (p. 97), therefore, language output like grammar rules, spelling, and punctuation can be less accurate.

In the mini-debate task, both high achievers were evidently very fluent as their speech production was fast enough and greatly coherent; they had almost no pauses or hesitations. Both participants outperformed themselves in the previous task; they received a score of 8.5 compared to 8 in the previous tasks.

In terms of lexical resource, the impact of task complexity was similarly positive as both participants used more advanced level of academic vocabulary and idiomatic expression. In this area, the level of performance rose to meet the level of complexity in the task. The score accordingly rose from 7.5 to 9 which is a remarkable progress.

Both high achievers, used mostly correct grammar rules (only two errors in 9.5 minutes) and their sentences structures were varied tending to be more complex; in other words, their level of performance also rose to meet the complex demands of this task.

The fourth criteria of assessment in this task, reasoning and argumentation evaluated the reasoning skills of participants and it helped to add more cognitive pressure on them. Both high achievers used valid arguments and provided sufficient reasons to support their points of view. Their interactional competence was very high as they were making sense and were very relevant to the debate topic.

Evidently, in the case of high achievers, the increase of task complexity has a positive impact on their spoken language production. Many researchers assumed the positive impact of interaction in speaking tasks, dialogs; among these are (Long ,1990) Interaction Hypothesis, Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990) and Output Hypothesis by (Swain, 1985; Swain, & Lapkin,

1995). Certainly, as already stated earlier the Cognition Hypothesis also predicts higher accuracy measures in dialogues (Robinson, 2001, 2005, 2007).

The interactive nature of dialog and the shared or divided pressure of speaking reduce the stress during language performance because speakers get turns and accordingly time to plan during their partners' turns (Tavakoli & Foster, 2008). When in a monological task, the speaker feels all the stress alone and hesitation is an element that plays a role in speech production. In dialogues, both interlocutors have higher chances of accuracy and fluency in terms of speed and repair as they both have more attentional resources available (Levelt, 1989).

On the other hand, the two mid-achievers level of performance evidently declined as their speech suffered from more unintentional pauses (around 11 times) and they barely lasted for 5 minutes compared to the high achievers who lasted for more than 9 minutes. It is also noteworthy that the 4th participant was not able to continue performing this task of debating due to mental cognitive stress as she translated that into a sentence in L1 "my mind has been blocked". The score fell from 6 to 5. The findings in this area of fluency and coherence agree with Skehan's (1998) 'Limited Capacity Hypothesis'

In terms of lexical resource both participants performed with the same level as the previous task; there was no clear impact on their speech production except for the scarcity of high academic vocabulary yet they still perform well as per their level in this area speech production. The stability of performance in this area maybe due to the nature of interactive task. Further, it can be explained in terms of what was stated by Pickering and Garrod (2004) who believe that in dialogical tasks learners borrow and reuse the structures and lexis of each other; this linguistic behaviour is called alignment. The alignment behaviour includes routinization in which the speakers in a dialogue implicitly and indirectly agree on specific phrases and words to be used during their interlocution.

In terms of grammatical range and accuracy, it is diamond clear that this area of speech production is the one that received the most negative impact. Both mid-achievers underperformed in this area of the task. Grammar errors were many and frequent; new errors appeared like pronoun-antecedent agreement and uneasy shifts in tenses, in addition to some wrong sentence structures that were only simple throughout the entire task. The score declined to reach 4.5, the lowest score throughout all research tasks and areas. The findings in this area contradict those of Michel et al. (2007) who investigated the increase of task complexity on

learners' both individual and interactive performance and his research findings confirmed decreased fluency and increased accuracy and structural complexity

The reasoning of the two mid-achievers was not as effective as the high achievers. Reasons were not enough to support and arguments were not fully refuted. The cognitive stress caused many mistakes in term of language as well as the logical sequence of the debate as the participants kept repeating their words in some occasions during their task which lasted for only 5 minutes.

In general, the evaluation of both external raters confirms the patterns found in the evaluation of the researcher. In other words, high achievers ascendingly received higher scores in terms of lexical resource across the three tasks while the mid achievers descendingly received lower scores in terms of grammatical range and accuracy across the three tasks.

5.3 Research Question 2

The researcher investigates the difference in performance between high achievers and does proficiency level impact the linguistic performance of high achievers and mid-achievers?

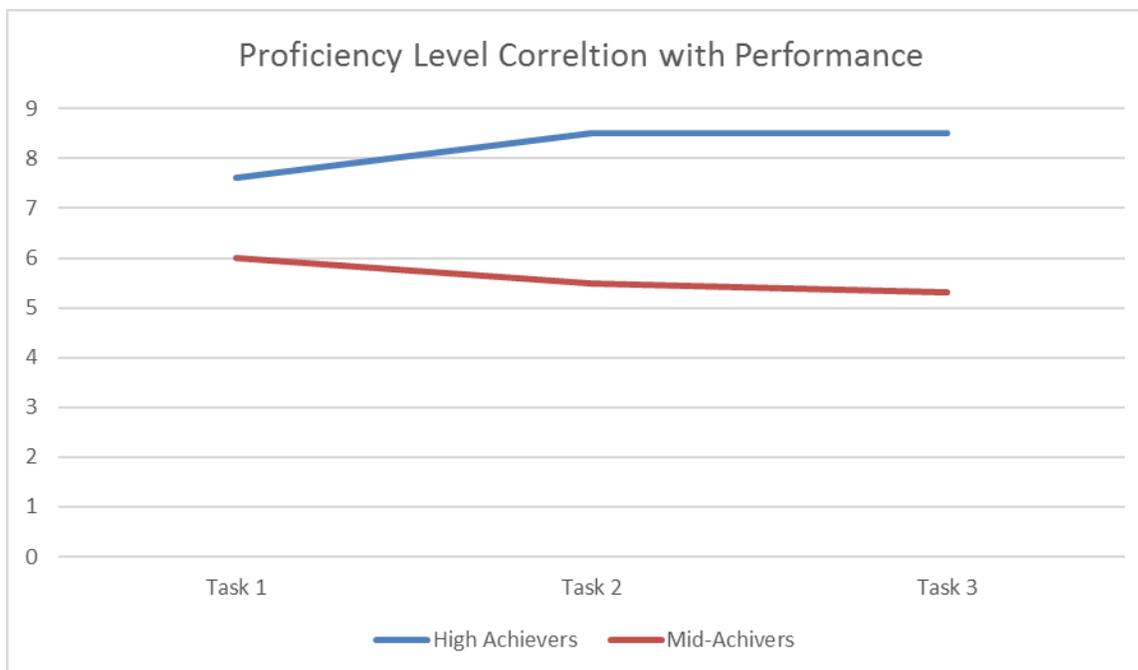
Evidently, high achieving participants had a better performance in the interview and the mini debate tasks; in fact, both participants scored higher in terms of fluency, accuracy, and most importantly in lexical resource or complexity. such a positive correlation confirms the findings (except for lexical complexity) by Michel et al. (2007) who investigated the increase of task complexity on learners' both individual and interactive performance by increasing the number of features in a task that required a decision-making process. The findings showed that learners tended to slow down the pace of their speech and they became more accurate; their linguistic complexity was not affected. In addition, substantially higher levels of fluency and accuracy were found in the dialogical interactive tasks than the individual tasks. Another researcher Gilabert (2007) found a strong correlation between participants' language proficiency and their performance in dialogical tasks.

Accordingly, high achievers' performance demonstrated a noticeably positive correlation between their level and their performance in dialogical (interactional tasks).

As for the mid-achievers, the findings suggest that in dialogical tasks their performance received a negative impact and they scored less than the individual task(monolog) in terms of grammatical range and accuracy in which they scored 4.5 in the mini-debate on the IELTS band score. As for the rest of other language production areas examined, the findings were similar to (Gilabert et al., 2009) weaker correlations found between proficiency and performance in all dialogical tasks.

The positive correlation between high achieving participants' proficiency and their performance in dialogical tasks are in line with the suggestions of many researchers who assumed the positive impact of interaction in speaking tasks, dialogs; among these are (Long ,1990) Interaction Hypothesis, Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990) and Output Hypothesis by (Swain, 1985; Swain, & Lapkin, 1995). Certainly, as already stated earlier the Cognition Hypothesis also predicts higher accuracy measures in dialogues (Robinson, 2001, 2005, 2007).

The issue remains unsolved in the case of the mid-achievers as they underperformed especially in terms of grammatical range and accuracy; perhaps participants resorted to trade off grammar and accuracy for lexical resource; eventually that can be another interesting area of research.

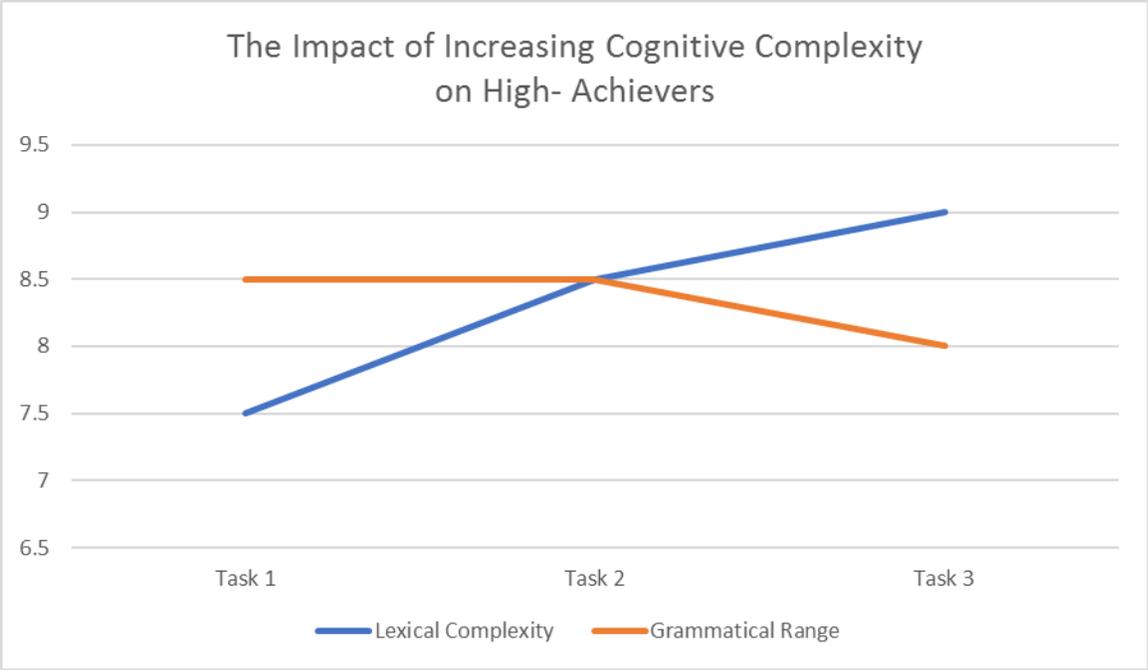


The relationship between proficiency level and participants' performance

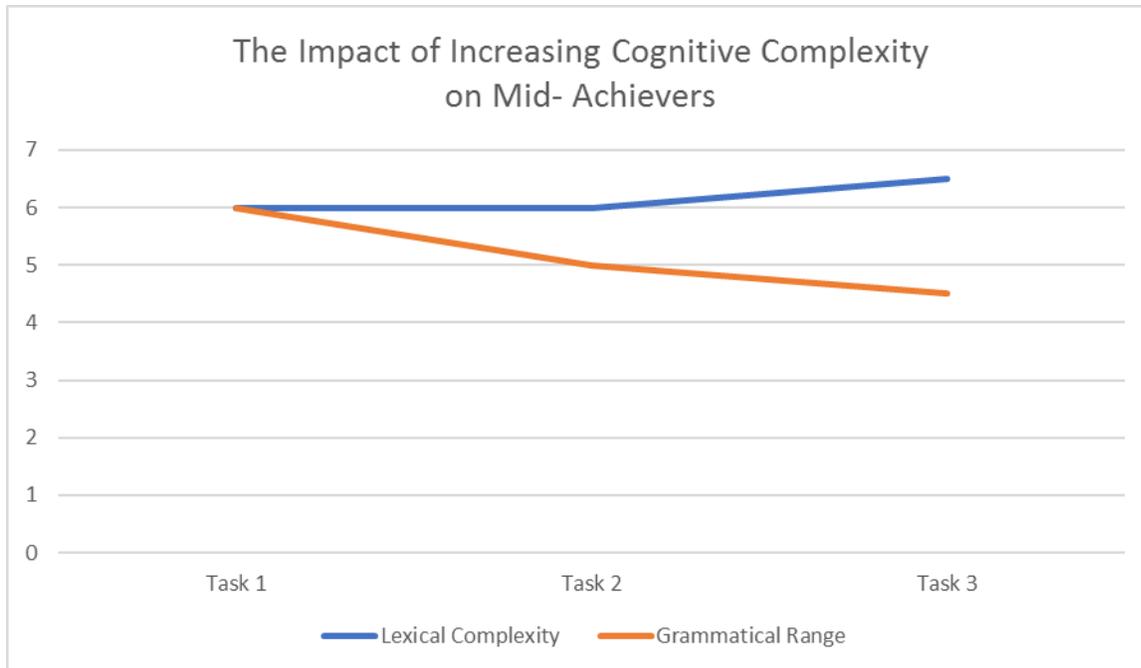
5.4 Research Question 3

The researcher investigates the impact of increasing the cognitive complexity of the speaking task by including debating and more reasoning and the question is :does increasing the cognitive complexity of the task impact oral language performance?

The main negative impact was related to the grammatical range and accuracy as all participants' performances were affected, ranging between severely (in the case of mid-achievers) and slightly (in the case of high achievers). Nevertheless, a positive correlation was found in this study, mainly in the lexical complexity area in which both high achievers and mid-achievers scored highest in the debate task that required more reasoning skills and underpinned more cognitive load. To some extent, the findings of this research question contradict the results in the studies by Gilabert and colleagues (Gilabert, 2007; Gilabert et al., 2009), that the increase of task complexity had no impact on language performance in the tasks that involved decision making or cognitive reasoning demands.



The impact of task complexity on high-achievers' lexical resource and grammatical range



The impact of task complexity on mid-achievers' lexical resource and grammatical range

5.5 Participants' Interviews and Insights

The Two High Achievers:

The 1st participant said that she found tasks 1 and 2 to be easy while task 3, the debate to be the most difficult as she had no time to prepare and her opponent was a tough debater.

Similarly, the 2nd participant felt most comfortable in performing the 1st task yet she still finds task2 to be easy. She described the debate task to be the most difficult and the stressful task due to lack of preparation.

The insights of the two high achievers confirm what Costa et al., 2008; Pickering & Garrod, 2004 concluded; they suggested that dialogues are cognitively simpler than monologues in what they called the Alignment Hypothesis

The Two Mid-Achievers:

The 3rd participant, surprisingly, stated that the monolog was the most difficult task because she was not interested in the topic. Moreover, she stated that the debate task was the easiest because she thought it was fun and interesting due to the topic nature and having a partner.

Similarly, the 4th participant believed that the debate task was the easiest and she felt most comfortable performing it particularly because she had a partner to talk to. As for the monolog task, she thought it was the most difficult as she had to speak on her own in addition to the fact that she did not like to describe her feelings, but rather she prefers to express opinions and give reasons for them.

The insights of the two mid-achievers confirm what (Tavakoli & Foster,2008) suggested about how the interactive nature of dialog and the shared or divided pressure of speaking reduce the stress during language performance because speakers get turns and accordingly time to plan during their partners' turns.

Chapter 6

Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the main areas of the dissertation. It covers the theoretical framework discussed in the introduction in addition to the literature reviewed in chapter 2. It also covers the methodology adopted in the research. Briefing of all findings and discussions are also provided. Finally, it provides some recommendation that can be built on the findings of this dissertation.

6.2 Summary

This dissertation investigates the impact of task complexity on language performance and production in ESL classrooms. Recent literature has findings confirming both negative and positive effects of increasing task complexity on language areas like fluency, lexical complexity, and grammar and accuracy. The researcher chooses speaking as a skill because he is highly interested in speech analysis and he believes that speaking is the most important communicative means upon which all civilization and human progress was built.

The study covers many concepts in the theoretical framework in early chapters. Frameworks like TBLT help understand the nature of tasks and how learners produce their speech outputs based on language input provided. The connection between TBLT and SLA is crucial here in terms of helping syllabus designers to sequence their tasks to meet their language teaching objectives.

The link to cognition hypothesis is a corner stone of the study as it examines the suggestion of having positive effects on fluency, lexical complexity, grammar and accuracy when the tasks are made more complex. Similarly, the limited capacity hypothesis is importantly relevant as it suggests that task complexity has negative effects due to the consumption of attentional resources.

Interactional competence is another area of concern: most language teachers do not focus on the level of interaction and its contribution to language learners and their ability to conduct successful interactive spoken discourse.

The literature reviewed in this dissertation mainly focuses in detail on two main studies by (Gilabert, Barón, & Llanes, 2009) and by Marije C. Michel in addition to other few studies in brief. The study compares its findings to the findings of these relevant studies in different areas of speech production.

The methodology and research procedures are described in detail; the qualitative approach is the best to suit the needs of the study by operating a speech analysis and conducting interviews with participants to gain their insights and feedback on tasks and experiment. The researcher also uses the IELTS band descriptor by the British Council and Cambridge University as an evaluation form or an assessment tool of participants' oral speech production during the three tasks of the study; the researcher includes and adds one more area of assessment; reasoning and argumentation.

The findings of the monolog task show that the high achievers are evidently very fluent in terms of speed and the number of pauses. They are relevant and their speech production is coherent. Both high achievers spoke with a great deal of accuracy and flexibility in terms of vocab or lexical resource. Grammatical range and accuracy was another area they both scored high and their sentence structures varied to demonstrate their high proficiency level. As for mid-achievers, their level was evidently less in the monolog task as they showed less fluency by being slower and by making more pauses that are language related. Both mid-achievers used simple and average words and their structural complexity was very basic as they used mostly simple sentences and very few subordinate clauses. Also, the grammar mistakes by both participants are common in this level of proficiency unlike the high achievers who had almost no grammar mistakes.

The findings of the interview tasks show that the two high achievers still had a high level of fluency and coherence and only had a slight negative effect that is barely noticeable on the grammatical range and accuracy. The only area that witnessed a very positive impact was the lexical complexity as participants used more wider range of vocabulary and more highly academic words and sets of collocations.

On the other hand, mid achievers demonstrated a very slight negative effect on fluency and a great negative impact on grammatical range and accuracy. Many grammar mistakes appeared when the complexity increased in this task.

The findings of the mini-debate task, the highest in terms of complexity, show that the high achievers were still very fluent due to their speed and very low number of pauses. The positive impact on lexical resource was even higher in this task. For the grammar, there was a slightly negative effect but the researcher did not consider it due to the length of the debate task that lasted for 9.5 minutes.

Mid-achievers demonstrated less competence in terms of fluency as they spoke less time full of pauses and could not finish the debate. Evidently, the area that witnessed a major negative impact was the grammatical range and accuracy; Both mid-achievers underperformed in this area of the task. Grammar errors were more frequent; new errors appeared like pronoun-antecedent agreement and unnecessary shifts in tenses, in addition to some wrong sentence structures that were mostly simple sentences throughout the entire task. The score declined to reach 4.5, the lowest score throughout all research tasks and areas.

To sum up the areas that exhibited impacts of increasing task complexity were the lexical complexity (positive impact) in high achievers and grammatical range and accuracy (negative impact) in mid-achievers; the former is in line with the cognition hypothesis by Robinson while the latter is in line with the limited capacity hypothesis by Skehan. Therefore, the dissertation findings hereby partially confirm the researcher's 1st hypothesis in regard to grammatical range and accuracy(mid-achievers) and contradicts the hypothesis regarding lexical resource and complexity (high achievers).

Regarding the 2nd hypothesis, high achievers' performance demonstrated a noticeably positive correlation between their proficiency level and their task performance in dialogical tasks (both interview and mini-debate). On the other hand, mid-achiever's performance showed very weak correlation except for the grammatical range and accuracy area (negative correlation). The researcher suggests this unclear correlation to be investigated further.

Regarding the 3rd hypothesis, the findings of this dissertation contradicts what Gilabert and colleagues (Gilabert, 2007; Gilabert et al., 2009), suggested that the increase of task cognitive complexity had no impact on language performance in the tasks that involved decision making or cognitive reasoning demands. Increasing the cognitive complexity by including the debate in the

3rd task had the greatest impacts on all participants especially in terms of grammar and vocabulary.

6.3 Recommendations

Both task-based design for classroom practice and research as well as task based testing can clearly benefit from the knowledge obtained from the found results.

First of all, increasing the cognitive demands of tasks has demonstrated the direction of learners' attention to form, either to the vocabulary they need to use or to the structures they need to consider; in other words, teachers or syllabus designers can use this finding to promote teaching more advanced vocabulary as part of SLA process.

Second, data about how increasing cognitive complexity impacts performance should inform decisions on how to sequence tasks in a syllabus. Sequencing them in an ascending sequence may help as the performance of learners rise gradually in more than one area, in addition to the practice effect which will enhance the language performance/production and accordingly learning and SLA.

Third, interactive tasks like interviews and debates push L2 learners to greater accuracy, lexical complexity, and fluency. Speaking activities or tasks therefore should incorporate pair work or group work to trigger more fluency and lexical complexity. Language teachers and testers however should be aware that L2 learners are often evaluated in a monologic setting, especially in a testing environment. This is likely to mislead/distort the evaluation of learners as they can perform better in a dialogical testing setting.

Fourth, ESL teachers can use these tasks as formative assessments to gain a reflective view about the learner's language input and his/her output; that can help the teacher stress the areas of weakness that need more reinforcement.

Fifth, teachers and syllabus designers and coordinators can make use of task manipulation to adjust the level of tasks and instructions to suit the needs and levels of their classroom students. It can help to meet the needs of advanced students as well as beginners; tiered assignments and differentiated instructions can help benefit all levels of students based on their cognitive complexity level.

Sixth, teachers and syllabus designers should consider that learners have different learning styles and that some of them have interpersonal intelligence while others have intrapersonal intelligence; in other words, working or learning alone can be a form of task complexity for some learners whereas to others it could facilitate learning depending on the learner's social nature and the area of his/her multiple intelligence. Accordingly, designing ESL tasks should incorporate both types of tasks; individual and interactive.

Seven, interactional competence among pairs in dialogs of debates can be another area of evaluation; learners can be evaluated on how effective communication they are able to produce in pairs or groups.

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Appendices

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SPEAKING: Band Descriptors (public version)

Band	Fluency and coherence	Lexical resource	Grammatical range and accuracy	Pronunciation
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> speaks fluently with only rare repetition or self-correction; any hesitation is content-related rather than to find words or grammar speaks coherently with fully appropriate cohesive features develops topics fully and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses vocabulary with full flexibility and precision in all topics uses idiomatic language naturally and accurately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a full range of structures naturally and appropriately produces consistently accurate structures apart from 'slips' characteristic of native speaker speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a full range of pronunciation features with precision and subtlety sustains flexible use of features throughout is effortless to understand
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> speaks fluently with only occasional repetition or self-correction; hesitation is usually content-related and only rarely to search for language develops topics coherently and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide vocabulary resource readily and flexibly to convey precise meaning uses less common and idiomatic vocabulary skilfully, with occasional inaccuracies uses paraphrase effectively as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of structures flexibly produces a majority of error-free sentences with only very occasional inappropriacies or basic/non-systematic errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of pronunciation features sustains flexible use of features, with only occasional lapses is easy to understand throughout; L1 accent has minimal effect on intelligibility
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> speaks at length without noticeable effort or loss of coherence may demonstrate language-related hesitation at times, or some repetition and/or self-correction uses a range of connectives and discourse markers with some flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses vocabulary resource flexibly to discuss a variety of topics uses some less common and idiomatic vocabulary and shows some awareness of style and collocation, with some inappropriate choices uses paraphrase effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a range of complex structures with some flexibility frequently produces error-free sentences, though some grammatical mistakes persist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows all the positive features of Band 6 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 8
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is willing to speak at length, though may lose coherence at times due to occasional repetition, self-correction or hesitation uses a range of connectives and discourse markers but not always appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has a wide enough vocabulary to discuss topics at length and make meaning clear in spite of inappropriacies generally paraphrases successfully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a mix of simple and complex structures, but with limited flexibility may make frequent mistakes with complex structures though these rarely cause comprehension problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a range of pronunciation features with mixed control shows some effective use of features but this is not sustained can generally be understood throughout, though mispronunciation of individual words or sounds reduces clarity at times
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> usually maintains flow of speech but uses repetition, self-correction and/or slow speech to keep going may over-use certain connectives and discourse markers produces simple speech fluently, but more complex communication causes fluency problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> manages to talk about familiar and unfamiliar topics but uses vocabulary with limited flexibility attempts to use paraphrase but with mixed success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> produces basic sentence forms with reasonable accuracy uses a limited range of more complex structures, but these usually contain errors and may cause some comprehension problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows all the positive features of Band 4 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 6
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cannot respond without noticeable pauses and may speak slowly, with frequent repetition and self-correction links basic sentences but with repetitious use of simple connectives and some breakdowns in coherence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is able to talk about familiar topics but can only convey basic meaning on unfamiliar topics and makes frequent errors in word choice rarely attempts paraphrase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> produces basic sentence forms and some correct simple sentences but subordinate structures are rare errors are frequent and may lead to misunderstanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a limited range of pronunciation features attempts to control features but lapses are frequent mispronunciations are frequent and cause some difficulty for the listener
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> speaks with long pauses has limited ability to link simple sentences gives only simple responses and is frequently unable to convey basic message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses simple vocabulary to convey personal information has insufficient vocabulary for less familiar topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempts basic sentence forms but with limited success, or relies on apparently memorised utterances makes numerous errors except in memorised expressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows some of the features of Band 2 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 4
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pauses lengthily before most words little communication possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> only produces isolated words or memorised utterances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cannot produce basic sentence forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speech is often unintelligible
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no communication possible no rateable language 			
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not attend 			

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Page 1 of 1

The IELTS Speaking Evaluation Criteria (Band Descriptor)

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Test Report Form

ACADEMIC

NOTE Admission to undergraduate and post graduate courses should be based on the ACADEMIC Reading and Writing Modules.
GENERAL TRAINING Reading and Writing Modules are not designed to test the full range of language skills required for academic purposes.
It is recommended that the candidate's language ability as indicated in this Test Report Form be re-assessed after two years from the date of the test.

Centre Number

AE001

Date

25/MAR/2017

Candidate Number

027865

Candidate Details

Family Name

HUSSAIN

First Name

FATMA HASSAN ABDULLA MOHAMMAD

Candidate ID

784199926329865

Date of Birth

03/08/1999

Sex (M/F)

F

Scheme Code

Private Candidate

Country or Region of Origin

Country of Nationality

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

First Language

ARABIC

Test Results

Listening

5.5

Reading

5.0

Writing

5.5

Speaking

6.5

Overall Band Score

5.5

CEFR Level

B2

Administrator Comments

Centre stamp



Validation stamp



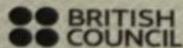
Administrator's Signature

Date

07/04/2017

Test Report Form Number

16AE027865HUSF001A



The validity of this IELTS Test Report Form can be verified online by recognising organisations at <http://ielts.ucles.org.uk>

The IELTS transcript of the 4th participant

IELTS™

Test Report Form

ACADEMIC

NOTE Admission to undergraduate and post graduate courses should be based on the ACADEMIC Reading and Writing Modules.
GENERAL TRAINING Reading and Writing Modules are **not** designed to test the full range of language skills required for academic purposes.
It is recommended that the candidate's language ability as indicated in this Test Report Form be re-assessed **after two years** from the date of the test.

Centre Number AE001

Date 15/SEP/2016

Candidate Number 013087

Candidate Details

Family Name -

First Name SARAH AHMAD CHAKIB ABDULKARIM

Candidate ID 784200073571877



Date of Birth 11/05/2000

Sex (M/F) F

Scheme Code Private Candidate

Country or Region of Origin

Country of Nationality SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

First Language ARABIC

Test Results

Listening 7.5

Reading 6.0

Writing 6.0

Speaking 7.5

Overall Band Score 7.0

CEFR Level C1

Administrator Comments

Empty box for Administrator Comments.

Centre stamp



Validation stamp



Administrator's Signature

Date 27/09/2016

Test Report Form Number

16AE013087TS001A



The IELTS Transcript of the 1st participant

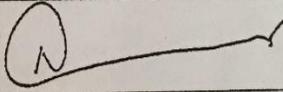
Country of Nationality	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	
First Language	ARABIC	

Test Results

Listening	7.0	Reading	6.5	Writing	5.0	Speaking	6.0	Overall Band Score	6.0	CEFR Level	B2
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Administrator Comments

<p>Centre stamp</p> 	<p>Validation stamp</p> 
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Administrator's Signature: 

Date	18/03/2017	Test Report Form Number	16AE025919TTF001A
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The IELTS Transcript of the 3rd Participant

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BRITISH COUNCIL  IDP  CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH  Language Assessment part of the University of Cambridge

Centre Number: AE056 Date: 05/NOV/2016 Candidate Number: 003105

NOTE: Admission to undergraduate and post graduate courses should be based on the ACADEMIC Reading and Writing Modules. GENERAL TRAINING Reading and Writing Modules are not designed to test the full range of language skills required for academic purposes. It is recommended that the candidate's language ability as indicated in this Test Report Form be re-assessed after two years from the date of the test.

ACADEMIC

Family Name: ABDIN First Name: ZINA ZEIN Candidate ID: 784199906540218

Date of Birth: 01/06/1999 Sex (M/F): F Scheme Code: Private Candidate

Country or Region of Origin: Country of Origin: CANADA First Language: ARABIC

Test Results

Listening	8.0	Reading	9.0	Writing	7.0	Speaking	8.5	Overall Band Score	8.0	CEFR Level	C1
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Validation stamp:  Centre stamp: 

Administrator's Signature: 

Administrator Comments:

The IELTS Transcript of the 2nd Participant

Participants' Speech analysis and evaluation by 1st Rater (Amanda Lesely, a native English teacher in Jebel Ali Primary School)

Task 1 Monologue Participant 1

Good fluency and comprehension of what was being asked. Her vocabulary was mixed: she used repetitive words such as 'also' and 'a lot', however, she was also able to use topic words such as 'event' and 'design' and colloquialism such as 'made from scratch.' I would have enjoyed this more if she used her time conjunctions to emphasize the sequence of the day. But she vocabulary to explain and clarify what parts she had done before and during the event. Overall she demonstrated a rate of fluency that did not stop until she had run out of things to say, explaining what she had enjoyed about the event using correct grammar and syntax, with no pauses for word retrieval.

6/9

Task 2 Interview Participant 1

Participant 1 had a good understanding, pronunciation and fluency when using English. She hesitated after questions to process what was asked this was not automatic and she utilised words used by the teacher. She has some lexical / grammatical errors such as 'before year 3 ago' and 'we went a lot of places'. The language was quite simple; adjectives were quite basic such as 'good' and 'nice', although she was able to use and apply conjunctions easily. The teacher was trying to assist her speech by directing towards things she liked such as using the tv show and celebrities and this showed her humour and ability to move from one topic to the next with very little trouble.

7/9

Task 1 Monologue Participant 2

This was a good fluency and comprehension of what had been asked. Initially explaining in the date, its meaning and what occurred at the event with a good level of vocabulary, using adjectives and correct sequencing and syntax. However, after her initial thoughts were spoken her ability to retrieve information that was relevant was limited. Although from her going off on a tangent about 'a person dying from a horse riding experience' she demonstrated her ability in spoken English and comprehension is good but her organizational skills and ability to formulate answers is limited but I would suggest this would also occur in her mother tongue.

7/9

Task 2 Interview Participant 2

Participant 2 is fluent English speaker. She is able to speak at a very fast rate, accurately understanding the question. She starts with powerful 'ing' openers instead of repeating parts of the questioner question, which someone less able would do. She applies personal experience with relish, showing a depth of understanding not only of the question but of the topic and her love of travel and the history of the countries she visited. She used appropriate time conjunctions and adjectives to create interest. She explained with clarity what she liked and why and how it was different to her family members. She summarized her trips to countries succinctly, using cause and effect throughout such as 'the problem with Europe it closes early therefore you need to eat early'. A highly competent English language student, who I'm sure would have excelled if she was given questions to answer rather than a less structured interview.

8/9

Task 3 Mini-Debate

Both students understood and complied with the instructions for the debate demonstrating their fluency and comprehension of the language and subject.

Participant 1 spoke eloquently and clearly, succinctly giving several reasons why she believed in wearing a uniform, such as school identity, bullying and not being able to afford the same as others.

Participant 2 countered in a very confident manner, expressed with excellent vocabulary the arguments against. Good use of cause and effect to establish and validate her argument using research as evidence.

Participant 1 Countered in such a fantastic manner - repeating Student 2's argument to reinforce her understanding and then establishing how one dimensional it was. She explained individuality was not about looks, school was able to provide expression through ... You heard her pause as she did understand her flaw in using the word 'smart' but was confident enough to carry on ignoring her mistake that children can be smarter at school and using it to imply no one is better than another at school.

participant 2 then used a limited argument focusing only on clothes to express individualism, but she accredited so many aspects that could be encompassed to this one view, it was excellent comprehension. She validated her point using exceptional vocabulary, explaining similarities and the complex interaction / meanings that can be deduced through humans and the clothes they wear. It was something that she obviously felt passionately about and was very expressive in her presentation style. She has a very deep understanding of how school impacts a person not just academically and her language ability justified her arguments wonderfully. This was not just facts and opinions, it was a well formulated argument, constructed and determined by understanding of complex argument.

participant 1 was methodical, more fact and opinion, and less engaged with the subject matter. However, her many points were valid and expressed in a concise, precise manner that were formulated to provide many reasons and therefore drown the one voice of student 2.

Both girls considered and evaluated the other opinions and replied using the correct grammar, causal conjunctions and extended vocabulary. They spoke audibly and fluently with an excellent command of standard English. Their arguments were relevant, well-structured and justified by research.

Participant 1: 8/9

Participant 2: 8.5/9

Task 1 Monologue Participant 3

Participant 3 halting use of English with many pauses, incorrect grammar, although she was trying to describe past time sequence, not simple sentences. Her enunciation was clear but a couple of words were said incorrectly. Repetitive language 'what I liked about', simple language 'fun' and 'good' and expansion using only the same theme e.g. the classes involved. She could use simple sentences correctly with limited descriptions.

5/9

Task 2 Interview Participant 3

The interview started with better fluency than the monologue. She enjoys talking about something familiar rather than unfamiliar but reverts back to 'safe' with very little detail, although she uses conjunctions appropriately and frequently. She has more expression when she is talking about what she wants, but provided very little extra detail even when prompted. She said the names of foods without explaining what they were. Grammatical errors were also present along with pauses.

6/9

Task 1 Monologue Participant 4

Fluent and clear pronunciation, with nice description and good explanations. She had a mix of sentence structures and uses the language naturally, but ran out of steam very quickly. Again, showing the same problem as above, by not clearly demonstrating the ability which I believe she possesses she will lose marks. Maybe this is a self-confidence issue, but I feel she is just a quieter member of the class.

5/9

Task 2 Interview Participant 4

Participant 4 started off fluently with expression, clear pronunciation and produced simple sentences correctly. What an amazing topic to discuss. She was able to recall details succinctly and grammatically correct, although she missed at least one article. Repeated the questioners question and then provided a list of places with no detail, she missed an opportunity to expand and demonstrate her vocabulary range. She did not want to veer of her topic of hospitals and was unable to discuss tourists' spots or foods, which could be lack of comprehension / coherence, but I do not feel this. However, as above, she did not take the opportunity to produce a range of vocabulary. 5.5/9 although I feel she could be much higher if she engaged in the question, rather limiting herself to the experience.

5.5/9

Task 3 Mini-Debate

Participant 3 uses language halting and repetitively, but she has a good idea and explains it in a limited fashion; with some grammatical errors.

Participant 4 speaks more naturally, understands and is able to provide a response that is accurate.

Participant 3 again, has an idea that is suitable: dress code linked to culture, but she lacks the vocabulary and coherence to fully explain, with hesitation loses the momentum.

Participant 4 is much confident in addressing an argument and has quicker and varied responses, demonstrating her language ability to link to the topic.

Participant 4 starts with an usual idea to support why not to have a uniform but she is hesitant and not convincing, although it is a creative idea.

Participant 3 responded well but then did not fully explain or develop her response and therefore it was incomplete.

This debate was full of pauses and incomplete ideas and sentences and the grammar mistakes were more than previous tasks

Both participants: 4.5/9

Participants' Speech analysis and evaluation by 2nd Rater (Iman Diaa Abd El Moneim, a certified IELTS examiner in the British Council in Riyadh, KSA)

Task 1 the monolog

Participant 1: has demonstrated band 8 in fluency, lexis and grammar. However, I thought she could've been more precise in the use of lexis. her pron is, overall, band 7 or 8 - I gave her a 7 because in her mono the tone was flat and she didn't demonstrate the use of intonation.

Ratings: F 8, LR 7, GR 8 & P 7.

Participant 2: demonstrated band 8 in fluency; topic development was very good. simple and complex structures were generally produced accurately. her pron was a band 8; she demonstrated good features of bands 7/8 - chunking, intonation, rhythm...The lexis range was good but could've been wider and more precise.

Ratings: F 8, LR 7, GR 8 & P 8.

Participant 3: demonstrated features of band 6/7. In fluency, hesitations relevant to language occurred. She used a range of connectives / discourse markers but not with full flexibility. She's a band 7 all through, she could've been more precise and more flexible in using structures (range). She used some less common /idiomatic vocabulary.

Ratings: F 7, LR 7, GR 7 & P7.

Participant 4: demonstrated features of band 6/7. Language related hesitations occurred which affected flexibility but there was no loss of coherence. Inaccuracies in grammar, I think, prevents her from achieving band 7 in GR. Her vocabulary is wide enough to discuss the topic but with limited flexibility.

Ratings: F 7, LR 6, GR 6 & P 7

Task 2: Interview

Participant 1:

She demonstrated very good fluency and flexibility. Hesitations were few and were mainly content-related to develop answers to the questions.

The participant used a very good mix of simple and complex structures with good flexibility. Error free sentences were produced without noticeable effort and control was very good. Few inaccuracies persist but these were limited and had no effect on understanding and communication.

The participant used a wide range of vocabulary to discuss the topic; the use of collocations and less common vocabulary was evident which resulted in fluency and flexibility.

F 8.5, LR 8, GR 8 & P 7

Participant 2:

Fluency and confidence were evident, hesitations were a bit more evident but mostly content-related and had no effect on coherence and understanding.

Similar to the first participant, she has used a very good mix of simple and complex structures to convey the message with very good flexibility. Error free sentences were produced with ease and the few inaccuracies didn't affect understanding or communication.

She has used very good collocations and precision was evident. She has used a wide range of vocabulary in her description. This participant has used a wide range of pronunciation features with good flexibility.

F 8.5, LR 8, GR 8 & P 7.5

Participant 3:

Compared to the first two participants, fluency was good but with more language-related hesitations and few pauses.

Compared to the first two participants, inaccuracies in grammar were more frequent. Though she has used some complex structures, the majority of the sentences produced to answer the questions were simple. The participant, however, maintained a very good level of accuracy and the grammatical issues did not affect communication.

The participant used a good range to discuss the topic but the use of collocations was limited which was reflected in simple / one-word answers to some questions (limited flexibility), but with some good precision.

F 6, LR 6, GR 6 & P6.5

Participant 4:

Despite language-related hesitations, there was no breakdown in coherence. She maintained a good level of fluency.

Similar to the third participant, this participant used more simple sentences. She has maintained good level of accuracy despite the inaccuracies. Flexibility in using simple and complex structures wasn't as evident as it was in the first two interviews.

She has used a good range of vocabulary to develop the topic but collocations were few and the use of less common vocabulary was limited.

F 6, LR 6, GR 6 & P7.

Task 3: The Mini-Debate

Participant 1 demonstrated band 8 in terms of fluency and coherence. As for lexical resource, she obtained 8.5 while in grammatical range and accuracy she received 8. She was very confident and spoke clearly and addressed the point; she supported her argument efficiently.

F 8.5, LR 8.5, GR 8 & P 7

Participant 2 was very fluent and provided good reasons and was able to produce complex sentences with almost no errors.

F 9, LR 8.5, GR 8 & P 7.5

Participant 3 had many pauses that are both language related and content related. She made many grammar mistakes and her LR was good in general.

F 5.5, LR 6, GR 4.5 & P6

Participant 4 showed some fluency but was not able to continue the task. Grammar mistakes were common and her LR was still in a good range.

F 6.5, LR 6, GR 5 & P7

Speaking Tasks Transcripts

1st Participant Monolog

Researcher: So, Sarah, you are going to talk to me about the national day which was a couple of days ago. So, go ahead.

1st participant: The National Day was one of the greatest events; it was my last National Day I will ever attend because it is my last year in school however it was great since all the student's council worked a lot a day before or two days before it. There was a lot of events in the national day; there was a photo booth for the media committee and a photo booth for media students. There was a camel to was free to ride, there was horses ridden by students of our school. There was also marching done by council students especially seniors there were students that were drumming during the march; it was a nice event. I also went on stage for the 1st time; I made an act about the union of the UAE, people liked the act however I was a bit nervous. I had a lot of duties such standing in front of the cars so that people won't touch them. Another duty was staying in the photo booth; I was taking pictures and printing it; each photo costed 5dhs. I also took a lot of pictures for my friends and teachers. I had the experience to socialize and meet my ex teachers, yes, it was great.it was a tiring day; the day before the event we worked from 2 till 9. We worked on the museum ,we worked on the booth; we designed the whole booth, we made it from scratch, we painted the colors of the flag; we made a masterpiece basically. however, the photo booth, we did not gain a lot of money but it was a fun experience. Also the Gallabia, the traditional uniform of UAE, I had trouble finding that so I just wear one that I already have

1st Participant Interview

Researcher: Ok,Sarah, We this task ;it is an interview, I will be asking you some questions. I would like you to talk about an unforgettable travel experience that you had before.

1st participant: an unforgettable travel experience is traveling to Turkey. Since Tureky is my favourite country because I watch a lot of Turkish series so it was always my dream to visit

Turkey. We went to a lot of places; we visited the blue mosque. It is a huge mosque; it has a lot of nice designs which interested me because I'm going for interior design or architecture.

Researcher: When did you go to Turkey Exactly?

1st participant: Before three years ago.. I was not ..before three or four years ago ,I was a bit a kid, I was not a kid but my mind was still like a kid. I did not really care I just wanted to go back to the hotel however I really enjoyed it.

Researcher: What other places did you visit?

1st participant: We saw the whole of Turkey through a telefreeck it was a huge telefrick that went from the hills of turkey to the upper parts in Turkey...down parts

Researcher: What was the most important place you went to?

1st participant: the most important place is the museum of Turkey it is a museum which all famous things in turkey are put into small things in the museum so literally everything that is famous in Turkey is put there so if you don't get the chance to go and see them in real life you can see them there.

Researcher: Did you try any traditional Turkish food?

1st participant: Yes I have tried their ice cream, it is very nice they do tricks with it. I also tried their traditional dessert it is called Konafa.It is so good it has cheese and other things.

Researcher: Did you meet any people there?

1st participant: We don't have any relatives there, however my uncle and his kids followed after 3 days so we had to go to the same laces together.

Researcher: What did you learn from this experience?

1st participant: I learned to be independent because our parents in one of the days made us go alone, made us have a choice to visit a place on our own and go back to the hotel.

Researcher: Would you travel to Turkey one more time in the future?

1st participant : Yes I would travel to turkey but not the city I have been to which Istanbul,I would go to somewhere else because turkey is also known for its beaches and those fun sides.

R: Did you try to do any research about other places

P1: Yes,I have tried doing a research about a city called Ezmir, not because of the places but because most of the celebrities live so I Like to see the place.

3rd Task (Mini-Debate) 1st & 2nd Participant

Researcher: Good morning, this is the 2rd task, the debate about school uniform. One of you is in favour of the topic, the other is against it. please go ahead.

1st participant: Today I will be talking about School uniform. I'm in favour of students wearing school uniform for a lot of reasons. First of all, we face a lot of problems nowadays with students wearing other clothes than the uniform; some students will be judged from their teachers or colleagues. Also, some don't have the ability to wear fancy clothes like their colleagues so they will be a bit left out; they can be cyberbullied for this so tis will increase cyber bullying at school. second, I think the school uniform is like an identity for students in university they don't wear uniform because they study different things however in school we are all equal and this uniform represents that we are all equal.

2nd participant: You said that we are all equal; don't you think that everyone has something to show we are all individual and we have different capabilities. If you gonna wear a school uniform you are gonna see them as students but for students they should express their thoughts and feeling to their clothing decision. Second you said equality; no one is equal, everyone has their individual thought so you are confining them into the same uniform and it is not a great

way because you are stripping them away from their individuality as a person you just treating them all the same and they have to have their own characteristics. Now cyber bullying, there is judgment wherever you go..how you button your school uniform and there is a study that was done that bullying in general happens equally in both schools with and without uniform; they did not find much details about enno..clothing and dress code cause bullying.

1st participant: First of all you said that students can express their thought through uniform, however there are other ways to express their thoughts through extracurricular activities, through talents, such as art they can express their thoughts through this or through student council; they can be creative giving ideas.

You said also that we are not equal; we are not equal however in school hours we are equal no one is different or smarter than the other. There are people that are smarter but you would find other stuff in the other person so you can find creativity in others.

2nd participant: your argument about equality, would not it be easier if we can just wear our clothes and express our identity? would not it be easier to make friends? Because people would know what kind of pole they are into because through your clothes you can say a lot about your personality so it is easier to find friends, it is easier to find hobbies and interests; many kids right now they are facing individuality problem, they cannot find who they are; they are being lost. Choosing your clothes and the style that you want will actually help find who you are in the future and this is a problem that many people are facing right now, that is why many students cannot find their career jobs because they don't know who they are and what they like so they don't know themselves as individual but only as a unit.

1st participant: ok,as I have told you before ,people don't express their thoughts through clothes only; they can socialize with friends, they can socialize with others to become friends; they can find many other ways other than clothes.

2nd participant : Socializing would be easier if each student wore what they want because not just saying this girl likes fashion and she enjoys fashion;she sees this girl with a similar sense of fashion and they have some sort of connectiveity so she know who to approach and who she enjoys talking to.from what she wears she understands the other girl's mentality;she has a view of it.

1st participant: Students after school can go out and they can enjoy those stuff outside school so they can express their thoughts outside school through going out having lunch together; through school we only care about studying and a bit of socializing and making friends.

2nd participant: school is not only a place for education and many students most of their childhood in school so this is a place where to build a person's individuality if school does not play an important role in it through helping students find who they are. School is a major part of it so if the school does not help then the students will be lost because after when they go back home they will be tired and they would just sleep and they have homework to do so really, they don't have time to find themselves so the only time is during the school hours.

1st participant: but they won't find themselves through clothing

2nd participant: it does help; it helps so much. Imagine yourself; imagine a little kid. A little kid expresses himself through the colors and through ... clothes helps the person to express themselves. Imagine you are being confined into wearing the same outfit every single day of your life. You would feel like you are oppressed. choosing your own clothes will actually help the person. It helps the person emotionally because they feel they don't have to be like some they are not; they can just be who they are because many people don't like to be formal like in wearing pants and suits. Students want to feel comfortable; students want to feel who they are so wearing the school uniform takes it away.

2nd participant: individuality is something very important in everyone's life. Wearing your .. mmm.. students should express their thought through what they wear; they should wear whatever they want whenever they want but they have to follow some regulations that respect other's traditions and cultures in the school. A recent study done by Harvard, found out that students who pick their own outfit don't go to private schools, so they found that students in public schools are happier; the reason is that they don't feel they have more rules and one of the rules is the dress code, so I think that removing the dress code will increase students happiness.

1st participant: ok..mm.. you said that we should have a dress code. that is right however there are lots of students that do not follow those dress codes ;there are lots of students who don't obey these rules ;they wear stuff they are not supposed to wear such as wearing short skirts and unbuttoning their shirts. There are a lot of students that do not follow those dress codes.

2nd participant: something funny that happened is that-about the rules and clothing and uniform-they found that students that go to schools with dress code they actually break the rules more than students that actually go to public schools why? Because in uniforms they either skirts to express what they are even they unbutton their shirts but in public schools, they are given more options so students don't have to actually break the rules.

2nd Participant Monolog

Research: good morning, this is the 1st task,the monlog.I will ask to talk about the national day.

2nd participant: The school had the national day ceremony. The national day ceremony started with the parade; students held the flag and walked with it; there were horses that followed them. there was music and celebration all over the school. The students wore different outfits; the girls wore either abayas or traditional dress while the guys wore the traditional clothes for UAE. There were so many activities for the national day. There were ..like you can ride a camel or a horse and paint the UAE national flag and other more. There were so many faces and shops all over the school so you can buy traditional food like Byriani and Lugaimat and there was coffee and dates for everyone to eat and drink. Many students from outside and many parents came and joined to celebrate the national day. The national day is very important for UAE because it symbolizes the importance of a country and everyone can come and celebrate the importance of a country they live in because the UAE provides many people with source of income and as afe place to live and to raise your kids. I enjoyed my time I really enjoyed the traditional music they played during the day and I enjoyed eating the food Lugaimat was very sweet, the coffee was bitter, the dates were sweet....mmm....yea..I don't like riding horses that is why I didn't ride them because I had a really bad experience as a kid. One time we had a school celebration in my old school and the horses just fled and they stepped on a guy and he had to go to hospital. I don't what happened I think he died.

2nd Participant Interview

Research: This is the second task; I'm going to ask you about an unforgettable travel experience that you had; so what is it?

2nd participant: traveling is very important and I really enjoy traveling around countries to learn about different cultures and traditions. one of my favorite places I went to was a trip around Europe. The trip around Europe helped me gain experience and cultures and learn about the history of European countries because they are rich in the history and many of wars and scientific research and advancement in Arts and science happened in that location. The first trip, the first stop we went to France, we saw ..we saw many important locations overtreated scenery was amazing but the problem was there was too much traffic and police officers so it was really hard to pass by. my favorite part was going to the old town; it was really nice you really could see how they have changed over this period of time like the Victorian time and gothic era they have different structures ;the windows were different and there were different windows.

Research: What was the second country you visited?

2nd participant: The second country I visited was Germany. Germany is a really nice country but we did not stay there for a long time we just went there for 2 or 3 hours, I really dint get to experience that much of the country. The 3rd stop was Switzerland where we stayed for a week. It was really nice and it was amazing; the scenery was really beautiful, the sky was blue and the mountains were tall and green..yea..

The problem with Europe is that they close very early so at 6 o'clock and finding a place to stay after 6 o'clock is really hard because everything close and everything is quiet so driving in the middle of the night was really hard because there was no light.

Research: Did you visit other countries?

2nd participant : We went to Italy for two hours; we just went to eat because in Switzerland the food was horrible, so someone told us just go to the borders it 10 minutes away ,we ate some pasta and went back

Researcher: Did you try any traditional food in any of these countries?

2nd participant: No, because most of the food contains wine and pork ,so we stayed away..so we just ate ..you know..we at things like.. my mom cooked.

Research: Did you enjoy the journey?

2nd participant: I did enjoy the journey; it was really fun..the thing I liked about it is that I learned so much about the history and background..we visited a palace and they told us the 1st light bulb was over there and how he loved the king loved sweet and desserts so we went to his kitchen and I love sweet and desserts so they showed us how they baked them and their different cookie cutters that he had. It was really nice?

Research: Did you do any kind of research before going on that trip?

2nd participant: No, I didn't do any research.

Research: So, what was the main thing that you learned through your trip in Europe?

2nd participant: The lesson I learned is that sometimes a person needs to travel and get away from the country and expand his/her knowledge about different cultures and different traditions because if you confine to what you know it is gonna be really hard to communicate with others; you need to know about other people's traditions and cultures.

Research: Will you travel again in the future?

2nd participant: Yes, I would want to go to Europe again because my parents don't like the things I enjoy; I really like going to museums and they hate going to museums.

3rd Task (Mini-Debate) 1st & 2nd Participant

Researcher: Good morning, this is the 2nd task, the debate about school uniform. One of you is in favour of the topic, the other is against it. Please go ahead.

1st participant: Today I will be talking about school uniform. I'm in favour of students wearing school uniform for a lot of reasons. First of all, we face a lot of problems nowadays with students wearing other clothes than the uniform; some students will be judged from their teachers or colleagues. Also, some don't have the ability to wear fancy clothes like their colleagues so they will be a bit left out; they can be cyberbullied for this so this will increase

cyber bullying at school. second, I think the school uniform is like an identity for students in university they don't wear uniform because they study different things however in school we are all equal and this uniform represents that we are all equal.

2nd participant: You said that we are all equal; don't you think that everyone has something to show we are all individual and we have different capabilities. If you gonna wear a school uniform you are gonna see them as students but for students they should express their thoughts and feeling to their clothing decision. Second you said equality; no one is equal, everyone has their individual thought so you are confining them into the same uniform and it is not a great way because you are stripping them away from their individuality as a person you just treating them all the same and they have to have their own characteristics. Now cyber bullying, there is judgment wherever you go..how you button your school uniform and there is a study that was done that bullying in general happens equally in both schools with and without uniform; they did not find much details about enno..clothing and dress code cause bullying.

1st participant: First of all you said that students can express their thought through uniform, however there are other ways to express their thoughts through extracurricular activities, through talents, such as art they can express their thoughts through this or through student council; they can be creative giving ideas.

You said also that we are not equal; we are not equal however in school hours we are equal no one is different or smarter than the other. There are people that are smarter but you would find other stuff in the other person so you can find creativity in others.

2nd participant: your argument about equality, would not it be easier if we can just wear our clothes and express our identity? would not it be easier to make friends? Because people would know what kind of pole they are into because through your clothes you can say a lot about your personality so it is easier to find friends, it is easier to find hobbies and interests; many kids right now they are facing individuality problem, they cannot find who they are; they are being lost. Choosing your clothes and the style that you want will actually help find who you are in the future and this is a problem that many people are facing right now, that is why many students cannot find their career jobs because they don't know who they are and what they like so they don't know themselves as individual but only as a unit.

1st participant: ok,as I have told you before ,people don't express their thoughts through clothes only; they can socialize with friends, they can socialize with others to become friends; they can find many other ways other than clothes.

2nd participant : Socializing would be easier if each student wore what they want because not just saying this girl likes fashion and she enjoys fashion;she sees this girl with a similar sense of fashion and they have some sort of connectiveity so she know who to approach and who she enjoys talking to,from what she wears she understands the other girl's mentality;she has a view of it.

1st participant: Students after school can go out and they can enjoy those stuff outside school so they can express their thoughts outside school through going out having lunch together; through school we only care about studying and a bit of socializing and making friends.

2nd participant: school is not only a place for education and many students most of their childhood in school so this is a place where to build a person's individuality if school does not play an important role in it through helping students find who they are. School is a major part of it so if the school does not help then the students will be lost because after when they go back home they will be tired and they would just sleep and they have homework to do so really, they don't have time to find themselves so the only time is during the school hours.

1st participant: but they won't find themselves through clothing

2nd participant: it does help; it helps so much. Imagine yourself; imagine a little kid. A little kid expresses himself through the colors and through ... clothes helps the person to express themselves. Imagine you are being confined into wearing the same outfit every single day of your life. You would feel like you are oppressed. choosing your own clothes will actually help the person. It helps the person emotionally because they feel they don't have to be like some they are not; they can just be who they are because many people don't like to be formal like in wearing pants and suits. Students want to feel comfortable; students want to feel who they are so wearing the school uniform takes it away.

2nd participant: individuality is something very important in everyone's life. Wearing your .. mmm.. students should express their thought through what they wear; they should wear whatever they want whenever they want but they have to follow some regulations that respect other's

traditions and cultures in the school. A recent study done by Harvard, found out that students who pick their own outfit don't go to private schools, so they found that students in public schools are happier; the reason is that they don't feel they have more rules and one of the rules is the dress code, so I think that removing the dress code will increase students happiness.

1st participant: ok..mm.. you said that we should have a dress code. that is right however there are lots of students that do not follow those dress codes ;there are lots of students who don't obey these rules ;they wear stuff they are not supposed to wear such as wearing short skirts and unbuttoning their shirts. There are a lot of students that do not follow those dress codes.

2nd participant: something funny that happened is that-about the rules and clothing and uniform-they found that students that go to schools with dress code they actually break the rules more than students that actually go to public schools why? Because in uniforms they either skirts to express what they are even they unbutton their shirts but in public schools, they are given more options so students don't have to actually break the rules.

3rd Participant Monolog

Researcher: Can you please describe the school national day ceremony?

3rd participant : The national day this year was.....a ... was kind of good. I liked it before as it was perfect but this year was not that much good. What I liked about this year's national day is that they brought new stuff to school; we made a media booth with the media teacher, we worked on it for like two weeks. It was good ;we had fun. What we did was to take photos with students to help them wear their traditional clothes and to explain about their traditional clothes as well..... [Pause] ok we also had the senior café that was done by 12C,A,and B...mmm.. our classmates did that café in order to get money to help them enter college[w baead] the senior café's name was 'Kashta' ,the meaning of this name is like a trip or a road trip;the meaning of this word is to get out of the house with friends and visit new places, this is the meaning of Kashta..so we chose this...this word it is like a new word no one chose that word as a name of a café before ,so they wanted to change a bit. The design of the café was nice ;they used traditional.They set it as a traditional place. They spent a lot of money; it costed them 33 thousand dirhams....they collected it; they used their own savings. The school was supposed

to help the but they increased the money by renting them the space by a thousand or 800 something like that so instead of helping them the school just.....[unidentified sounds]

3rd Participant Interview

Researcher: This is the interview, I will be asking you questions about an unforgettable travel experience or a country you visited before. So, go ahead please.

3rd participant: I went to Turkey, three years ago it was my first visit; I went there with my family; we were 24 persons; it was a large number but it was fun. When we first went there we were shocked because the weather there was not like the weather here; it is cold, they have nice view everywhere; they have a lot of Nature unlike here. we had a lot of fun. We started visiting Turkey after this visit [Yeani] like each year till now; we bought a house even. The house is three levels; each level has four rooms. Each year, in the winter break and the summer break we go there in order to have funand forget all the problems we faceevery day..here..in dubai

Research: What other places did you visit in Turkey?

3rd participant: I visted Istanbul.Istanbul is a nice city but kind of crowded..it is like Dubai here...so ..somehow it was fun...but it was...we also visited our house is in Yellovar;it is a nice place there,there is a nice view.we go to the beach like every single day. Our house is there..mm.. we also went to Borsa.Borsa is on the top hills. It snows there like a lot especially in winter. we go skating;I like Borsa a lot but it is cold.

Research: Did you visit any other places in Turkey? Touristic sites?

3rd participant: no only these three places,maybe only Taxim

Researcher: Did you try any traditional Turkish food?

3rd participant: mmm.. Kafta Iskandar,what else?.... mmmmm the ice cream ...what do they call it? Boza.I like this ice cream.

Researcher: So, in general did you enjoy your trip to Turkey?

3rd participant: yes,I enjoyed ,and every year I look to this trip because.....mmm..I need some space in my life; I need to be alone ,and the only I be alone is when I travel like I have my own room..yea

Research: What was the lesson that you learned from that trip/

3rd participant: The lesom I learned... Nature there is very nice that it find me ..now I'm studying or willing to study about plants;I have books and iam going to read books about plants. And my dream is whenever I look at a plant ,I know what is it and I know why they use it or why they plant it here and how to plant it.

4th Participant Monolog

Researcher: This is the 1st task, the monolog with the 4th participant. Talk to me about the school national day.

4th participant: The national day is December 2nd but we celebrated yesterday because of the vacation for all the country. It was an amazing day; we enjoyed our time, we were working yesterday in our media booth and it was a new idea that is why we enjoyed it. We work a lot; It was the first time for me to work with boys, but I found that a very nice experience. The place was colorful with colors of our flag which is red, white, black and green. The place was full of students, teachers, and parents and many popular people that is why we enjoyed our moment; we learned a lot from our experiencewhat..... oh I did something ..it was the first time I do a play on stage in front of more than a hundred of people and I enjoyed a lot, I learned a lot from it. I learned how to be responsible and how to deal with people..I tried to..like in case I forgot anything I try to cover it..anyway..

The 4th Participant Interview

Researcher: alright, now we have the second task for the 4th participant. Talk to me about an unforgettable travel experience.

4th participant: actually, last year, I had an unforgettable travel experience; we traveled to Germany..it was not the 1st time like I traveled to Germany more than 7 times, it is my 2nd country but last year was my worst experience.. why? First of all ,we traveled on my birthday and we were planning to celebrate and at the same time my father had an appointment in the hospital. It was the second day.lik we traveled on August 3rd and the appointment was August 5th but unfortunately after arriving to Germany by two hours he got an heart attack and they took him in an ambulance and he was in the intensive care. It was my worst experience because I was about to lose my father so... I didn't feel that feeling from before that is why it was the worst and he stayed in the hospital for a long time and he just came back before one week..he stayed there to take his treatment for 4 months, and I came back home and I stayed home alone and I suffered a lot ,then Thank God he is good now and he is taking his medicine and getting better.

Researcher: Sorry about that, what other places did you visit in Germany?

4th participant: Other places in Germany..I went to Garmisch ,Salisberge ,Munich, specifically I visited all the hospitals in Munich.

Researcher: Did you go to any tourist attractions?

4th participant: yep, I did but not a lot ,like I know the places, and I know the locations.....

Researcher: so what are the places you normally go to?

4th participant: normally? Hospitals

Researcher: Did you try any traditional German food?

4th participant: no..i did not try a lot of Traditional food actually, I have to know specifically what is it and what it is made of..I can try it but not eat it;if I like it yea,if not.....no

Researcher: Did you enjoy going to Germany?

4th participant: last time, no, but generally yes, even if we go to hospitals....ah.. I feel happy because if someone of us is sick ,he gets better soon.

Researcher: ok what were the lessons learned from these travels to Germany?

4th participant: ah....to be responsible ..and to know how to deal with any problem I face. I can go out alone and I can deal with any case without my parents and to be responsible.

3rd Task (Mini-Debate) 3rd & 4th Participant

R: "Alright. So, this is the third task, which is a debate about the same topics and uniform. I have two students here. One is in favor of the topic and other one is against the topic. So it's your turn to start, go ahead please."

3rd participant: Okay. I am going to talk about the school uniform. I am in favor with this topic because school uniform makes all students equal.....yea.. It will show us that all students are equal first of all. Becausesome students maybe don't have a lot of money to buy new clothes like for every week or every month. So the school uniform will help them be like all of them will be equal, all the students will see that their classmates are at the same level as they are. So,..... they won't fight a lot,they won't get bullied a lot because all of them are at the same level.....

"That's it? Okay. Your turn now."

4th participant: Actually, I am against the school uniform because you can't judge a person from his clothes. So, we can't say that all the students are not equal because they are not wearing

alike. You can't say all students are equal because they are wearing same uniform. We are in a school and they will be wearing like a jeans or a t-shirt. So all of the students will be wearing the same, they can't wear any..... short dress or something. You can't decide if this is a rich student or a poor student from the school clothes,even if it wasn't auniform.

3rd Participant: Okay, but there is a dress code. In our culture you can't wear whatever you want. Some students will wear..... short clothes. Which is...

4th Participant: Which will not be allowed in the school.

3rd Participant: Which won't be allowed in school. Okay... so... all the students should wear same uniform...(ye3ni)... The school should also follow culture.

4th Participant: Okay. The school can put some rules that short dresses are not allowed, like shorts for boys are not allowed. So, they can put some conditions and all students have to follow.

3rd Participant: Even though, but still students sometimes they will fight. Because " oh she wore that t-shirt last week", "oh my god, she doesn't have the taste in wearing". They will fight a lot. So...

4th Participant: They can specify a color.

3rd Participant: Specify a color?

4th Participant: Yes, for example black jeans and white t-shirts for all the students.

3rd Participant: Then this is a uniform. (laughing)

"Okay. It is your turn now to start an argument."

4th Participant: Okay.

"Start."

4th Participant: So, I will be talking about the school uniform. I am against the school uniform because, of course, the uniform will be made up of specific material and some students could have allergy from this material and in this case we can't deal with it because it is a health

problem. So, they won't be able to wear the uniform. Uniform should not be 3:40. All the students should wear whatever they want but of course I did not forget that it is a school, they can't wear whatever they want..... Okay. For example, a girl can't wear a short dress, like she has to know she is going to a school. For example, she can wear simple., very simple t-shirt and jeans. So yea

"Okay."

3rd Participant: About the material...

4th Participant: Yes.

3rd Participant: They can choose. The school should choose amaterial that would..... be good for all, for mostly all people. They can choose.....

4th Participant: You are saying most. So there is a part of students...

3rd Participant: Yes. Those students they have a special condition. They should deal withthe school itself to provide them with other kinds of material. But itwould be from school uniform.

4th Participant: So you mean they change the material of the uniform?

3rd Participant: Yes, just the material not the uniform.....

4th Participant: Umm. Okay,what if the material wasn't suitable to do the design of the uniform?

3rd Participant: All thematerials are suitable.

4th Participant: No. Some material you can't do all... like you can't use all the materials to do the same design.....(khalas ghafalt)

Post Tasks Interviews Transcription

The 1st participant

Q. Which assignment did you feel most comfortable?

A. I felt most comfortable in the 1st task; I had to express my feelings I was not asked by anyone. I also liked the second because in case I ran out of ideas I have someone to help me with a question.

Q. Which task was the most difficult to you?

A. The most difficult was definitely the debate because I did not have a lot of time to prepare and I had to think of something to prove my point of view.

Q. Did you feel any stress in that task?

A. Yes, I felt a bit of stress because my opponent was very strong

The 2nd participant

Q. Which assignment did you feel most comfortable?

A. 1st task because the incident happened recently and I also enjoyed the day and I was involved so I enjoyed the celebration; I still remember the taste of the food and the voices of camel and everything.

Q. Which task was most difficult to you?

A. The debate because I had to be in a side I did not believe in: I could not think about ideas and I had to make up some lies, as I was not prepared. Another difficulty we were both arguing around the same thing and we were repeating the same thing over and over again.

Q. Why was it the most difficult?

A. You have to come prepared to support you so without preparing I'm lost; not being prepared was the main difficulty.

The 3rd participant

Q. In which task did you feel most comfortable and why?

A. In the second task about the traveling because this experience was a kind of fun and I was excited about it.

Q. Which task did you feel most difficult?

A. The most difficult one was the monlog because you asked me to talk about something I'm not interested in; I'm interested in fun things.

Q. How about the 3rd task, the debate?

A. It was easy and it was fun; we talked about something we face everyday

The 4th participant

Q. Which one did you feel most comfortable?

A. Which I feel most comfortable is the last topic which was the argument about the school uniform. I felt comfortable at that moment because there was someone to talk with I usually don't like to talk alone I don't like to be given such a subject and talk alone about it .I usually don't like to describe I like to give reasons about my point of view I like to prove it with evidence and facts so that's why it was the easiest topic.

Q. Which one the most difficult?

A. The most difficult was the first topic which is about the national day because I was supposed to describe what was going on at that day to describe the place to describe my feelings I usually don't like to describe things and that's a weak point on me I have to work to improve this point so I should know how to describe situations and feelings and many other things.

Q. And now how about the second task?

A. It wasn't that much good I don't want to remember these moments it was short and I didn't have many actions to talk about.

Did you feel any stress in any of these three tasks?

A. Yes, to be honest the first two tasks I didn't have the confidence to speak before but now I improved.