

THE USE OF THE NARRATIVE APPROACH IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' INTEGRATIVE MOTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis describes a study carried out in response to the question, "How can I explore teaching approaches to develop integrative motive among Sixth-grade primary students in the Saudi School, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia?". In order to take suitable action and gain usable knowledge, I adopted Gardner's (1985, 2001, 2005) socio-educational model to operationally identify and measure the potential motivational factors in my teaching context. I also used an action research approach owing to its flexible nature and practical outcomes. The study vigorously went through three cycles which were meticulously guided by the voices of my students who presented evidence of conflicts when particular approaches did not serve them well. The first cycle was a fact finding cycle in which the mini Attitudinal Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) and a focus-group interview were used for data collection. I found out that the participants were instrumentally orientated to learning English. However, there was a noticeable decline in other integrative motivational constructs. This decline was largely attributed to the fact that neither the textbook nor the learning tasks were challenging or meaningful. Looking for a proper action, I implemented the Narrative Approach as an alternative teaching method in the second cycle. I found out that the storytelling activities promoted many integrative motivational factors among the participants. Nevertheless, being in a mixed-class, girls expressed their concern that the class was more dominated by boys and it would be more comfortable for them if they could have a single-sex-class. Considering students' feedback, I proceeded with storytelling sessions where boys and girls were segregated. I found out that the motivational intensity of both girls and boys was increased and they felt more comfortable during the segregation stage in the third cycle. In order to increase the quality of this action research study, I asked pre- and in-service Malaysian teachers to reflect on the whole study and relate it to their teaching context. The reflections of the participants corroborated the finding that storytelling did increase integrative motivational factors among the sixth-grade primary students. Additionally, reflecting on the action research study created a meaningful and a democratic communicative environment in which the in- and pre-service teachers gained insights, constructed meanings and obtained practical knowledge. Working on this thesis made an important contribution to my personal, educational and professional development and placing it in the public domain will, hopefully, enable other practitioners in similar situations to relate to my experiences and gain insights.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

One day an elephant appeared in a family's living room. Because the elephant was larger than the doors or windows, it seemed impossible to move it. The family, after several unsuccessful attempts to remove the animal, decided they could live with it in the room and proceeded to ignore the elephant's presence. To them the elephant soon became invisible. Sometime later a friend came to visit and upon seeing the elephant asked "Why's that in the living room?" Others came and when they saw it they exclaimed, "what is an elephant doing in your living room?" The family was forced by others to acknowledge that there was, in fact, an elephant in their house and set about finding a way to remove it—a fable(Denti and Guerin, 2004:113).

Denti and Guerin (2004) point out that educationalists should recognize the presence of their students' literacy problems, the elephant in the fable, and take the initiative to solve them professionally. However "some teachers reject to take an action as a possible mode of professional development because they say in essence, there is nothing we can change... everything is decided by the Ministry of the Inspectorate" (Wallace, 1998:22). These teachers take such an attitude because some inspectorates, decision makers, curriculum designers and researchers may not be aware of the reality of the learning situation in classrooms. To cap it all, teachers' points of view are hardly taken into consideration. Being obliged to follow the instructions of their authority, teachers start passively conforming to the practical recommendations of educational theorists and researchers (Shaik-Abdullah, 2005).

However, if teachers choose to say that there is nothing they can do to change, "students will be the greatest casualties because teachers give them schooling at the cost of their education. They are carrying out tasks set for them by others rather than to pursue their own reasonable aspirations" (Kemmis, 2006:436). Teachers might assume that their role in developing curriculum is minimal because they feel that decisions have already been made for them in state or local curriculum guidelines. However, in some contexts, teachers can make decisions that have a major impact on the curriculum they teach (Lenz and Deshler, 2004).

Thus, "to say powerless is to go too far. Teachers can make intellectual and moral sense of a life which is always constrained, but never entirely powerless" (Winter, 1998: 374). Wallace (1998) also argues that:

It is hard to believe that teachers in certain contexts have no personal decision-making powers. If this were the case, one would expect the quality of teaching in such contexts to be almost identical in every class. Experience shows that in such contexts, as in other more unconstrained contexts, there is in fact a wide range of teaching quality. It is possible that these differences are attributable to personality traits or the degree to which the teacher flouts the 'rules'. But it seems equally possible that the differences are due to decisions taken by individual teachers in terms of classroom management, interaction with the class, motivation, pacing of lessons , task – prioritization , feedback, disciplinary routines and so on (p.22).

Reeves (2007) contends that school improvement is neither feasible nor sustainable without the full and active participation of teachers in the change process. Teachers, therefore, must be reflective and pro-active to lead the improvement process in schools.

Reeves (2007) further contends that the institutionalization of values of reflective practice, collegiality and critical pedagogy demand a commitment to collaborative knowledge creation by teachers and their managers. Arguing in a similar vein, Scharlach (2008) contends that teachers, like all human beings, make decisions based on their beliefs. These decisions and actions have significant impact on the learning experiences provided for students. These beliefs include beliefs about responsibility for teaching, pedagogical methods, and issues of authority and autonomy.

There is evidence that the notion of the teacher as an autonomous professional is based on the idea that teachers can base their practice decisions on their own observation and information rather than the guidance of those who are not in the classroom on a daily basis. Thus, the key to becoming a teacher-researcher and gaining autonomy in the teaching profession is related to using daily reflective observation with systematic and purposeful inquiry about teaching and learning carried out by teachers in their own school and classroom (Vaidya, 2001). As far as the development of reflective TESOL teachers is concerned, Bartlett (1990) contends that becoming critically reflective is substantially determined by the degree of autonomy and responsibility teachers have in their work. This autonomy is determined by the level of control teachers can exercise over their actions.

In this respect, Kemmis (2006) argues that in certain contexts people are actively prevented from thinking for themselves by the body of official knowledge, and the way that knowledge is codified in specific ways of teaching and learning. In such a context, people are prevented from living their values and their excitement gradually fades with the quietude of acceptance. However, in other contexts, people can exercise their power to engage in a lively dialogue in which they generate their own living theories of education. The exercise of power does not necessarily involve conflict. It is characterized by recognition of one's responsibilities as a teacher and a commitment to thoughtful, reflective practice (McNay, 2003).

This reflective practice demonstrates the power to take initiatives to modify and improve learning in one's own context (Pollard and Tann, 1993). The concept of being reflective also assumes that professional growth is a lifelong process. Reflecting on teaching, and developing knowledge of it and theories about it are essential components in this lifelong process (Nunan and Lamb, 1996). Additionally, adopting a reflective model and inquiry-oriented approaches in teacher education leads to intelligent action (Bruna, 2005). However, it is not only the intelligence of the reflection that matters, but also its ethical and political nature. Reflection is meant to help teachers develop selves committed to critical action research and dedicated to uncovering the ideology of the society through the ideology of schools and, importantly, through the ideology of their own personal and professional practice (Kincheloe, 1991).

Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006) used the term 'presence' in their conceptualization of the essence of good reflective teaching. They explained the term 'presence' as:

a state of awareness, receptivity and connectedness to the mental, emotional and physical workings of both the individual and the group in the context of their learning environments and the ability to respond with a considered and compassionate best next step...reflective teaching cannot be reduced to a series of behaviours or skills, but is a practice that demands presence. As such, it involves self-knowledge trust, relationship and compassion (p.266).

Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006) further elaborate and contend that in order for a teacher to be present to learning, it is necessary for him/her to have a deep knowledge of the subject matter, of children and of learning as well as a repertoire of pedagogical skills. These skills enable reflective teachers to monitor critique and defend their actions in planning, implementing and evaluating language programs (Nunan and Lamb, 1996). Thus, reflective teacher-practitioners are curious about their work, wish to learn from it, and consciously engage in cycles of observation, reflection, and new action-conscious trials and errors-to improve their practice (Stringer, 2004).

Holding the belief that one of the defining characteristics of a good teacher is to have a reflective practice, I realized that I had a problematic area in my class and I had to take a proper action in a structured and systematic way in order to live up to my values. I believed that if I avoided discussion of my problematic areas in my class and shrank from confronting them, my teaching will be neither critical nor transformable (Kemmis, 2006).

1.2 Statement of the problem

My problematic area was based in the primary-six class in the Saudi School, Kuala Lumpur, where I was working as a teacher in the primary stage during the year 2006-2007. The Saudi School was established in 1991 under the supervision of the Ministry of Education of Saudi Arabia. It is a small school with a total enrolment of 300 students from different backgrounds and countries. Malaysian, Singaporean, Filipino and German students were mixed with students from different Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan, Algeria, Qatar and Oman. There is no doubt that continued motivation to learn is considered a criterion for defining a successful language learning experience, nevertheless, "like cold and flu symptoms, motivation problems come in many shapes and sizes. But usually they come in "packages" and some combinations of symptoms are more common than others" (Stipek, 2002:1). Being the only English teacher for the Sixth grade primary students, I observed , during my first five months of teaching English in my primary Six class, that there were three types of students who demonstrated a combination of motivational symptoms that would inhibit optimal learning.

1.2.1 Type One

The first type of students are those who like to practice oral activities that include telling their stories, talking about themselves, and reflecting on their adventures and personal matters. However, the present textbook is too boring to meet their needs because it is below their level. Pedagogically speaking, the text book is designed by the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia for zero-beginners. It is meant to meet the needs of students who are supposed to have no idea about the English alphabets and numbers. Most of the

lessons focus on introducing the new English alphabets and numbers through isolated words accompanied by some colorful illustrations. There is also an activity book in which students are expected to trace and write the English alphabets, and match words with pictures and, in some exercises, students are required to write simple sentences. The problem lies in the fact that 15 students in my class out of 23 have been learning English for four to five years in private English centers in Kuala Lumpur. Bearing this in mind, the proficiency level of these students was far above the level of the textbook. The fact that the textbook and the activity book were not at the right level for my students made the learning experience unchallenging and irrelevant. I grew more alarmed about this reality when I received a phone call from one of the parents telling me that her son was extremely bored with the textbook.

The mother insisted on meeting me to show me the number of stories her son had written out of his imagination. She was pessimistically worried that her son would probably lose his interest in learning English because of the unsuitability of the textbook. Voicing out her concern, I started reflecting on John Dewey's (1938) notion that the word "teaching" is comparable to the word "selling" in that a transaction is implied. This notion indicates that "one could not teach unless someone learned, just as one could not sell unless someone bought...thus, to teach, in this sense, is known by its effects" (as cited in Eisner, 1994:179).

Reflecting on the parent's complaint also brought to mind the argument of Cunningham et al. (2004) that students, who are regularly engaged with interesting and important materials, add to their funds of knowledge items and patterns which will be recalled and connected to more difficult materials as they will encounter them in the future. Thus, the classroom and teaching materials should aid learners to make efficient use of the resources in order to facilitate self-discovery (Bolitho and Tomlinson, 1995).

It is true that the teaching learning materials can play an important role in sustaining students' favorable reaction towards language teaching (Gardner, 1985). Nevertheless, the designated textbook was not fulfilling this principle. My argument is not that the textbook is good or bad. The point is, as Cunningsworth (1984:2) argues, "Good for what and bad for whom?" Though the textbook may be good for Arab students in an EFL environment, it does not necessarily mean that it is suitable for Arab students living in an ESL environment. Thus, the culprit may not be the textbook per se, but the mandate that I follow it submissively, unreflectively, and unresponsively, whether or not my students benefit. Such submissive adherence ignores my students' interests, rates of progress and reactions to daily exigencies. And because contexts differ, instructional practices that work in a certain context, may not work in another context (Margolis and McCabe, 2006). Assuming that classrooms do not operate in isolation from the community and society, learning is looked at as a situated, culturally contextualized activity (Klinger & Edwards, 2006).

This suggests that what is considered appropriate in terms of teaching techniques and classroom management in a certain context may not be technically appropriate in other different contexts (Nunan and Lamb, 1996). Additionally, Tomlinson (1998) points out that teaching materials should achieve an impact by introducing students to a variety of unusual topics that have an appealing content and attractive presentations. One obvious point is that this impact is contextual. In other words, what achieves impact with a class in a certain context might not achieve the same impact in another different context. Maximizing the likelihood of achieving impact on learners' interests should be fully considered.

It is crucial to consider the learning context because the motivations for language learning are largely affected by cultures and learning contexts (Oller, 1981), they can differ within individuals at different times in their lives (Oxford and Shearin, 1994; Schumann, 1998) and depend on the characteristics of the learners, the subject that is learnt and the environment where learning is taking place (Dörnyei, 1994). Bearing that in mind, settings are meaningful when they relate to students' worlds, when they tap individuals' interests and concerns; In short, when they are relevant. Students in meaningful settings can acquire new words for a genuine purpose. They intend to apply what they learn. They acquire vocabulary while engaging their minds fully in ideas of value to them (Cunningham et al., 2004).

The effectiveness of a textbook is shaped by three key factors, including teacher, learner, and contextual variables. Teacher factors include the teacher's language proficiency, training and experience, cultural background, and preferred teaching style. Learner factors include learners' learning style preferences, their language learning needs, interests, and motivations. Contextual factors include the school culture, classroom conditions, class size and the availability of teaching resources (Richards, 2006).

My intuition, gained from 11 years of teaching in Saudi Arabia and 3 years in Malaysia, tell me there is a big difference in terms of English proficiency between Arab students in Saudi Arabia and those in Kuala Lumpur. This is due to the different amount of exposure to the English language the students have. English language teaching in Malaysia was introduced by the British government in the early-nineteenth century. When Malaysia achieved independence, English was made compulsory in all primary and secondary schools. However in 1961, Bahasa Melayu became the medium of instruction in schools. English was then an important second language in the country (Foo and Richards, 2004). A swift change in the medium of instruction was announced in the mass media on 11 May 2002. This led to a reinstitution of English as the medium of instruction for science and math in the national schools, beginning with Primary One, Secondary One and Lower Six. The majority of academic management and academics of the public universities supported the change and took measures to convert courses from Bahasa Melayu to English (Gill, 2006).

In line with the paradigmatic shift from narrower focus in the use of English to a wider knowledge-based purpose, a milestone language policy was initiated with the emergence of the Malaysian University English Test (MUET) for pre-tertiary education students. The MUET was seen as providing the essential continuity in the exposure and use of English for students leaving the general school system. This gave the impetus for English to play a bigger role in the national education system (Heng and Tan, 2006). The dynamics of innovation in the language policy evoked reactions from academics, politicians and parents. This policy was largely seen as a deliberate attempt at social change through language (Gopinathan, 2003).

Hassan (1999) points out that the widespread use of English in Kuala Lumpur is not confined to schools. English is spoken widely and given an ESL status, and in many cases children are bilinguals or multilingual (as cited in Shaik-Abdullah, 2005). Because most of my students have been living in Kuala Lumpur for more than four years, they have been exposed to English language in the shopping centers they go to, the sports clubs they are affiliated with and their neighborhoods where they interact with multi-ethnic children whose medium of communication is English. This rich exposure and this length of residence in Kuala Lumpur greatly helped these children to develop their English. This length of residence in the receiving society provided a good opportunity to develop L2 learning (Steven, 2006).

The status of English in the Arab countries stand in stark contrast to the Kuala Lumpur context. Teaching English in the Arab world can be traced back to the 1920s when different parts of the region came under the British colonialism. With the increase in the use of English as a lingua franca, most Arab governments began to recognize its importance by including English as a foreign language into the school curriculum (Al-Khatib, 2000). As far as education in Saudi Arabia is concerned, students join school at the age of six and stay for six years in primary school and three years each in intermediate school and high school. Students can attend either high schools offering programs in both the arts and sciences or vocational schools. Students' progress through high school is determined by comprehensive exams conducted twice a year and supervised by the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education of Saudi Arabia, 2008).

English language used to be taught only from grade 7 to grade 12 (Rababah, 2003). However, in 2005, the Ministry of Education of Saudi Arabia launched a new policy to make English a compulsory subject for primary six. Among the goals of EFL teaching in elementary schools in Saudi Arabia are to cultivate students' interest in learning English language, help develop the four language skills, benefit from English speaking -nations, enhance the concepts of international cooperation that develop understanding and respect of cultural differences among nations, develop students' awareness of the importance of English as a means of international communication, make them aware of both their own culture and foreign cultures and develop positive attitudes towards learning English (Ministry of Education of Saudi Arabia, 2008).

In spite of the goals the Saudi Ministry of Education attempts to achieve, there is a widening gap between what the Arab foreign language class should be and what actually is. In this respect, Al-Bassam (1987) points out that part of the problem lies in the fact that the officials of the Ministry of education of Saudi Arabia are not fully aware of the reality of the present teaching situation. This argument is consistent with Al Maiman's (2005) contention that, despite the Saudi Ministry of Education's attempts to bring about some changes by revising the English language curriculum, English language teachers, educators and parents have continued to complain about their children's inability to use English proficiently.

Additionally, students' attitudes and motivation in English language learning achievement has not been given considerable attention yet. In this respect, Brewster , Ellis and Girard (2003) further explain that there is often a mismatch between what policies try to achieve and classroom reality. Some of the reasons for this mismatch are that the government or institution tries to implement a policy too quickly in spite of the fact that there is not enough time to prepare educators and teachers in appropriate methods. Rababah (2003) further highlights that English is not used much in daily situations in many Arab countries including Saudi Arabia where Arabic is used everywhere. The only way to learn English in the Arab world is through formal instruction, i.e., inside the classroom where the language teachers are native speakers of Arabic. So, teachers who have never had a chance to converse with a native speaker are desperately trying to act as models for their students' English use (Al-Bassam, 1987).

Pondering over the two contexts, it is clear that the English textbook, that is designed for primary six students in an EFL environment, can hardly be suitable for my primary six learners in Kuala Lumpur which is an ESL environment. This explains the reason why many parents in my class took their students to English language centers where they learned more advanced English courses because they were dissatisfied with the level of the textbook.

As far as the learning activities are concerned, students used to drill words and structures they already knew. However, as Cunningsworth (1984) argues, there is a big difference between participating in a language drill and the ability to carry through a real transaction, the ability to express one's feelings or attitudes about real things or events to people who in no way form part of a formal learning situation. A narrowly focused series of activities which require very little cognitive processing (e.g. mechanical drills; rule learning; simple transformation activities) usually lead to shallow and ephemeral learning unless linked to other activities which stimulate mental and affective processing. It is important that the content of the materials not be trivial or banal and that it stimulates thoughts and feelings in the learners (Tomlinson, 1998).

Based on her review of research on student motivation, McCombs(1995) argues that:

When students are asked what makes school a place where they want to learn, they report that they want rigor and joy in their schoolwork, a balance of complexity and clarity, opportunities to discuss personal meanings and values, learning activities that are relevant and fun, and learning experiences that offer choice and require action (as cited in Alvermann et al., 2007:10).

I realized that the first type of my students need to feel that they are building up their knowledge of English by adding new learning units to their existing body of knowledge. In order to achieve that, the learning materials, must be interesting, attractive, and at the right level of difficulty (Abdul Razak, 2005). Learners should constantly be challenged with tasks that refer to skills and knowledge just beyond their current level of mastery. This will capture their motivation and build on previous successes in order to enhance the confidence of the learner. Therefore, the choice of teaching materials and the information content of the lesson should correspond to their motivation (Cook, 2001). It is also a truism to say that my learners need to be involved in their own learning. Decisions about what to learn and how to learn should not only be made with reference to the learners, but the learners themselves should be involved in the decision-making process (Nunan and Lamb, 1996).

1.2.2 Type Two

The second type of students are those who reluctantly sat in the class and had no motivation to voluntarily participate. They were not poor at English but they hardly showed any real consistent engagement. Additionally, they used to devalue the tasks they were given. A vivid example of this disengagement presented itself one day when I asked one of the female students in my class to read a text. I was offensively shocked when she refused to even look at the title. Asking the girl about the reason for her refusal to read, she sighed and said: "My father used to force me to read when I was in Grade Four". The girl was very good at English and I wondered why she resisted reading despite her ability to read.

Research suggests that resistance is a common response in contexts where people have no freedom of choice or where they are forced to comply with rules over which they have no control (Stringer, 2004). Research also suggests that anger and rebellion are common when students feel unmotivated to learn and that these feelings of anger leading to resistance seem to be associated with students' sense that they were not given the opportunity for self-determination (Oldfather, 1994). The act of seeking with the element of choice is central to our sociobiological selves. There is pleasure inherent in the seeking with the element of choice that plays central role in the quests children undertake. Having the sense of control encourages engagement and decreases the possibility of resistance and subversion (Meskill, 2007).

Research also suggests that environments that support autonomy are associated with greater student interest, sense of competence, creativity, conceptual learning, and preference for challenge. When students can make choices, they are more likely to believe that the work is important and tend to internalize educational goals and take them as their own (Woolfolk and Weinstein, 2006). Thus, giving enough authority to students to choose their own actions much motivates them considerably and helps develop positive emotions because of the enjoyment and satisfaction derived from the feeling that they control their own learning. Students feel autonomous when they feel and understand the value or relevance of the task in which they engaged, and can therefore identify with it (Deci and Ryan, 1985, 2000).

Literature also emphasizes the significance of feeling autonomous during action engagement. For example, Reynolds and Symons (2001) assessed the motivational affect of topic-choice. They found that choice of the topic facilitated both the performance and search sequence in an information search task. The choice of topic was beneficial because it was relevant to participants' interests. Additionally, Reeve, Nix and Hamm (2003) gave undergraduates "action choices" (e.g., how to allocate their time). They found that action choices have a stronger impact on the sense of psychological freedom and volition.

Furthermore, Cordova and Lepper (1996) examined the effects of choice among elementary school children involved in an educational computer activity. In their choice condition, participants could choose features such as the icon representing them on the game board, the name of their spaceship, the name of the opponents and their starting point of two shortcuts. Results revealed that choice did have a positive effect on learning and motivation. The opportunity to choose made the contest personally meaningful to the participants.

Moreover, Alvermann, Phelps and Ridgeway (2007) further argue that in a study conducted on 600 students in a large mid-Atlantic city school system (55 percent African American, 43 percent Caucasian, and 2 percent Asian and Hispanic), motivational dimensions, related to enjoyment, curiosity, and a sense of efficacy, were the best predictors of the frequency with which students read. The findings of the above studies indicate that in order to engage learners; they need to have autonomy in their learning because this will have a positive effect on motivation. Consequently, the options should differ markedly in terms of their importance to the participants, so that the chooser finds at least one of them to be more relevant, interesting, or important. Research also suggests that choice is more effective when students perceive the relevance of tasks they are doing.

Stringer (2004) highlights this point and contends that people, engaged in activities which they see as pointless, are expected to be resistant and unproductive. In the same vein, Alvermann, Phelps and Ridgeway (2007) contend that giving up on, or withdrawing from, situations that involved learning from text was a tactic students used when the material they were assigned to read seemed uninteresting. Given that, my students' lack of engagement may also be a reflection of the way they view literacy (Asselin, 2004).

Cunningham et al. (2004) point out that literacy engagement is probably the most common term used today to talk about the relationship between motivation and the rest of what constitutes literacy and literacy learning. Cunningham et al. (2004:10) contend that "Engaged readers and writers: read and write in a motivated way-that they employ whatever literacy skills and strategies they have with effort, persistence, and expectation of success. Other students may have equal or even superior skills and strategies, yet they do not feel like it".

Fredricks et al. (2004) further elaborate that literacy engagement includes affective reactions which include interest, happiness, and identification with learning that impact students' desire to keep learning. When students get engaged, they experience a variety of affects including interest, happiness, and identification with learning and their school. Such positive emotions can impact students' achievement in meaningful ways.

Guthrie (2004) also argues that engaged learners are motivated, they enjoy reading, believe they are capable of reading well, have purposes for reading, spend significant amounts of time reading, interact with others, share information and see learning as a social activity. Reflecting on my own teaching practices, I found that the vast majority of those practices tended to focus on drilling. My unawareness of my learners' personal experiences, preferences, strengths, and vulnerabilities, resulted in unintentionally creating disengaged learners in my class (Belzer, 2002). This brings to mind that intrinsic rewards which spring from the personal satisfaction derived from reading and writing activities were not well addressed in my classroom (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

I started to believe that when students' motivation or interest in learning are addressed, I should not focus only on whether the students can identify words or comprehend, but also equal emphasis should be given to how the students feel about this learning experience (Brewster, Ellis and Girard, 2003). I need to show understanding for my students' feelings, provide a relevant rationale for the task, and offer choice by allowing students to participate in task, goal selection, their work methods and the mode of evaluation of their work. I also need to allow criticism and some expression of negative feelings (Katz and Assor, 2007).

1.2.3 Type Three

The third type of students are the low achievers in my class. Most of these students were not richly exposed to English outside the classroom either because they have just come to Malaysia, or because they were living in areas where the majority of the inhabitants are Arab immigrants. The presence of the low achievers with the high achievers in one class posed a daunting challenge for me. Every group had different academic and affective needs; the high achievers would feel unchallenged because the level of activities were very low. On the other side, the low achievers would feel left out and intimidated when their classmates appeared to be almost fluent in English.

According to Brewster et al. (2003), if children feel that they are not good at language learning, they may under-achieve. These children quickly become aware of their position within a class and tend to know whether they are in the top ability group or not. The main problem with the low achievers was that they always felt anxious and insecure about speaking English in my class. They would sometimes hide out and avoid eye contact while I was looking for a volunteer to respond to a question I raised. They used to pretend that they were good listeners but if I asked them to recall what I said, they would look confused and their faces would turn red. I wondered: "Why do these students hide out?" and "Why do they feel anxious?"

Covington and Mueller (2001) point out that many individuals equate their personal worth with their accomplishments, and because they perceive ability as a central factor for success, and inability as a major cause of failure, ability becomes critical to their definition of identity. In order to avoid the implications of failure, some students avoid tasks and hide out.

Elkhafaifi (2005) further highlights that some individuals deliberately seek to avoid challenging situations rather than make an active effort to deal with them. This task avoidance suggests that individuals try to arrange circumstances to make success in an ego-threatening task more difficult, thereby providing an excuse for potential failure. These individuals who use a task-avoidant strategy are likely to have poorer academic achievement and lower satisfaction (Gregersen, 2003; Horwitz, 2001; MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991). Summers et al. (2003) further point out that Expectancy–Value Theory assumes that for all individuals, achievement situations arouse both positive and negative motives, and that the fear of failure tends to motivate an individual to hide out and avoid tasks. However, if an individual expects success, he/she tends to accept tasks because they are positively valued. This argument is in line with several studies that have highlighted the role of students' personal expectations regarding language learning.

These studies revealed that students, with little or no confidence in their ability to learn a foreign language, tend to experience more language learning anxiety (Spielmann and Radnofsky, 2001; Sohn and Shin, 2007). Woodrow (2006) points out that anxiety is usually classified as being either a trait or a state. Trait anxiety is a relatively stable personality pattern. In other words, a person who is trait anxious is likely to feel anxious in a variety of situations. As far as state anxiety is concerned, it is a temporary condition experienced at a particular moment. Stroud and Wee (2006) further argue that students may have competence-based anxiety or identity-based anxiety. Competence-based anxiety refers to students' fear of failing in the task, while identity-based anxiety refers to students' fear of being looked down upon their peers in the class. With competence-based anxiety, it is the teacher whose evaluations matter, but if the teacher is no longer the source of anxiety, then it becomes harder to find ways to make students feel safe in the class.

Gardner (2005) further contends that second language learners face two types of anxiety: classroom anxiety and outside-the-classroom anxiety. He further contends that language anxiety is generally negatively related to achievement as well as to self-confidence with the language. This negative relationship indicates that high levels of language anxiety interfere with language achievement, and low levels of achievement cause individuals to be anxious in situations where they have to use their language either inside or outside the classroom.

Gardner's (2005) argument is in line with Woodrow's (2006) contention that foreign language anxiety has two dimensions: in class, anxiety is experienced within the learning environment and out-of-class, anxiety is experienced in the target language environment. Horwitz (2001) also postulates that some students may have a language anxiety because of the uniqueness of the language learning process. Thus, it is probable that the striking differences between the orthographic systems of English and Arabic cause difficulties in communication, and that the lower achievers' motivation for learning would be easily hampered by such difficulties faced in learning. It is also possible that the low achievers found learning difficult because they experienced it as very separate from their real lives (Bruner, 1996) and they did not experience authentic tasks that could stimulate their interest (Cunningsworth et al., 1984).

If that is the case, it is crucial for the low achievers to be routinely given materials and assignments for which moderate effort will likely produce success (Guthrie and Davis, 2003; Guthrie and Humenick, 2004, Linnenbrink and Pintrich, 2003; Margolis, 2005). It is also vital to highly motivate them to deal with the difficulty of the language and it is important to make them feel comfortable to lower the level of their anxiety (Okada, Oxford and Abo, 1996).

1.2.4 Concluding thoughts

Considering the three types of my students, the high achievers who are not satisfied with the level of the textbook, the reluctant students who do not feel autonomous in pursuing their learning and the low achievers who feel anxious and avoid tasks, I was trying to state my problem in my classroom. I was trying to identify my concern and explain why I am concerned. Recognizing the problem is a preliminary step to reflecting and taking action. Reflecting on the three types of students in my class, it is clear that my problematic area was very much related to motivational factors that were not well addressed in my teaching context. I also realized that the state of boredom was a result of my unawareness, not of the importance of motivation, but about how to actually motivate my learners in the classroom (Dornyei, 1998).

I thought that the first step to mitigate the negative effects of the unsuitable textbook and the absence of meaningful challenging activities would be to have some practical knowledge pertinent to motivation. In spite of the reality that arousing students' interest, increasing students' motivation to speak English and getting the maximum participation are all big challenges for teachers, it is crucial to investigate the source of motivation which is very important in a practical sense for stimulating my students' interest in learning English (Oxford and Shearin, 1994).

To water the right roots, I came to believe that it would not be wise for me to base my work on prior assumptions about students' interests and motivation without making efforts to discover what possible factors shape motivation in my teaching context (McGroarty, 1996). Therefore, I have to direct more attention toward the classroom situation and the factors operating there (Gardner, 2001).

I believe that classroom situations can change quickly and dramatically, but research-based principles travel with teachers and they allow for reflective, insightful adaptation to local conditions. By understanding the local situation, and knowing different ways to supplement mandated scripts and programs, I can exceed administrative requirements. Exceeding such requirements to help children succeed -is ethical, not mutinous (Margolis and McCabe, 2006).

1.3 Motivation for language learning

The importance of motivation is manifest in the evidence of its power to influence academic achievement (Brohpy, 1999). However; motivation is not a thing that we can see. It does not have a reality that we can point to. It is a psychological idea, a psychological construct that we use to explain why people behave as they do. Because it is a psychological idea rather than a tangible thing that we can see, there is a debate about precisely how we can motivate learners (Maclelian, 2006).

Research indicates that motivation in any activity is a result of a whole set of interrelated factors and such a fact explains why there is no one single universal prescription for motivation. Nonetheless, the absence of universal prescriptions does not mean that instructors are powerless; there are several specific paths available to aid them in identifying the attitudinal and motivational factors relevant to their instructional situation (Oxford and Shearin, 1994).

A commonly held position in social and humanistic psychology is that two mutually distinct response processes are accountable for human behavior. These processes are commonly denoted as extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. The concept of "intrinsic intentionality" indicates that people engage in an activity because they enjoy that activity, or perceive their action as an end in itself. Asking learners whether they will continue to do an activity if they are no longer required to do so will determine whether they are doing it for intrinsic or extrinsic reasons (Vallerand, 1997).

Boggiano and Pittman (1992) further point out that both efficacy and curiosity theories suggest that people engage in activities for two different reasons. An individual may be moved to satisfy curiosity or achieve efficacy and control. Activities of this kind are regarded as ends in themselves and constitute individual's intrinsically motivated behaviors. Other activities may be pursued for reward and recognition. These are regarded as means to an end; they are extrinsically motivated behaviors. Comparisons between learners whose behavior is internally regulated and those who are externally controlled, reveal

that the former have more interest ,confidence, excitement, persistence, better performance, and show a better conceptual understanding of the material relative to the second group (Simons , Dewitte and Lens, 2004).

In the area of second language acquisition, two primary kinds of orientations have also been identified: instrumental and integrative. Instrumental orientation is present when a learner has utilitarian goal (such as learning English to get a job or pass an examination). On the other hand, Integrative orientation occurs when a learner desires to integrate with the people of the target culture and to use the second language to communicate with them (Gardner 1985, 1988; Gardner and McIntyre, 1993; Tremblay and Gardner, 1995; Gardner, 2001; Gardner, 2005).

Schmidt et al. (1996) directly address the correspondence between integrative and intrinsic orientation. They state that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation resemble integrative and instrumental orientation, respectively, but are not identical to them ,for both the integrative and the instrumental motives are extrinsic in that they are focused on goals, the one to become closer to native speakers, the other to get ahead. However, Gardner (1996) points out that identifying integrative motivation with intrinsic motivation would ignore the influence of community on motivation.

In other words, the motive to integrate with a community demands more than what intrinsic motivation does. Gardner (2001) argues that a learner who is integratively motivated should have a positive attitude toward the target language and the people who speak the target language. Thus, the integrative motive takes social aspects into consideration. As far as intrinsic motivation is concerned; a person may enjoy an activity for its own sake regardless of the presence or absence of social or educational aspects.

Additionally, Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) point out that instrumental motivation is more powerful for adult learners as they see language as a powerful tool for getting better jobs. This finding is in line with most of the previous studies that were carried out on Arab adult learners which revealed that they were mainly instrumentally motivated (Rababah, 2003). In order to gain some practical insight on how motivation was addressed, I am going to review some empirical studies that were carried out on Arab learners in different contexts.

1.4 Empirical studies on motivation of Arab learners.

Al Maiman (2005) used Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model in order to operationally measure the motivational factors of Saudi students in the seventh-grade, Onaizah, Saudi Arabia. The researcher wanted to explore the changes in students' level of motivation after they had been exposed to English language instruction in Grade Seven. It is worth mentioning that, during this time, teaching English at schools would only start in Grade Seven. The researcher used a questionnaire of 54 items administered in Arabic to

301 students. She employed descriptive analysis, a one –way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), and a Paired-Sample T-test. The findings of the study suggested that students' attitudes and motivation dramatically declined by the end of the academic year. Students came to schools with great expectations of learning English in an interesting way. They expected that they would have an interesting learning experience in their formal context. However, the findings revealed that the learning situation was not motivating enough to capture their interest and consequently, their motivational level declined.

Al Maiman's (2005) findings are in line with Gardner's (2001) argument that when students first enter the language class, they are often motivated by dreams of being able to speak the language in a very short time. They are generally unaware of the demands that will be placed on them. Quite often, they are very excited about learning another language and begin the study with enthusiasm. However, this enthusiasm does not last very long.

Gardner (2001) also cited the observation of many teachers in Japan that although students are initially very enthusiastic about learning English, their enthusiasm wanes before the end of the first year. Many interpretations were given for this decline: some teachers believed that this could be due to an over-emphasis on grammar translation in the curriculum. Others thought that it could be due to the age of the children. Others claimed that it was due to the quiet nature of Japanese children who often find it embarrassing to speak the language. Still others argued that there were too few model speakers of

English, and too few opportunities outside of the classroom to use it. In the same vein, Brewster et al. (2003) argue that "at first the novelty factor may be enough to carry children's learning forward. But feelings of enjoyment, challenge or success will need to continue for many years if the difficult task of learning a language is to be achieved"(p.218). This is why teachers should adopt a critical attitude to the activities and tasks they use and the expectations they create (Cajkler and Addelman, 2000).

McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth (1995) further point out that children begin their school careers with a positive attitude toward reading. However, many of them show a steady decline in voluntary reading as they progress through school. The reason is that these children do not enjoy typical school texts and novels, and as a result, they develop an aversion to reading that may last their whole life. This decline has been documented in many ways, but perhaps most clearly by Heath (1996) and Moll (1994).

Heath (1996) observed literacy practices among African families in one community that she called Trackton, describing the ways in which languages were used to communicate in a variety of settings, and the kinds of reading and literacy practices different families used. Moll (1994) described the literacy practices in some Latino households. One major point each researcher made is that the kinds of rich literacy practices that occurred in the households in each study did not match well with the school literacy practices the children of these families encountered, meaning that the kinds of competencies that children had developed at home did not help them much

in-school literacy practices. This mismatch had a negative impact on both school engagement and school achievement.

In order to explore the relationship of the motivational factors in learning English, Al Bassam (1987) carried out an empirical study on female Saudi high school students in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The subjects were randomly selected from tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades from three Saudi schools in Mecca. The researcher used a questionnaire of five-point scale to measure the responses related to attitudes, motivation, parental encouragement and satisfaction with the English program variables. The researcher also used T-Test to compare between the scores related to instrumental and integrative motivation. The findings of the study suggested that the subjects were more integratively motivated than instrumentally motivated. The findings also revealed that there was a positive correlation between achievement and attitudes, motivation, parental encouragement and satisfaction with the English program. The researcher suggested that attitudes and motivation can be changed from negative to positive by having interesting activities and experiences.

When interesting and relevant activities are successfully adopted in a classroom, students' motivation is likely to rise. This argument is supported by Al-Timimi (2005) who carried out a quasi-experimental study on 33 male and female Yemeni students enrolled in the second grade level of a public secondary school in Yemen. The researcher in this study attempted to investigate the impact of oral self expression activities on the Yemeni

secondary school EFL learners' attitudes and motivation towards English language learning. Self expression activities included activities in which students have opportunities to talk about themselves, express their feelings and ideas on relevant topics they chose willingly. The study utilized a methodology that involved the use of Gardner and Tremblay's (1994) expanded Attitudinal Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) model, classroom observation and semi-structured interviews.

The findings of the study suggested that most of the learners under investigation had developed favorable attitudes and considerably high motivational levels regarding English language learning after their engagement in the self-expression activities. Based on his observation, the researcher suggests that it is significantly motivating for English learners to conduct activities such as self expression activities which create and replicate as far as possible the process of natural and authentic communication in the classroom. The researcher also explicitly places great emphasis on the importance of having interesting materials which can bring about a motivating classroom environment and can help learners develop a positive attitude toward learning a foreign language. However, to have interesting materials, much attention should be paid to the cultural background of the students. In this respect, Abu-Rabia (1996) investigated the relationship of the attitudes and cultural background of Arab students in Israel to their reading comprehension of stories from Jewish and Arab culture. The participants were 74 eighth-grade Arab students (age 14–15 years) from Israel, learning Hebrew as a second language (L2), 83 Israeli students in Israel studying

English and 52 Arab students in Canada studying English. The study addressed two major questions regarding second language learning; (1) what attitudes do the L1 students have toward the L2 language and the L2 culture? and (2) how do students' attitudes and cultural backgrounds affect their L2 reading comprehension?

The researcher distributed eighteen stories for reading, six for each of the three groups, as follows: Israeli Arab--three Arabic stories with Arabic content provided in Arabic and in Hebrew translation; three Hebrew stories (Jewish content) in original Hebrew or in English translation. Israeli Jewish--three Hebrew stories with Jewish content presented in Hebrew and in English translation; three English stories (Western content) in English and in Hebrew translation. Arab Canadian--three Arabic stories (Arabic content) supplied in Arabic and in English translation; three English stories (Western content) in English and Arabic translation.

The rationale behind such sampling was to enable the researcher to determine how textual language and textual content would interact in relation with reader's attitudes and achievement under different types of social context. By doing so, the study proposed a new model that explained the affective and cognitive processes of reading and the interaction among them when learners read cultural texts of different content and different languages. The findings of the study revealed that students scored higher on tasks of reading comprehension with texts from their own cultural setting than with texts from a culturally unfamiliar setting. Furthermore, results of the attitude

success. Similar findings were obtained by Malallah (2000) who conducted research on Kuwait University undergraduates enrolled in English courses offered by the English Language Centre at Kuwait University. The researcher found out that the more a student needs the English language either for present studies or for future career, the more positive his/her attitudes appear towards the language. In the same vein, Suleiman (1993) found that the motivations of Arab students in the USA for studying English were primarily and almost entirely to achieve academic and career goals in their native countries. In Yazigy's (1994) study in Lebanon, 98 % of the Lebanese students responded that learning English was useful, practical, simple, dynamic and valuable. However, Arabic was deemed more superior in terms of its religious value. The findings suggested that students' attitudes to English underscored the necessity of learning it for reasons of career enhancement rather than personal efficacy, in contrast to Arabic.

Additionally, Schmidt et al. (1996) carried out a study that used factor analysis to explore the factors that affect EFL motivation for adult learners in Egypt. The study revealed nine motivational factors which included determination, anxiety, instrumental motivation, sociability, attitudes, culture, foreign residence, intrinsic motivation, and beliefs about failure and enjoyment. Furthermore, Mohammed et al. (1988) investigated the attitudes of students, teachers and parents towards English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabian public schools. The majority recognized the importance of English in business, education and communication. Musa (1985) surveyed the attitudes and motivations of 357 secondary school students, in the United Arab

Emirates. The study revealed that 75% of the students stated that they liked studying English because of its importance as an international means of communication.

1.4.1 Concluding thoughts

Reflecting on the previous studies, I found that most of them were conducted on adult Arab learners in an EFL environment. I also found out that there is a dearth of research that addressed the motivational factors of young Arab learners in an ESL environment. Thus, it is more meaningful for me as a practitioner to explore what kind of motivational factors that affect the three types of my students in their ESL learning context because there is an argument that young learners are not as instrumentally motivated as adult learners (Graddol, 2006; Gardner, 2001; Brewster et al., 2003).

1.5 Young learners' motivation

Graddol (2006) argues that young children are often said to be better at language learning than adult learners; however teaching children is a challenging task. Young learners face obstacles that adult learners do not. They are still developing physically and intellectually; their emotional needs may be higher; they are less able to take responsibility for their own learning; and they do not usually have the kind of instrumental motivation and determination for learning English that adult learners often have.

Brewster et al. (2003) further argue that children have a lot of physical energy and often need to be physically active. They have a wide range of emotional needs and are emotionally excitable. They are developing conceptually and are at an early stage of their schooling. They are still developing literacy in their first language and learn more slowly. They forget things quickly and tend to be self-oriented. They get bored easily and they cannot concentrate for a long time if the learning task is boring. Based on these special characteristics of children, Brewster et al. (2003:27) strongly emphasize that:

Young children are different from older learners; If we learn a foreign language as adults, we often have a long-term goal such as wanting to get a job, where bilingual skills are important, or wanting to study further in the country of the target language. These purposes are highly motivating and greatly increase our willingness to spend the long hours it takes to master another language. Young children, on the other hand, are not yet in control of their lives; at four, eight or twelve, children do not have specific foreign language needs.

The argument that children do not have specific foreign language needs highlights the importance of providing very interesting and relevant activities that can lead students into the enjoyment as well as the employment of literacy. However, it seems that these values were ignored in my practice. I used to sing the new vocabulary, play games and praise the students for participation, yet I observed that they were unmotivated to learn, reluctant to participate and anxious about using English. This experience urged me to ask: "How can I improve my practice?", and "How do I help my students improve the quality of their learning?"

1.6 How do I help my students improve the quality of their learning?

I am aware that not all our professional problems are capable of being solved. However, it is the received wisdom of those working in caring professions that most problems benefit from being aired and discussed in some controlled or structured way (Wallace, 1998). I also agree with the argument that every educational level is crucial for help and more importantly at the stage when motivation is at stake (Shaik - Abdullah, 2005). I started to believe that the best way to help my students cross this critical stage was to first investigate the factors that were affecting their motivation. Looking for a practical approach that could address my problematic area, I believed that action research would be more suitable to improve my performance (Stringer, 2004; Sagor, 2004; McIntyre and Lykes, 2004; Whitehead and McNiff, 2006). The cyclical nature of action research considers the research questions as a beginning and not an end.

I am aware that while I am trying to answer specific questions in advance, other issues may arise during my research and in that case there will likely be other new questions to be investigated. This is a commitment to learning, embracing the unknown future and accepting that the present is all I have (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006). I also accept the proposition that impermanent state of theorizing is better than resting in a place of propositional finality bounded by fixed delimitations that lead to closed modes of thinking and curtail the use of imagination (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006). I will use an open research design and I will not "impose *a priori* constraints" but will, however, clearly state a problem for investigation (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p.88). In

this study, the problem is related to students' lack of motivation for learning English. Based on the nature of my investigation, the early cycles of my research will achieve two primary objectives and will answer two primary questions as follows:

1.7 The research objectives

1. To identify the factors that are affecting the level of motivation of my students in the present learning situation.
2. To identify the impact of the new teaching approach on the level of motivation of my students in the present learning situation.

1.8 The research question of the first cycle of my research

1. What are the motivational factors that are affecting the level of motivation of my students in their learning situation?
2. What is the impact of a new teaching approach on my students' motivation?

1.9 The significance of study

This enquiry approach is meant to improve my performance and help me live up to my educational values. By identifying the motivational factors in my teaching context, it will be possible for me to research a potential change in my teaching practices. This change is going to be evaluated and modified in order to maximize my students' performance. Given that, the first chapter is meant to explain what my concern is, why I am concerned, and what experiences I could describe to show why I am concerned.

1.10 Layout of the study

The following chapters are dedicated to explain what I can do about my concern. In order to do that, Chapter Two addresses theories of motivation pertinent to my teaching context, Chapter Three tackles the enquiry approach I will adopt in my research , Chapter Four handles the fact finding cycle which identifies the motivational factors in my teaching context , Chapter Five discusses the potential intervention and the possible change it may bring about, Chapter Six is dedicated to evaluate this intervention and answers the second research question, Chapter Seven addresses the modification of my first intervention and answers the third research question, Chapter Eight and Nine discuss the findings and the implications of my research. Given that, the reader of my research will be clear about what kind of data I will gather to show the situation as it unfolds, how I will explain my educational influences in learning, how I modify my concerns, ideas, and practices in the light of my evaluation, How I evaluate the evidence-based account of my learning and how I transfer my practical knowledge to interested audiences (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006).

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

Much of the literature, which has addressed students' motivation, has used a priori approach to the identification of students' motives. Typically, this has meant that researchers have hypothesized, in advance, the existence of certain motives and then attempted to validate these motives through the use of psychometric research techniques. Such quantitative investigation can help researchers to systematically investigate students' motives, particularly in the real life school and classroom context (Lemos, 2001).

However, there is a strong argument that there is also a need to an inductive approach to explore students' perspectives regarding their motives rather than with researchers' perceived categories. The findings of such an inductive approach can be compared with priori theories and conceptualizations to determine whether a more complex understanding of students' motives is warranted (Dowson and McInerney, 2003). Given that, I will try to conduct an inductive, systematic and contextual approach to the study of students' motives. However, I will first review literature pertinent to motivational theories and how they conceptualized motivation. Second, I will relate the implications of the selected theories to my students' context.

Conceptualization is a mental process through which we specify what we mean when we use particular terms in research. Conceptualization then produces a specific agreed-on meaning for a concept by specifying one or more indicators of what we have in mind (Babbie, 2005). Because motivation is a complex human nature, theories have conceptualized motivation in considerable variation both in terms of their scope and their level of analysis. Consequently there is far less disagreement on the actual mediating factors and processes by means of which motivation achieves its impact on human behavior (Dornyei, 2000).

The disagreement among motivation theories resulted in a big number of defining or criticizing statements that describe how behavior is selected (Petri, and Govern, 2004) and made the notion of motivation quite difficult to be fully described by one theory (Gardners, 2005). The different approaches to the description of motivation vary not only in the type of nomenclature or data language used to describe this process, but in how that data language may be applied to a wider range of behavior, and what generalizations or predictions may be derived from that description (Stipek, 2002). Being multifaceted, motivation has been defined in many different ways by different researchers in psychology and other scientific disciplines. Therefore, motivation in learning a second language is not a simple construct to define.

However, motivation can be generally described as internal processes that give behavior its energy and direction, originates from a variety of sources (needs, cognitions and emotions) and these internal processes energize behavior in multiple ways such as starting, sustaining, intensifying, focusing and stopping it (Reeve, 2005). Given that, most motivation theories try to explain interrelated aspects of human behavior such as the choice of a particular action, persistence with it, and effort expended on it. That is, motivation theories try to answer what choices people make about their behavior, how long it takes to get started, what the intensity of involvement is in the chosen behavior, what causes a person to persist or to give up, and what the individual is thinking and feeling while engaged in the activity (Dornyei, 2000).

Reflecting on the three types of students in my class, each type has problems with at least one of the above five areas of motivation: intensity and persistence such as in Type One students, choices and autonomy as in Type Two students, and getting started as in Type Three. Each type presents a different motivational challenge. This is why I need a comprehensive theory that enables me to understand why the three groups of my students behaved the way they did. I am aware that the theory I will choose for studying motivation will influence how motivation will be conceptualized and measured in my own study. However, my main concern is to systematically investigate the potential motivational factors that are meaningful to my teaching context (Dowson and McInerney, 2003).

Following the track of some of the theories of motivation, I found out that some of them developed through work with animals in laboratories. Others were based on research with humans in situations that used games and puzzles. Some theories grew out of the work done in clinical or industrial psychology (Woolfolk, 2007). Reflecting on the educational implications pertinent to the theories of motivation, I believed that there is a certain amount of truth in each of them, for different people, at different times, in different academic situations (Waugh, 2002). Given that, my way of addressing each theory was to understand how each theory conceptualized motivation and what potential intervention each theory suggested to promote motivation in respect to my teaching context. Thus, my intention was not to prove the superiority of a theory to another; my critical analysis for each theory was based on how much relevant the theory was to my teaching context.

2.2. Theories of motivation

Reviewing the history of theories of motivation, it seems that it has gone through different stages of conceptualization, "going from a biologically based drive perspective to a behavioral mechanistic perspective, and then to a cognitive–meditational /constructivist perspective" (Eccles et al., 1998:1074). The reinforcement theory, which was developed and popularized by Thorndike's (1898) Law of Effect, was one of the behavioral approaches to motivation that dominated the educational literature until the 1960s (as cited in Stipek, 2000).

Thorndike (1898) argues that all learning, even in humans, does not involve the mind. For him, learning is simply the building of a connection between the situation and a response, depending on the rewarding or punishing consequences to the animal. He further points out that behavior is determined by its consequences in the sense that responses become more likely to occur as the result of some consequences and less likely as the result of others.(as cited in Stipek, 2000).

Skinner (1974) expanded Thorndike's law of effect and assumed that all human behavior is controlled by external reinforcements, defined as events that followed the response that made subsequent, similar responses more probable. He defined consequences that increased the probability of behaviors that they were contingent upon as positive reinforcements and consequences that reduced the probability of behavior as negative reinforcements. Stipek (2002) points out that the reinforcement theory has suggested many applications pertinent to the classroom setting. These applications include techniques like praising students, giving stars, putting students' paper on public display, or require students to stay after school for disruptive behavior. The reinforcement theory assumes that when students are rewarded for working hard on school tasks, they will likely continue to work hard and persist in the future. Given that, the reinforcement theory assumes that teachers' praise and rewards can take on reinforcing properties by having previously been associated with the reduction of basic drives, and can therefore influence behavior.

The useful applications the reinforcement theory brought to the classroom setting are very helpful especially in addressing disciplinary problems, yet the way by which motivation is conceptualized and measured in the reinforcement theory does not provide a complete conclusive picture of my teaching context. According to the reinforcement theory, motivation is not considered a quality of the person, but rather a set of behaviors and their contingencies. This indicates that any attempt to explain, predict or influence motivation would involve measuring behavior and examining the consequence of the current and the desired behavior. By conceptualizing motivation in this way, the reinforcement theory does not consider any unobservable motivational variables such as students' choice, beliefs, expectations or emotions. Such understanding ignores the fact that motivation is an inner characteristic every student needs to have (Graham and Weiner, 1996).

Additionally, the effects of a reinforcement depend on the context. Thus, applying the reinforcement applications in my teaching context will be meaningless at this stage because the tasks students are doing are not that challenging to be really praised for. There is no doubt that giving praise, offering to help, and giving encouragement is helpful (Brown, 2001), yet repeatedly rewarding the student for completing easy tasks results in students' feeling to be less able and less motivated (Miller and Hom, 1997). Furthermore, those children who are praised when they have not exerted any effort will learn that effort is not necessary for reinforcement. There are, therefore, negative consequences to indiscriminate praise, even for young children.

Additionally, reinforcing behavior also conveys the message that the behavior is not worth doing for its own sake. Such indication can undermine students' desire to be involved in any non school-related learning activity (Stipek, 2002). Moreover, the reinforcement theory suggests that people are entirely regulated by external forces. Providing grades, stars, stickers, and other reinforcements for learning is an attempt to motivate students by extrinsic means of incentives, rewards, and punishments.

However, Bandura (1997) contends that people are not passive respondents to environmental contingencies. Humans can learn what behavior leads to by directly or vicariously observing others. They do not have to experience the situation themselves or be rewarded for the new behavior. They learn by observing others. This observational learning suggests that a learner's mind is active and he/she is able to involve in higher order thinking. Thus, a motivated person is conceptualized as someone with cognitions or beliefs that lead to constructive achievement behavior. These beliefs include expectations and perceptions about ability and the potential value that can be obtained from a certain behavior. As far as expectancy is concerned, Rotter (1990) introduced the concept of expectancy of control in which he argues that people who believe that events are contingent upon their personal and individual characteristics will have an internal locus of control. However, people who believe that events are contingent on external factors such as luck will have external locus of control.

The studies, which used Rotter's (1990) locus of control scale, revealed that people who have internal locus of control had higher performance than the people who had external locus of control. Additionally, those people who had internal locus of control had better preparation for the given tasks in comparison to the people who had external locus of control (Bedel, 2008).

Weiner (1992) incorporates three other dimensions to the concept of expectancy of control. These three dimensions have important implications in my classroom. The first dimension is "*locus*" which refers to a student's belief about the location of the cause for success or failure. The second two dimensions are stability and controllability. As far as stability is concerned, it refers to the belief whether the cause is likely to stay the same in the near future or can change. As for controllability, it refers to the belief whether the person can control the cause or not. Bandura (1997:3) further argues that if success is attributed to internal or controllable causes such as ability or effort, this is likely to increase the person's self efficacy which is "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments". On the other hand, if a person has high self-efficacy, he/she will likely attribute his/her success to his/her abilities. This implicates that having a strong sense of self-efficacy for a certain task encourages controllable attributions and controllable attributions increase self-efficacy.

Research also suggests that when people come to believe that the events and outcomes in their lives are mostly uncontrollable, this is an indication that they have developed "*learned helplessness*" which refers to the belief that if they cannot control the outcome of an event, there is no need to try. When students feel hopeless, they will be unmotivated and reluctant to work (Ivey, 1999; Pressley et al. 2003).

There is also evidence that when teachers assume that students' failure is attributable to uncontrollable causes, teachers tend to respond with sympathy and pity. But the problem is that some students will perceive this reaction as an indication that their failure is attributed to uncontrollable cause and this perception will hinder future attempts for modification. So praise as a consolation prize for failing or over solicitous help can give unintended messages (Graham, 1994). However, research also suggests that when usually successful students fail, they often attribute this failure to internal causes such as lack of working hard. Consequently, they change their strategies and put more effort next time. This response often leads to achievement and pride (Woolfolk, 2007).

Based on the above arguments, it is possible that learners' current self-perceptions will strongly influence the ways in which they will interpret the success or failure of their current efforts and enhance their future tendency to perform these same behaviors. Nevertheless, Atkinson (1964) argues that expecting to be able to accomplish a task does not necessarily mean that an individual will exert the required effort and show the persistence to complete

this task. Atkinson (1964) points out that individuals go for a certain task because they expect to obtain a value from it. This suggests that learners will be highly motivated if they expect a value from what they learn. Students' value of an activity would determine both the quality and quantity of effort expended on that activity.

Pondering over the previous theories, Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Theory, Rotter's (1966) Expectancy of Control Theory, Weiner's (1980) Self-Efficacy Theory and Atkinson's (1964) Expectancy x Value Theory, it is noticeable that all of them emphasize the role of beliefs in motivation, yet they differ from each other with regard to the particular beliefs they emphasize. In spite of their differences, the cognitive theories could incorporate beliefs, values, expectations, and emotions. They could also imply the notion that students are active, thinking, and self-regulating. The difference between the reinforcement theory and the cognitive ones is that the reinforcement theory is much more concerned with the environment while the cognitive theories are more concerned with people's interpretation of the environment (Stipek, 2002). The question is: "How do the cognitive theories help me understand my teaching context?"

The implications of the cognitive theories emphasize the importance of the role of belief in learning. If successes and failures are attributed to internal factors such as ability and competence, success will lead to self esteem, pride and increase in motivation, whereas failure will diminish self-esteem. Such understanding brings to mind the importance of making the low achievers

believe that their inability to use L2 is not because of a stable uncontrollable cause. They should be taught some strategies that can help them to succeed in a moderately difficult task. Consequently, they will probably come to believe that putting more effort in learning and using different strategies can be an internal controllable solution to overcome their state of anxiety. Instead of pitying them or excusing these students, I can teach them how to learn and then hold them accountable. This will help them develop a sense of self-efficacy for learning and avoid learned helplessness (Schunk, 2000).

I started to believe that the low achievers in my teaching context need to experience success by going through moderately difficult tasks so that their beliefs about their abilities can be positively developed. They also need not focus on their abilities to successfully accomplish a particular task with no need for comparisons (Weiner, 1992). However, the real problem that makes any judgment about the reality of my students' ability ambiguous and inaccurate is the fact that these students have not been exposed to challenging and meaningful tasks since the textbook is too simple to challenge them and as, Atkinson (1964) points out, individuals go for a certain task because they expect to obtain a value from it. Additionally, Type One and Type Two students already have good perceptions about their abilities. However, they are not motivated to learn. The reason may be not because they lack self-efficacy but because they may not take pleasure in accomplishing tasks that do not reflect their real abilities and interests. So it seems that the problem does not lie in their cognitions and beliefs.

The problem may lie in the absence of real challenging meaningful tasks (Wigfield et al., 2004). Given that, building a student's positive belief about himself/herself is not about falsely telling students how great they are. Instead, it is about assessing student weaknesses and strengths and developing ways to address them at developmentally appropriate yet rigorous levels.

It is true that there are dangers in underestimating abilities because then students are more likely to exert little effort and give up easily. But there are also dangers in overestimating performance as well. Students who think that they are better readers than they actually are may not be motivated to go back and repair misunderstandings as they read. They do not discover that they did not really understand the material until it is too late (Pintrich and Zusho, 2002). Thus, it is crucial for me to create collaborative supportive environments with high but achievable standards (Akey, 2006). This implicates that boosting students' confidence can be obtained by teaching them how to love challenges and learning and how to cope with and capitalize on setbacks. Consequently, when students learn to thrive on difficulty and get a charge from mastering new skills, they can boost their own confidence in constructive ways throughout their lives (Dweck, 2006).

It is worth remembering the story of one of my students whose mother came to me and showed me a number of stories her son voluntarily wrote. Comparing the child's accomplishment at home and his passive silence at the class, I started to believe in the argument that many children do not enjoy school work because it fails to provide the feelings of competence and mastery they need to sustain intrinsic interest. This intrinsic interest can be found in activities and events that provide level of surprise, incongruity, complexity, or discrepancy from our expectations or beliefs (Deci and Ryan, 1985, 1987; Ryan and Deci, 2000).

The child was much interested in writing stories without being paid, applauded, cheered, thanked, respected, or anything but the good feelings he got from the activity. It seems that this child found an intrinsic value in writing his stories by his own. Conversely, Type Two students did not have that intrinsic desire that boy had. Comparing the two cases in the light of intrinsic theories, the boy could make his choice about what he intrinsically wanted to learn because he achieved personal pleasure from the stories he read while type two students were reluctant to learn because they did not have enough autonomy in what they wanted to learn. In this respect, Deci et al. (1987) point out that because a person no longer experiences a sense of self-determination for initiation or regulation of an activity, continued interest in the task becomes dependent on the promise of extrinsic incentives.

However, although extrinsic incentives may enhance students' willingness to undertake an achievement-related task at a given time, still there is the question of the effect of such extrinsic incentives on a students' subsequent willingness to undertake such activities, in the absence of the incentives (Boggiano and Pittman, 1992). This suggests that if Type Two students were left to themselves without being monitored, there is a little probability for voluntarily seeking learning the language whereas the intrinsically motivated boy is expected to proceed with his learning either he is monitored or not because his primary focus is on the pleasure driven from the task and not to avoid punishment or to please his parents (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

When the primary focus is on rewards inherent in the interaction with a target activity; the activity is approached as an end in itself. Features as novelty, entertainment value, satisfaction of curiosity and opportunities for the exercise of skills and attainment of mastery typically characterize the kinds of rewards sought from engagement in an activity when an intrinsic motivational orientation is taken. However, in extrinsic motivational orientation, the activity is approached as a means to an end. Task features such as predictability, simplicity and ease of completion typically are preferred when an extrinsic motivational orientation is adopted (Reeve, Nix, and Hamm, 2003).

Although both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations have an impact on the academic success of students, there is an implication that intrinsically oriented students tend to be more creative, experience greater conceptual gains in understanding and are more likely to remain interested in learning (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Additionally, when people get extremely engaged in an intrinsically oriented task, they become in the state of "flow" in which they do not want to do anything else but concentrate on the activity they are doing. (Csikszentmihalyi and Rathunde, 1993).

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) points out that the flow response is a subjective experience of pleasure, interest, and even ecstasy that is obtained from when there is a balance between the perceived challenges of a situation and a person's skills or capabilities for action. Being in the state of flow, students can be pushed to higher levels of performance by having a sense of discovery and a creative feeling of transporting themselves into a new reality. Additionally, Vallerand (1997) equates the concept of experiencing flow with the concept of receiving pleasure, but while one can re-experience a pleasurable activity by doing it in the same manner as before, being completely involved and having the enjoyment of peak performance requires continual growth. In the same vein, Webster and Martocchio (1992) illustrate that this experience is characterized by a heightened sense of playfulness, accompanied by a feeling of self control and increased learning. Reflecting on the implications of the intrinsic construct in my context, I started to believe that developing intrinsic motivation into my young learners is a good perspective to consider.

Using token rewards, such as candy or parties, to encourage students to complete a required assignment may be useless and unproductive. Thus, it is very crucial to create interesting activities that can bring students pleasure and fun on one hand and learning on the other hand. However, the complication is that the state of flow can not work all the time. Sometimes students get piqued by irregular verbs, new jargons, long sentences. So depending mainly on the intrinsic value of an activity can be impractical in some situations (Woolfolk, 2007).

Arguing in a similar vein, Kanfer (1996) points out that continued task practice (persistence) is necessary to yield improvements in task performance. But for practice to have a positive effect on performance, additional motivational mechanisms are required to sustain attention and effort over time and in the face of difficulties and failures. Research indicates that performance in schools is improved when students receive rewards based on achievement, not just engagement, because achievement rewards signal increasing competence (Graham and Weiner, 1996). Furthermore, the intrinsic value of a certain task is always subjective, situational and is conceptually present oriented. This suggests that the future orientation for learning English is not operationally emphasized in this concept (Bong, 2001; Eccles and field, 1995). Given that, the motivation we experience at any given time usually can be a combination of trait and state. In other words, motivation is not only a temporary state of excitement about a momentary learning experience but it can be a trait and an individual's characteristic that value learning regardless of the situational reward (Woolfolk, 2007).

The point is that motivation, conceptualized as a state process, can be necessary but insufficient for describing other factors that reinforce learning and performance in such a long-lasting nature of mastering a foreign language. Dornyei (2000) describes this motivational fluctuation and contends that:

During the lengthy process of mastering certain subject matters, motivation does not remain constant but is associated with a dynamically changing and evolving mental process characterized by constant reappraisal and balancing of the various internal and external influences that the individual is exposed to. Indeed, even within the duration of a single course, most learners experience a fluctuating of their enthusiasm/commitment, sometimes on a day –to-day basis (p.523).

The intrinsic construct heavily emphasizes one's personal perception of a task or an activity, yet it does not consider other environmental factors such as the impact of the social setting on my students because while English is a learnable school subject, learning it is a deeply social event that requires the incorporation of a wide range of elements of the target language culture (Gardner, 2005). Having said that, intrinsic theories can loosely apply to every learner in any learning context regardless of being in an EFL or ESL environment, formal or informal education and they can loosely apply to any school subject with no specificity of the nature of language learning. Based on that, the exclusion of the future orientations and the social factors make the intrinsic construct loosely applicable and less comprehensive to my context because they give partial explanation of learning.

Research suggests that complicated motivational life of actual classrooms can be best accounted for only by means of detailed constructs that represent multiple perspectives (Dornyei, 2000). Given that, "no single word or principle such as reinforcement or intrinsic motivation can possibly capture this complexity" (Graham, 1994: 47). Thus, L2 motivation must be integrated into a more complete picture of personality and of the interaction between students and the teacher, students and the task, students and the community since the relationships between a person's prior linguistic and academic experience, the social context of instruction, and the results of formal language instruction have complex and reciprocal connections with each other (McGroarty, 1996).

Furthering my study on the available literature, I came to believe that many of my concerns are much relevant to Robert Gardner's (1985, 2001, 2005) Socio-Educational Model. Robert Gardner is a Canadian researcher and it seems that the unique Canadian situation with the coexistence of the Anglophone and Francophone communities speaking two of the world's most vital languages has inspired him with the importance of motivation in learning L2 in a second language environment (Dornyei, 2003). Gardner's research on motivation in ESL/EFL has dominated the discussion of motivation for decades (Crookes and Schmidt, 1991) and the validity of the Socio-educational model of second language acquisition has been continuously investigated in various studies (Gardner, 1985, 1988; Gardner and McIntyre, 1993; Tremblay and Gardner, 1995; Gardner, 2001; Gardner, 2005).

The main disposition of the Socio - Educational Model is the concept of integrative motive which incorporates five motivational variables : (1) motivation , (2) integrative orientation , (3) instrumental orientation , (4) attitude toward the learning situation , (5) and anxiety . In the following paragraphs, I will discuss these five motivational variables and reflect on the relevance of each factor to my teaching context and to my living experience.

Gardner (1985:50) argues that "motivation involves four aspects, a goal, effortful behavior, a desire to attain the goal and favorable attitudes toward the activity in question". Gardner (2001) further explains these aspects and contends that the motivated individual expends effort to learn the language. This effort can be observed by persistently and consistently learning the material, doing homework, seeking out opportunities to learn more, and doing extra work. Also, the motivated individual seeks to achieve a goal and strives to get it, yet within the process of getting the goal, the individual will enjoy the task of learning the language and will say that it is fun, a challenge, and enjoyable. Gardner (1996) points out that effort, desire and positive affect are the main elements that distinguish between individuals who are motivated and those who are less motivated. However, each element, by itself, is insufficient to reflect motivation; some students may want to learn the language but they do not exert effort, this lack of effort indicates that the individual is not truly motivated.

Gardner (1985) points out that motivation consists of three elements namely (1) attitude toward learning the language, (2) desire to learn the language, and (3) motivational intensity that is measured by how much effort and persistence a learner shows in learning a language. It is fair to claim that motivation as defined in this way has been widely accepted by researchers since the 1980s as key factors which influence students in learning a second language (Abdul Razak, 2005).

Reflecting on the above three components of motivation, I began to realize that these components address behavioral, cognitive and affective aspects. The behavioral component is addressed by focusing on the degree of the intensity of involvement in a chosen behavior. The cognitive aspect is considered by looking for the causes that make a person persist or give up in a task. The affective aspect is emphasized by focusing on what the individual feels while engaged in an activity. Although students may have the same goal and the same attitude for learning the language, they may differ in the amount of effort exerted. Thus the measurement of motivational intensity is important because it can provide me as a researcher with some baseline information regarding how motivated students really are in learning the language (Abdul Razak, 2005).

Applying the principle of motivational intensity on the types of students I had, I became more sure that none of them is truly motivated. Type One and Type Two students do not seem to enjoy the classroom activities and do not desire to participate, while Type Three do not exert enough effort to develop themselves. However, I wondered whether these three elements of motivation are already incorporated in other theories such as the cognitive and intrinsic theories. So what is unique about the other motivational factors in the Socio-Educational Model? The conceptualization of integrative motive is not only confined to desire, effort and attitude, yet it incorporates other four variables (integrative orientation, instrumental orientation, attitude toward the learning situation, and anxiety) that affect the overall nature of motivation. The question is: How can the overall nature of motivation be positively or negatively affected by these variables?

Gardner (1985) believes that the orientations for learning a language can affect, either positively or negatively, the state of motivation. He makes a distinction between two types of orientations that refer to a class of reasons that explain why an individual is motivated to learn a language. Gardner (1985) argues that the individual may learn a second language in order to learn about, interact with, or become closer to the second language community. This type of reason is called "integrative orientation" (p.54).

Because language learning is culturally based (Gardner, 1985) , the concept of integrative orientation reflects a positive outlook on second language and its culture, to the degree that learners with high scores on this factor may want to integrate themselves into the second language culture and identify with the second language speakers. Csizér and Dörnyei (2005) argue that this process of identification is much affected by the social milieu which refers to the perceived influence of parents, family, friends and socialization effect of the learners' peer group. This implicates that if learners, their parents and their family show a degree of openness to take on the cultural/linguistic characteristics of the second language speakers, this will enhance the desire to integrate and identify with the second language community (Gardner, 1983). Given that, the notion of identification with the second language speakers is an indication that these learners show high level of integrativeness which is a very socially affective dimension (Masgoret and Gardner, 2003).

Reflecting on the integrative orientation, I recalled the time when I was a student in the English department, Faculty of Education. During that time, I had a strong desire to practice my English. I did my best to have an English-like accent; I used to listen to Voice of America (VOA) at very late times. My friends and I used to hang around with foreigners so that we could enhance our pronunciation and fluency. I also dreamed of living overseas where I could speak English more naturally and lively. All these efforts were done because we wanted to use English and talk with foreigners. This integrative orientation resulted in developing my language tremendously.

Later on, when I worked in Saudi Arabia, I also managed to integrate with Muslim Americans living in Riyadh. I did it only for the sake of practicing English. It was not for money, it was not for degrees, it was only because I wanted to integrate with English speaking people. During that time, I had the confidence to talk and share with others my ideas. I had a positive self-image. My linguistic ability much encouraged me to be open and have no sense of inferiority or anxiety. Crossing my race and ethnical boundaries was not a problem that threatened my identity. I wanted to integrate with others not to lose my identity but to add to my identity whatever positive in other cultures. Reflecting on my experience and the concept of integrative orientation, I wondered whether or not my students had this orientation.

I am much concerned because my desire to integrate with English speaking people helped my English tremendously. Additionally, there is evidence that integratively motivated students are more active in language classes, are more likely to participate in excursions to other cultural communities when given the opportunity and more likely to interact with members of that community (Gardner and MacIntyre, 1991). Research also suggests that highly motivated learners interact confidently with native speakers of the language, which in return increases the amount of input that learners receive (Scarcella and Oxford, 1992). But the question is: Does every body have to be integratively oriented in order to learn a language?

Gardner (2001) points out that it should never be implied that integrative orientation is the only reason to learn a second language well. Gardner (2003) emphasizes that people may learn the language for pragmatic reasons such as getting a job, getting a certificate, and getting promoted. These pragmatic reasons are instrumental in nature. However, Gardner (1985) argues that if some one is learning the language for only instrumental orientations such as passing a course or getting a degree, it does not mean that he/she is really motivated to learn the language because the impact of instrumental orientations fluctuates

Gardner (2003) further contends that individuals, whose motivation is based largely on instrumental reasons for learning the language, may become less motivated to learn the language once they achieve their specific goal. Arguing in a similar vein, Dweck (2006) states that grades often matter a lot, and many students who want to go on to top graduate and professional schools need good grades. Problems arise when students come to care so much about their performance that they sacrifice important learning opportunities and limit their intellectual growth. This argument corresponds with Rabba's (2003) contention that although adult Arab learners are instrumentally motivated, they still have poor communication skills. Gardner (1985) points out that there is a difference between an orientation and motivation. Orientations are cluster of reasons for studying an L2, whereas, motivation is an attribute of the individual describing the psychological qualities underlying behavior with respect to a particular task.

It is possible to recognize the value of a language and to be oriented toward that language, but without activating effort and positive affect, the individual would be oriented but not motivated to learn the L2. Having said that, I started to believe that It is possible that there will be students who may value the target language for both its communicative and pragmatic gains .The question is: "How am I going to help them achieve these goals efficiently?"

Gardner (1985) points out that student's "*attitudes toward the learning situation*" is a very important component in the integrative construct. Attitudes toward the learning situation deals with the individual's evaluation of the course and the teacher. Given that, the learning situation can be much motivating if there is an interesting dedicated qualified teacher, supported with an exciting curriculum, and meaningful evaluation procedures. Gardner (2001) states that:

The language teacher also has a number of duties and responsibilities in the language learning context. To achieve their goals, language teachers must have knowledge and skill in the language. On the one hand, this requires that they be sufficiently proficient to have the knowledge and skill to teach the language, and students can quickly determine if the teacher lacks proficiency. On the other hand, the teacher must have the training, personality characteristics, and ability to teach the fundamentals of the language to the student but also to encourage them to learn the material, and more importantly to use it ...this requires a lot of work and dedication on the part of both the teacher and the student, and is one of the many factors that account for the learning of a second language to be a difficult and time consuming task (p.4)

Given that, the quality of instruction, teacher curriculum, and lesson plans are expected to highly promote motivation. However, still students should perform some duties. Gardner (2001) states that:

When students are learning a second language, they have a number of duties and responsibilities. First and foremost, they must pass the course. In addition, however, they must acquire the language content (Vocabulary, grammar and the like) ; they must acquire language skills (oral production, aural comprehension); they must develop some degree of automaticity and fluency with their handling of the language ; and ultimately, they must develop some degree of willingness to use the language outside the classroom. This is no small set of requirements (p.3)

Gardner's (2001) description of teachers' role and students' duties highlights the fact that bringing about motivation requires a reciprocal process, that needs interaction between the teacher, who is the motivating agent, and the students, who are potential agents to be motivated. If the teacher wants to motivate and there is no practical response from the students, such as using strategies and exerting more effort, the motivation process can be at risk. Gardner (1996) points this out and contends that "you can not motivate a rock" (p.25). In other words, motivation must be an internal characteristic of the individual and that it can not be created, out of nothing, by an external force. An external force can stimulate motivation, as when a teacher tries to motivate a student. The potential to be motivated must already exist and be a property of the student in order for a particular pedagogical technique to be effective.

Gardner (1985) does not ignore the fact that students' duties are not small requirements and using the language inside and outside the classroom is not an easy task. He proposes that using the language inside and outside the classroom may be accompanied by a situation-specific anxiety. This anxiety is negatively related to L2 achievement, negatively related to attitudes and motivation (Gardner et al., 1985), and can lead to decrements in language learning (Macintyre and Gardner, 1994).

2.2.1 Concluding thoughts

Motivation is characterized as an integrative motive which is comprised of integrativeness, attitudes toward the learning situation, and motivation (Gardner, 1985). Integrativeness refers to an individual's desire to interact with the L2 group and is measured by three scales: Integrative orientation, attitudes toward the target language group, and interest in foreign languages in general. Attitudes toward the learning situation deal with the individual's evaluation of the course and the teacher. Finally, motivation assesses three components related to the L2: The individual's attitude toward learning, desire to learn, and the effort invested which is referred to as motivational intensity. The above mentioned factors, attitudes toward the learning situation, willingness to integrate, instrumentality, anxiety and motivation, form the components of integrative motive. These factors provide for behavioral, cognitive and affective components. The following diagram shows how the components of the integrative motive relate to each other:

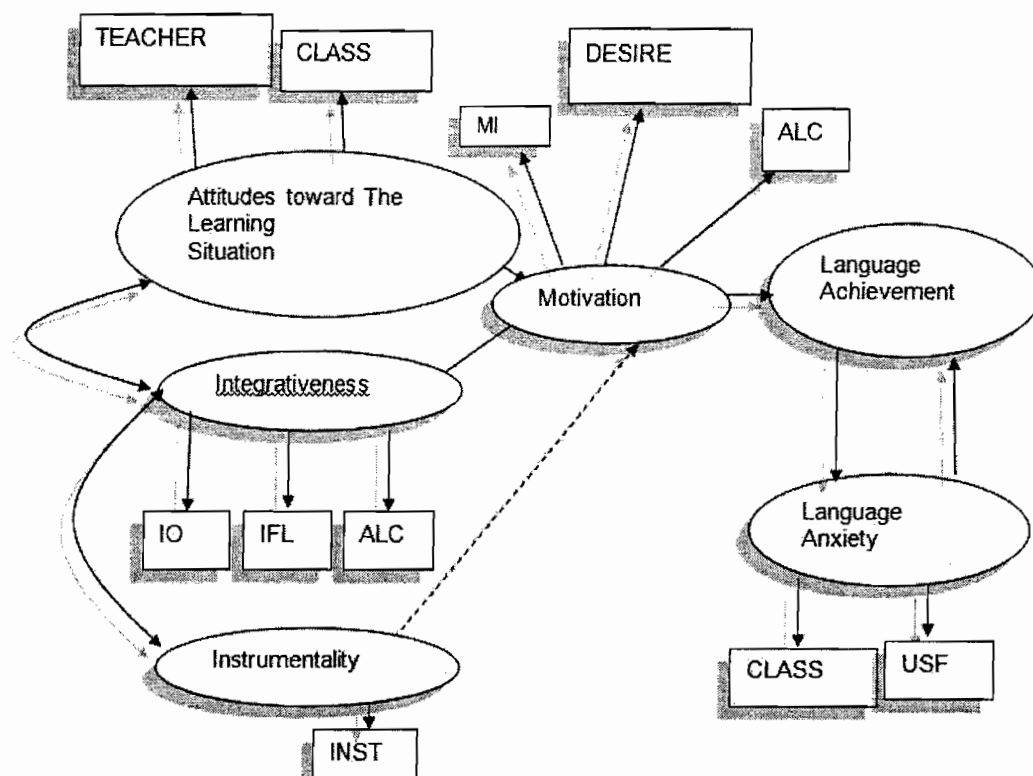


FIG 2.1 The Socio-Educational Model with Indicator Variables (Gardner, 2005, p. 12)

2.3 Definition of abbreviations

- IO: Integrative orientation
- IFL: Interest in foreign language
- ALC: Attitude Toward the Language community
- INST: Instrumental orientation
- MI: Motivational intensity
- ALL: Attitude toward learning language
- USF: Using foreign language

2.3.1 The relationship among the integrative motivational constructs

Looking at the Socio-Educational Model, it is clear that the bidirectional arrows linking integrativeness to attitudes toward the learning situation and also to instrumentality. These bidirectional arrows are meant to indicate that the two pairs of constructs are expected to be positively correlated with one another. Individuals with high levels of integrativeness would be expected to view the language learning situation positively, other things being equal and vice versa. Individuals who are high in integrativeness would also be expected to be high in instrumentality. The model also shows unidirectional arrows linking attitudes toward the learning situation, integrativeness, and potentially instrumentality to motivation. The diagram implies that motivation is supported by these constructs. Levels of motivation are influenced and maintained by attitudes toward the learning situation, integrativeness, and where relevant, instrumentality. Unidirectional arrows also link motivation to language achievement. This is meant to indicate that in the Socio-Educational Model, it is assumed that motivation can be responsible for individual differences in achievement in the language learning context. The Socio-Educational Model also postulates that anxiety can have motivational properties that might have debilitating components that interfere with learning and production. This understanding is in line with Krashen's (1985) hypothesis that students emotional variables (anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence) affect language acquisition. According to Gardner (1985), language anxiety is generally negatively related to achievement as well as to self-confidence with the language. This negative relationship indicates that high levels of language anxiety interfere with language achievement, and low levels of achievement

cause individuals to be anxious in situations where they are to use the language.

2.4. The Socio-Educational Model's relevance to my teaching context

Gardner's (1985, 2001, and 2005) Socio-Educational Model is much relevant to my teaching context because it organizes a host of variables that are implicated in second language learning and provides a parsimonious explanation of their role. The model is much relevant to my teaching context because it addresses learning English in an ESL environment. The previous theories of motivation address the issue of motivation in very general terms without taking into consideration the specificity of learning a language. For many, learning generally requires the same motivational factors regardless of the nature of the subject that is being taught. However, I much agree with Gardner (1985) who points out that:

.....languages are unlike any other subject taught in a classroom in that they involve the acquisition of skills or behavior patterns which are characteristic of another cultural community. It is argued that any other subject, such as Mathematics, Science, or History, involves the development of knowledge or skills which are part of the heritage of the student's cultural community; a second language, on the other hand, is a salient characteristic of another culture. As a consequence, the relative degree of success will be influenced to some extent by the individual's attitudes toward the other community or to other communities in general as well as by the beliefs in the community which are relevant to the language learning process (Gardner, 1985: 146).

Gardner (1985) emphasizes that learning a language is not like learning other subjects like arithmetic, history, geography, music, etc., which are generally all part of the student's culture, or cultural perspective at least, and acquiring them does not involve any personal conflict. Gardner (2005) makes a distinction between second language acquisition and foreign language acquisition. He contends that the dynamics involved in learning these two different types of languages may be quite different.

According to Gardner (1985), a language is a second language for an individual if it is readily available in that individual's environment, and the individual has many opportunities to hear, see, and use it. However, a language is a foreign one for the individual if it is the language of a group with which the individual has little contact and little opportunity to meet with members of that language group, or to experience the language first hand. This distinction between a foreign and a second language is also relevant to my teaching context. The text book is designated for students who are living in an EFL environment. It has not considered the nature of the new ESL context the Arab learners are living in. If the curriculum planners had taken Gardner's argument into consideration, they would have developed a suitable material for the Arab learners who are living in an ESL environment. Additionally, the model is also unique in its comprehensiveness. In the previous theories, there is much controversy about the nature of motivation. Reinforcement theorists overemphasize the role of the external factors and do not consider motivation as a quality of a person but a set of behaviors and their contingencies.

The other theories (Drive Theory, Cognitive Theory, and Intrinsic Theory) suggest that motivation originates from a variety of internal process (needs, cognitions , emotions, and feeling of pleasure) that energize and direct behavior in multiple ways such as starting, sustaining, intensifying, focusing, and stopping it . However, the Socio-Educational Model addresses both internal and external, and formal and informal factors that may interfere in energizing and directing behavior toward learning a language. I also found out that motivation is looked upon as an integrative concept that encompasses the main factors that are operating in the formal school setting such as students' attitudes toward the learning situation, the language instructor, the language course on one hand and students' persistence and effort to learn the target language on the other. Given that, the Socio-Educational Model links the individual's rationale for an activity such as language learning with the range of behaviors and degree effort employed in achieving this activity. Thus, the model integrates motivation into a more complete picture of personality and it considers the interaction between person and situation. Additionally, the model does not ignore the role of cognitive factors in learning language. It implies that both pragmatic and integrative orientations can affect motivation. It is my role as a teacher to help my students achieve these orientations. The model predicts that if teachers can motivate students, this should be evidenced in measures of attitudes toward the learning situation and perhaps motivation. Understanding the concept of motivation in this way suggests that there is a chance for me to motivate my learners. They need an interesting learning experience .Yet they also need to exert effort and show persistence in the learning tasks (Gardner, 1985, 1996, 2001, 2003, 2005).

2.4.1 Conclusion

The Socio-Educational Model provides a parsimonious interpretation of second language acquisition. It proposes that environmental variables play important roles. It suggests that the quality instruction begets quality learning; how the material is presented, immediate reinforcements and clearly identified objectives all will promote learning but, equally obviously, much of the environmental influences are mediated by the individual. This argument clarified my role as a motivating agent and also the students' readiness as having the potentials to be motivated. The model emphasizes that the environmental factors operate on and interact with the individual. In the end, it is how the individual responds that leads to the ultimate results. Despite the potential value of the suggestions and principles suggested by Gardner, they are probabilistic and because they examine what occurs, on average, across situations, there may be situations where these principles do not apply. Thus, it is important to point out that I am going to use Gardner's model as a guide rather than a prescriptive device (Linnenbrink and Pintrich, 2003). Gardner (2005) points out that teachers can make a difference. For this to occur, the third chapter is devoted to address the methodological procedures I used not only in identifying the problematic areas in my context but also to strive systematically through circles of fact –finding, reflection, action and evaluation to make that difference. In my search for a solution, I tried as Dewey (1933) suggested to be open-minded, responsible and wholehearted.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Peterson (1992) points out that teachers, who are committed to improving both their own practice and their students' outcomes, find action research a proper approach for obtaining professional improvement. Being responsible and accountable for improving my performance and the performance of my students, I came to believe that action research is the most appropriate approach of enquiry because it has a practical, problem-solving emphasis (Kemmis, 2006).

Being in a world where practitioners increasingly engage in research themselves as a key strategy in knowledge transfer, I started to believe that adopting a scientific positivism approach would be inappropriate to my context (Shaik-Abdullah, 2005). The social sciences were originally modeled directly on the physical, or natural sciences. While the physical sciences are powerful ways of understanding our physical being and provide deep insight into our biologic nature, they come up short as a vehicle for providing explanations for the sociocultural aspects of human life.

While positivistic science is meant to understand nature in order to control it, this process may work well with natural phenomenon but when human beings are the object of enquiry, one can hardly expect that human beings always behave in what scientists expect them to (Stringer, 2004).

The world of human life is meaningful, interactional, emotional, and constructive, and accomplishing human productive and harmonious human activity requires all these aspects of experience to be taken into account (Stringer, 2004). Thus human living can not be understood solely in terms of sets of prepositions, nor can it be improved just by the application of abstract theories. Instead, "theories need to be grounded somehow in the living reality of peoples lives, in order to avoid the contradiction of offering prescriptions about human living, relying on the justification of abstract theoretical agreement but without the justification of the realities of the experience" (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006 :144).

The classroom is a complex social environment and innovations which work in one situation may be of only limited use in another. Having an intimate knowledge of the context allows teachers to determine what needs to be done, and what can be done amidst all the other pressures of the classroom day (Macintyre, 2000). Therefore, adopting a social science traditional approach would be a separation of me as a researcher from what is researched, of my capacity to accurately represent reality, of objectivity as my way of professional life (Smith and Goodwin, 1997).

In contrast to the scientific methodologies, and more naturally integrated in my work as a practitioner, action research approach is a purposeful investigation which involves gathering data and generating evidence in relation to articulated standards of judgment, in order to test an emergent theory (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006).

It is worth mentioning that philosophers tried to interpret the world in different ways, but the point is to change it (Marx and Engles, 1989). I am much inspired by Arendt's (1978) argument that the highest form of human action is located in practice rather than in the sphere of ideas (as cited in Coulter, 2002). Literature is rich with evidence that action research is a practical approach that bridges the gap between theory and practice (Coulter and Wiens, , 2002; Dadds and Hart , 2001; Feldman, 2003). It is an approach that can help me identify my problematic areas in my class, reflect on them, take an action and then evaluate my new practices and start with a new cycle.

This flexibility is a strong reason to adopt action research (Stringer, 2004). Given that, I need to struggle over the values and the potential beneficiaries to whom I wish to commit when setting my research agendas. If my purposes are merely absorbed into academic culture which is no longer relevant to the my students I am meant to serve, my research will have no practical implications and I will live with contradictions in theory and research (Francis and Skelton, 2001).

3.2 Definitions of Action Research

Action research is an authentic and a meaningful research that can be conducted by teachers with students, colleagues, parents, and/or families in a natural setting of the classroom or school. It is authentic because it is conducted by the teacher in his/her own classroom space and it is meaningful because it relates to the daily activities in classrooms (Heron and Reason, 2001). In action research, classrooms become "laboratories" (McBee, 2004:157), where practitioners uncover strategies to improve their teaching practices (Sagor, 2004).

These practitioners adopt an inductive approach in which they move from the specific to the general in respect to the research context (McIntyre and Lykes, 2004). Developing strategies for improving teaching practices is done through the step-by step process that is constantly monitored over varying periods of time and by a variety of mechanisms so that feedback can be translated into modifications, adjustments, directional change, and redefinitions (Cohen and Manion, 1994). The main aim of going through these cycles of adjustments is to bring about a satisfactory benefit to the on going process itself rather than to some future occasions because action research addresses a concrete problem which is located in an immediate situation (Somekh, 2006).

More important, in an action research study the process of examining problems is done systematically so that practitioners can evaluate, improve and influence decision-making and practice (Cohen et al., 2000). Having an influence on decision making brings into mind the usefulness of action research in helping people to practically solve their own educational problems during the course of their work (Elliott, 1991). It is worth mentioning that solving problems in certain specific settings does not mean that action research aims to contribute only to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation but also to the goals of social science by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable framework (Rapoport, 1970). This framework is flexible enough to allow action (change, improvement) and research (understanding, knowledge) to be achieved at the same time.

The cycles of action research provide a useful way of thinking which allows practices and understandings to be refined or changed over time. By refining their thoughts, researchers and participants act more intelligently and skillfully to co-construct knowledge (Dick, 2002). This knowledge emerges from a process of exploration of social interactions rather than solely from rational deduction (Freisen, 1995).

3.2.1 Concluding thoughts

The definitions of action research share a commitment towards encouraging practitioners to investigate their own practices and reflect on how to improve them. Given that, theories are validated through practice that relies on practical thinking (Shaik-Abdullah, 2005). Additionally, the definitions of action research point to the possibility for researching my own practices for

understanding my students' difficulties, and thinking critically of ways to improve my future practices.

According to Shaik-Abdullah (2005), the activity of researching one's own practice and coming up with plans to improve the teacher's performance and his/her students' performance suggests that the process is purposeful. Consequently, adopting action research would improve the quality of my teaching and learning because practitioners' experience with action research, so far, has shown that they have been able to cope up with the challenges and problems of practice and have carried through innovations in a reflective way.

3.3 Classroom based action research studies

Research suggests that a considerable number of teachers, who adopted the action research approach of enquiry, have made important contribution to the knowledge base of their profession. Many successful action research studies have improved students' and teachers' performances in different contexts. Many professional educators influenced the quality of learning of others and improved their performance by adopting action research (Altrichter et al., 2000).

Patrick (2007) carried out a six- month action research study on 12 children who were in their second schooling year in a large inner –city school that had an affiliation with the University of Newcastle, Australia. Recognizing that many of the beginning writers' performance was beyond the expected stage

levels , Patrick (2007) investigated how the implementation of the instructional strategy of cooperative learning could develop the writing skills of his beginners in his class. The case study used observation, anecdotal note-keeping, reflections in a journal: conferencing with children and recording interactions. The findings of the study suggested that when children work with a higher ability partner, peer tutoring is likely to occur in various ways. Additionally, the study also revealed that there was a positive correlation between being given a topic to write about with explicit teaching input and scaffolding, as well as when children were given a partner to write with, rather than self-selecting their own partner. The study, therefore, recommended that teachers should allow students at times to work with similar abilities in order to share strengths and jointly help.

Patrick (2007) argues that adopting action research helped to improve his professional practice. The researcher also emphasized that he had the intention to further problematize his own and other's theories on collaborative and cooperative learning and engage with them experientially with other teachers because action research became a way of life in their classrooms.

McKown and Barnett (2007) carried out a one-year action research study that aimed at improving reading comprehension among second and third grade students in a school located in a suburban village community in a Midwestern state, USA. The researchers used higher-order thinking skills such as predicting, making connections, visualizing, inferring, questioning, and summarizing. In classrooms, the teacher researchers modeled these

strategies through the think-aloud process and graphic organizers. This was followed by enabling the students to use these strategies through whole class, small group, and independent practice. In order to document any improvement or change in the students reading skills, the researchers used (1) Metacomprehension Strategy Index to measure the students' awareness of their strategic reading process before the strategies were introduced, (2) State Snapshots of Early Literacy Test to determine students' growth in reading comprehension, and (3) The Teacher Observation Checklist to gather data throughout the intervention.

The findings suggested that the use of teacher modeling, the teacher think-aloud process, and student practice of the reading comprehension strategies which included predicting, making connections, visualizing, inferring, questioning and summarizing had a positive impact on students' comprehension. The teacher researchers recommended a continuation of teacher modeling, the use of the teacher think-aloud process, and student practice of the reading comprehension strategies. They also had the intention to share their research results and their knowledge of the comprehension strategies with the administration and other teachers in their school.

Lantz et al. (2007) conducted an action research study to increase on-task behavior of kindergarten and fifth graders who were located in northern Illinois school district, Australia. The researchers found that their students showed several off-task behaviors which included disruptive behavior, incomplete work, inability to follow directions, and lack of motivation. In order to assess

the scope of this problem, the researchers used Listening Skills Assessment and On-Task Behavior Checklist. The study focused on attention to task at hand, listening and following directions, and active participation. The study also used focused instruction in listening skills, following directions, and motivational reward systems. The intervention period took ten weeks. The findings suggested that teaching the students how to listen, and what listening looked like helped the students to become more on task.

The findings revealed that students were most on-task during cooperative learning activities. Additionally, the study suggested that the fifth grade students were more motivated by the reward system than the kindergarten or first grade students. However, as the intervention progressed, they became less motivated by the reward systems. Overall, the researchers were pleased with their results that revealed that the overall percentage of on-task behavior increased. The researchers also emphasized that action research has taught them a great deal, it has broadened their horizons, and it has brought about more effective teaching practices.

3.3.1 Concluding thoughts

Having highlighted some of the successful classroom-based action research studies, I came to believe in the truthfulness of McNiff and Whitehead's (2006) argument that action research is "a form of enquiry that enables practitioners everywhere to investigate and evaluate their work" (p.7). The previous studies also confirmed my belief that action research is really meaningful, friendly and possible. It is meaningful because it allows "practitioners to investigate and

improve their practices” (Hendricks, 2006:3). It is friendly because it enables researchers to find a relevant area of interest, develop reflective practice, create positive change, and improve the lives of students (Mills, 2007). It is possible because a practitioner will likely stay interested and find the motivation to see the project to completion (Preisman, 2007).

It is also noticeable that the decision about what methods to use in response to a particular problem is dependent not only on what produces the best research results, but also on how they ultimately affect one's practice and understanding of it. It is also clear that practitioners in action research have an obligation to ensure trustworthiness by providing evidence of the value of the changes in their practice (Capobianco and Feldman, 2006). Additionally it seems that all the versions of practitioner research share the features of intentionality and systematicity. Intentionality refers to the deliberate nature of practitioner research in the sense that the research is carried out on purpose for the sake of solving a problematic area the researcher is facing in his context. As far as systematicity is concerned, it refers to organized ways of gathering information, keeping records of experiences and events and analyzing the information that has been collected and recorded (Cochran-Smith and Donnell, 2006).

It is also obvious that the defining feature of the classroom - based studies is the teacher educator's dual role as a practitioner and researcher. In all its variants, the researcher's professional context is the site for inquiry, and problems and issues within professional practice are the focus of investigation. Having said that, the boundaries between research and practice are often blur, developing and encouraging environment for reflection on and improvement of the practice of teacher education (Borko et al., 2007). However, in order to improve the practice, action research needs to adopt a systematic approach. The question is: Which approach should I follow?

3.4 Whitehead's (2000, 2006) and McNiff's (2002, 2006) Enquiry Approach

Bell (1999) points out that action research is an approach that proved to be particularly attractive to educators because of its practical, problem –solving emphasis. Amongst the action research approaches that I thought would help improve my performance was McNiff's and Whitehead's (2000) enquiry approach. Both Whitehead and McNiff (2006) have been passionately interested in issues concerning knowledge, especially the forms of knowledge and knowledge creation that action research embodies. They collaboratively developed many issues related to action research . The rationale behind choosing them as guides is because they address and raise very generative dynamic meaningful questions that can guide my research.

Whitehead (2000, pp.91-98) raises very meaningful ontological as well as epistemological questions that suggest that the nature of human knowledge and understanding can possibly be acquired by enquiring one's performance and striving to improve it. These questions are as follows:

- How do I improve my practice?
- How do I help my students improve the quality of their learning?
- How do I live my values more fully in my practice?

The above epistemological questions are influenced by the ontological stance that sees a researcher as part of other people's lives. This stance enables the researcher to adopt an insider, participative approach, which would involve him/her offering descriptions and explanations for how they, the researcher and the participants, are involved in mutual relationships of influence. This interaction is a process of testing what is already known and transferring it into something better (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006).

This ontological and epistemological stance also suggests that new knowledge can be constructed by interacting with others. This knowledge does not ignore the real-life vagaries of practice. Knowledge is created in a living process that requires openness to new possibilities and resistance to closure. Perceiving oneself as in living interaction with the world, and also involved with others in processes of knowledge creation, the researcher may see social purposes as finding ways of improving both their own processes of interaction and knowledge creation. Thus, it is meaningful for me to engage in systematic enquiries as I ask how I improve my understanding of my work,

and exercise that understanding as educational influence. Improving my practices carries the implication that I am seeking to understand my values as I give them life in my everyday work practices and living (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006).

The questions also suggest that I am learning while I am searching. They also suggest that I should not give up the theories I learnt before, but I try them provided that they are applicable in my context. Thus, the intention is not to fit the reality to the theory but to let the reality of the situation and the power of truth to confirm the practicality and workability of the theory in my context. The validity of the theory can be established by evaluating the impact of the action strategy, on the assumption that failure to achieve the intended impact would demonstrate that theoretical insight on which it was based is invalid (McNiff, 2000). This implicates that I should be open-minded. As Dewey put it, open-mindedness is:

an active desire to listen to more sides than one, to give heed to facts from whatever source they come from, to give full attention to alternative possibilities, to recognize the possibility of error even in the beliefs which are dearest to us" (Dewey, 1933, p.29).

Being open-minded implicates that what I know now may change into something better or worse. By doing so, constructing knowledge will be a continuous process that result in uncontrollable growth of knowledge as well as the improvement of my students' learning. My concern about improving my students' learning is a social value that gives my life hope and meaning and denying it in my practice will make my life meaningless and cause me to experience myself as a living contradiction (Kemmis, 2006).

In order to live my values, I should strive consistently to find ways in which I can improve my practice. Before I embark on original work of my own to improve my understanding, I need to make some effort to see if others have already undertaken such work in a way that I can draw on for my learning. Feeling that my practice is satisfactory is not valid until I show evidence to support my claims (McNiff, 2002). Once I get to where I want to be, I may imagine that there may be somewhere even better and I may have the capacity to transform the already obsolescent present into a more desirable future. The desire for always improving my performance is a real-life current practice; and the good of it lies in the striving, not necessarily in the arriving (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006).

The questions, raised by Whitehead (2000), also suggest that there is much emphasis on the role I can play as a practitioner. It is assumed that there is a possibility for me to take very systematic decisions to improve my teaching practices as well as my students' learning. This indicates that I can play effective roles in implementing change in my context. It is also assumed that I have some values to live for. These values are not subjective but they are socially accepted. The value that I want to create a motivating environment that can establish meaningful learning lies in the educational domain (Dorney, 2000). The value of successfully motivating my students has its epistemological implications that there is a possibility to articulate and explain the intellectual and practical processes involved in motivating them (Stringer, 2004).

By explaining the intellectual and practical processes means the articulation of what is learnt and what is done during the process of research. In order to transfer my good practices to other audiences who want to share with me my experience, I also need to generate evidence via those intellectual and practical processes. By establishing evidence, I can articulate my claim of knowledge. Articulating claims to knowledge means that I need to make accounts of my practice available to critical others in the attempt to reach a level of trustworthiness to the knowledge I claim (Whitehead and MaCniff, 2006). By explaining the systematic ways I went through in my self critical study, there would be more transparency that can enable other interested researchers to relate to these practices as long as they hold the same values and have similar teaching contexts (Capobianco and Feldman, 2006). For the sake of transparency, there is a need to make myself public since "I" am an instrument in this research.

3.4.1 Introducing self

Developing a personal voice within an academic writing may be perceived by some scholars a violation of objectivity and academic rigor. Wolcott (2001: 20) argues that still today there are academics and academic editions around which insist that scholarly work be reported in the third person. However, science may be better served by substituting "participants" for "we", or the "observer" for "I". By recognizing the critical nature of the observer's role and the influence of his or her subjective assessments in qualitative work, readers remain aware of this role and this presence. This is why writing in the first person for reporting qualitative research should be the rule than the

exception. The question of authorial voice is critical in qualitative research. Believing in Wolcott's (2001) argument that the researcher's role is ordinarily an integral part of a qualitative study, I wrote my descriptive accounts in the first person. Being the primary instrument of data collection, my experiences and perspectives are also very meaningful to the study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

This understanding of myself urges me to bring my values to the reader to maximize transparency and minimize any possibilities of misunderstandings. In the following paragraphs, I reflect on my past, my present and my future. These periods represent my role as a student, teacher and a researcher. The three stages show the growth of my potential development and by telling my story, I assume that other interested audiences can gain insight and closely identify with my values in life.

3.4.2 My past

I have experienced learning a language within the context of a foreign culture. Looking back on my experience in my school days in Egypt, I did not feel being passionate and enthusiastic to learn English; the English classes were not motivating; they were teacher-centered classes and most of them were grammar-focused. I could not develop my speaking and listening skills in an EFL environment where Arabic was the dominant language. I was able to memorize hundreds of words but I could not dare to speak good English for five minutes. I was wondering how is that teachers were not able to help me perform well and live up to my aspirations! However, during my first days in

Assuit University, Egypt, I got jealous of a very fluent confident female colleague who used to speak English as good as a native speaker. I wondered how she could come to that level of being able to communicate as smoothly as she did. I started to know that she used to listen to English tapes, read English stories and have some native friends overseas. Consequently, I decided to make the best use of what was available around me to improve my performance.

I started to speak English with four of my friends who shared with me the ambition to be fluent speakers. We started to read authentic materials, watch English movies and listen to English programs. The exam was not a priority in our agenda: Our main concern was how to be like a native speaker in terms of pronunciation and fluency. There were days when we used to hang around trying to find a tourist to speak with. I vividly recall an incident when I spent two hours in a very cool night for the opportunity of conversing with an Australian tourist who was going sightseeing in Luxor, Egypt. Realizing the importance of participation during my university sessions, I took strong initiatives in speaking English with my lecturers. In the third and the fourth year of university, I used to make many successful presentations that increased my self pride and confidence as an English speaker. Since then I have become, and I am still, a passionate and enthusiastic learner of English. I simply enjoyed all the wonderful opportunities for learning and using English.

I also remember other classmates who did not do well in their study. They were exam - oriented and they would hardly speak up their minds during lectures. They would feel anxious and under pressure if they were asked to present in English. They would always prefer to act as recipients rather than as participants. After graduating in 1993, the Faculty of Education, English department, Assuit, Egypt, I was always thinking of how I could make my English class as exciting as possible. Being an English teacher in Egypt (1993-1997), I had the chance to teach in different teaching and learning contexts and conduct courses for different levels of students (primary, intermediate, secondary and university).

Being aware of the importance of continuous professional development, I joined in- service training courses (1993, 1995), conducted by the Ministry of Education, Cairo, Egypt. Getting a contract as a teacher in Al Rowad School, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1998, was a very rich experience in my life. Being one of the most prestigious schools in the Kingdom, Al Rowad administration put much emphasis on teachers' training. I was lucky enough to join a one –year teaching methods course conducted by the British Council, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The training course included practical sessions where the British trainers would supervise our performance in the classes and there were also theoretical sessions that focused on pedagogical issues related to innovative teaching such as critical thinking and inductive learning.

These training sessions confirmed my belief that in order to be good at English, students should use English inside and outside the classroom. However, there were some social values held by the parents and students that I could hardly change. Some people would consider learning a foreign language a threat to their children's identity. Others would go so far and wonder how their students would learn the language of the disbelievers. They think that learning the language of the Americans and the British would be interpreted as a form of resembling the disbelievers in the way they speak. The most challenging barrier was that students in their EFL environment did not feel the need to learn English because Arabic is the only language for communication. After working in Saudi Arabia for nine years, I came to believe that it was high time for a change. It was one of my students in Direct - English Teaching Center, Riyadh, who sparked the idea of furthering my study in Malaysia.

3.4.3 My present

Coming to Malaysia was a real chance to widen the scope of my knowledge and enrich my experience in both my social and academic skills. While I was staying in Kuala Lumpur, I was offered a job in the Saudi School, Jalan Ampang, Damai. I was recruited to teach primary - six students whose age was 12 years old. They came from different Arab countries, bringing with them different experiences and values. As I mentioned in Chapter One, in spite of the fact that the Arab students were living in an ESL environment, the school followed the same syllabus that was designated for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which is for an EFL environment.

There were four non Saudi PhD candidates who were also recruited with me. The presence of the PhD candidates established an atmosphere of continuous reflection on what was going in our classes and there was a common ground among us that we felt the need to develop ourselves professionally and proceed with our PhD research. During the first five months in the school, my primary - six students complained about the unsuitability of the textbook and expressed their desire for more motivating practices. I wondered: "if the development of a motivating literate classroom is fundamental to my own values and philosophy of education, why cannot I show the impact of it on the well-being and learning of the children I teach?, How do I research this in my classroom?, How could I provide learners with the capacity to take delight in and to some degree feel uplifted by their own learning?". For the first time in my professional career, I found myself in a position in which my role was not tidy and I was able to bring to the position my values, perceptions and experience (McDonough and McDonough, 1997).

The school administration was open to any modifications and adjustments that would maximize students' performance and live up to parents' expectations. In that stage I got much affected by the meaningful questions raised by Whitehead as I mentioned before. I started to wonder: "How do I improve my practice?" and "How do I help my students improve the quality of their learning?" "I" inspires me that my problems are my own and "I" can solve my own problems. In other words, there is a chance to carry out a research related to my teaching context (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000).

The self-conscious use of the living 'I' is very empowering as it places me at the centre of the research process and emphasizes the significance of subjective accounts for improving my educational practice. This highlights the fact that the 'I' is excluded from most forms of traditional research as historically subjective knowledge has been viewed as lacking objectivity. But, my research perspective focuses more on my 'internal enquires' as a practitioner rather than 'external enquires' (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002).

While external enquiries help the researcher to have a distant view on the scene of the research, my internal enquires demand to gain access to deeper levels, to develop a certain rapport with my participants, to win their trust in order to discover the meanings that they attach to their behavior (Measor and Woods, 1984). My intention to improve my performance for my professional growth and the benefit of my students contains a social intent. Increasing my awareness and my readiness to be self critical is going to influence my students for the better. I am aware of the fact that when I come to improve my students ' practices, I should consider the fact that they are different in terms of their readiness levels, learning preferences, and interests. Feeling the responsibility for addressing this diversity of needs and interests is a value that forms my vision to the future as a chance for professional growth as a researcher practitioner.

Pondering over how I can address these individual differences, I am much inspired by Tomlinson's (2005) reflections on her experience with her English teacher. Tomlinson reflects on her experience as follows:

I do remember my English teacher's name. He was Mr. Arnold. He was a fairly new teacher ... he worked hard to know us as individual students and to make the class work for us as individual students. He met during class with small groups of students who needed help with an assignment. He connected our various interests and personality traits to literature we read. He picked out books for individuals' book reports, dignifying us with that bit of personal attention. He gave careful thought to student groupings and told us what he thought would make the class work for us. Mr. Arnold somehow learned that I had a spiral notebook in which I copied lines from books that seemed lovely or important or funny to me. I didn't understand that I was developing a love affair with language, but he understood. Many times during that year, he gave me personal projects that involved using or adding to the notebook. He saw that I needed to learn at a different pace and even in different directions than did some of my peers in his class (p.13).

Reflecting on her experience, Tomlinson (2005) suggests ways that can help me cater for the diversity of my learners in a classroom . Tomlinson (ibid) suggests that it is very useful to have a survey on interest, attitude and learning preferences of the students at the outset of the year. She further argues that it is very useful to use small, teacher-led groups in which teachers can hear from students who get lost in the larger group, re-teach important content in alternate ways for students who continue to struggle, or extend learning for students who learn quickly or who know the content prescribed for the lesson. Addressing the individual needs of my students inspires me how I can exploit this diversity of interests and abilities to foster social skills that can enhance cooperation among these individuals. In other

words, students, regardless of their individual differences, need to integrate with each other to form a friendly environment that is conducive to learning and this is a value I need my students to live. McGroarty (1996) contends that when membership in a specific linguistic or ethnic group has relevance for language study as a part of the curriculum, it is important to examine group as well as individual motivations which contribute to initial choice, persistence, and success in language study. Also the intergroup relationships characteristic of the social context of language instruction are likely to affect the success of various groups of students differentially. Addressing my students' needs should not be my responsibility alone.

Action research should essentially be done with my students and not on my students (Shaik-Abdullah, 2005). Thus, I expect that my students should also show readiness to improve their learning as well. This understanding is based also on the argument that motivation is a reciprocal process: a teacher acts as a motivating factor and students are expected to respond as potential motivated agents (Gardner, 1985).

Gardner (1985) elaborates and points out that an interesting, devoted skilled teacher with a good command of the language, an exciting curriculum, carefully constructed lesson plans, and meaningful evaluation procedures will promote higher levels of motivation. However, the actual success of this instruction depends upon how it is received by students. Some students will profit from the high quality of instruction more than others because of the degree of persistence and effort they exert.

Given that, there is a similarity between the concept of motivation and the nature of action research in my teaching context. Motivation includes two sides: the motivating and the motivated. Action research suggests that the teacher can improve his/her performance but the decisions taken in action research are shared with the participants and are not taken in isolation. The link between the concept of motivation and the action research approach is that both require reciprocal voluntarily democratic interaction between the motivating and the motivated, the researcher and the participants. By doing so, students "take responsibility for themselves, not just as the recipients of the education and schooling we gave them, but as free and equal subjects capable of speech and action" (Kemmis, 2006:467).

So in my teaching context, I do not consider only how "I" as a teacher help "you" as students but I would also expect to see an increasing transfer of responsibility to the learner for decision making as my students construct knowledge and proficiency in a given sphere of activity. In this respect, I can give my students ample chance to "determine their own roles in improving the process" (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1981, p.44). Enabling my students to play a role in improving their performance emphasizes the democratic nature of my action research. Wolcott (2001) highlights this point as follows:

Among the more self consciously "scientific" qualitative types, researchers typically desert their subjects at the last minute, leaving folks and findings to fend for themselves, seemingly untainted by human hands and most challenges-posed by qualitative approaches is to treat fellow humans as people rather than objects of study, to regard ourselves as humans who conduct research among rather than on them (p. 20).

McNiff (2002) further emphasizes that the dynamic nature of conducting research makes the researcher begin with an individual's question, 'How do 'I' improve my work?' However, when this enquiry becomes meaningful to other participants, the question then changes to 'How do we improve our work?'(p.10). Pedagogically, encouraging learners to reflect on their learning generates enthusiasm and encourages students to expend more effort and time on language activities. The following cycles, adopted from McNiff (2002, p.11), illustrate the four stages that would take an action researcher through his/her enquiry:

- Identify an area of practice to be investigated;
- Imagine a solution;
- Implement the solution;
- Evaluate the solution
- Change the practice in the light of evaluation."

Pondering over McNiff's cycles, it is noticeable that action research approach is spiral in nature. These cycles start with finding out the reality of the learning context and digging out for the roots of the problem. Investigating the problematic area is considered a 'fact finding stage" which is not confined only to the beginning stage of the study, but also at every stage, when it is necessary (Shaik-Abdullah, 2005). The first cycle is important for me because I should not base my work on prior assumptions about students' interests and motivation without making efforts to discover the potential factors that shape motivation in my teaching context (McGroarty, 1996).

Once the fact-finding cycle manages to vividly bring the factors that are operating in my learning context into clear focus, the reflection stage starts. In the reflection stage, I imagine a solution and look for alternative practices. In this stage I review literature related to the problematic area in my class. Once I get the empirical evidence that the alternative practices may work out in my teaching context, the implementation stage starts. McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996) argue that this implementation stage is considered the center of my research:

Action is the centre of your action research...action to which you, the researcher, are committed by your personal and professional values, action that is informed by your careful considerations about its appropriateness, and action that is intentional and undertaken by you to achieve the objectives you have set (p.71)

To make sure that the action taken is effective in overcoming the problematic area or not, the new practices should be evaluated. In this evaluating cycle, I observe my students, take their feedback through a survey, conduct a focus group -interview, ask them to write me accounts of their experiences and consult my critical friends. In the evaluating cycles my students and critical friends act as witnesses, helpers, evaluators and supporters. They witness how the research process takes place, they ensure that I give a good account of what happens, they provide support and criticism as appropriate and they provide praise, sympathy and encouragement (McNiff, Lomax, and Whitehead, 1996). To claim that the research was successful, practices will have changed, thinking will have been modified and professional development furthered (Bell, 1999: 221).

More important, if their lives (research participants) are better, the research may be evaluated as effective (McNiff, Lomax, and Whitehead, 1996). However this being action research, I am aware of the argument that these cycles could involve venturing into other areas that I did not expect at the start (Shaik - Abdullah, 2005). Taking this fact into consideration, I should address my particular professional problem, implement a solution and continue on as further problems that could arise. The following figure shows the first cycle in my action research:

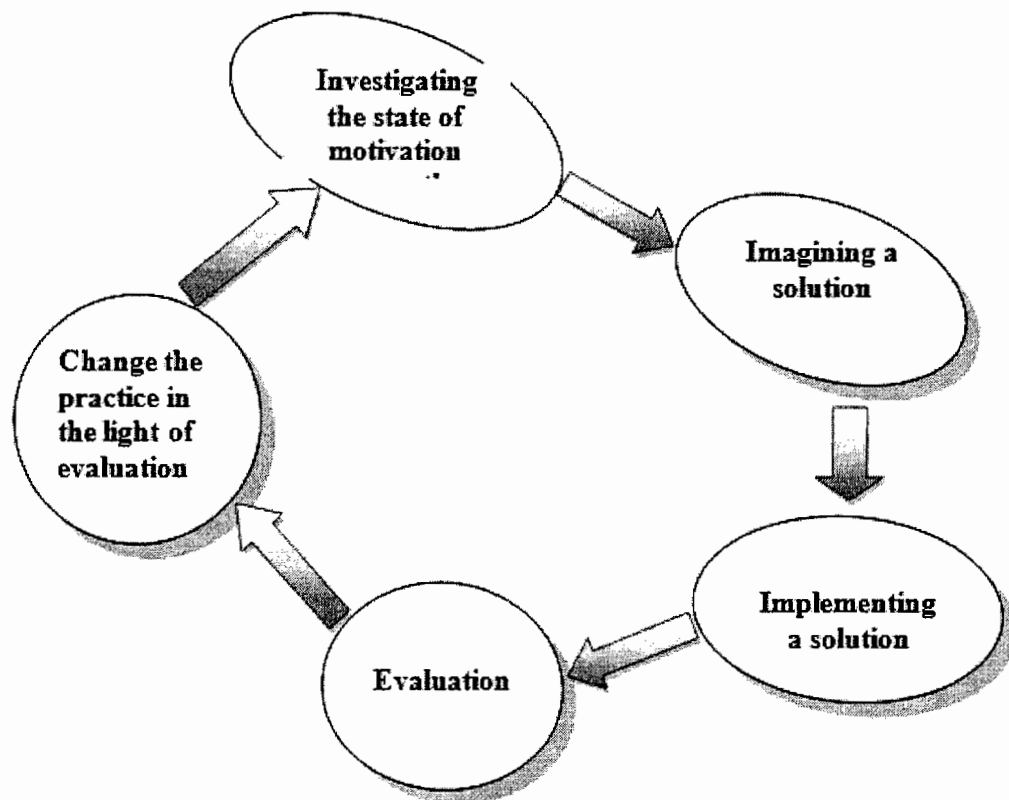


FIG: 3. 1 General framework for the first cycle

3.5 The research context

The problematic area was based on a school setting. Thus, the context and the setting from which data were collected was the school setting. This means that I depended on the primary data collection since I was in charge of interviewing as well as observing my students myself. I was aware of being trapped in making my prejudices interfere in interpreting the data while I was collecting and selecting them. To avoid the risks of being subjective in collecting my data, I was firstly concerned about obtaining data that were based on factual observation in the sense that they were unambiguous and were accessible and open to cross-checking by others, the result of which would be consistent with my own analysis and findings. Secondly, I was also concerned about how this data would bear scrutiny by others. Additionally, I was making use of my professional experience as well as relevant theories to interpret this data (Altrichter et al., 2000).

The Saudi school was established in 1991 under the supervision of the Ministry of Education of Saudi Arabia. The school is located in Damai, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The school is a two-storey building with eighteen classes which are well air-conditioned and white-painted. In spite of their small sizes, each class is equipped with a TV set and a computer. There is one library room and smart room in the second floor. There is also a single small playground where only boys are allowed to play some sports. The teachers at the school had an average of 8 years of experience, 15 teachers had a bachelor's degree and 6 teachers had a master's degree. The teaching staff at the school was 30% Saudi and 70% of the staff were from different Arab

countries especially, Egypt, Sudan, Palestine and Jordan. The administrative staff at the school consisted of one Saudi principal and his Assistant. The support staff consisted of several office workers, one secretary, two computer technicians, one librarian, one accountant and two custodial staff. The teaching staff at this school consisted of 21 full-time classroom teachers.

3.5.1 The participants

The total number of the participants amounted to 23 students who included 16 males and 7 females. Most of the students were about the same age (12 years old). Their parents were well educated and most of them were bachelor degree holders. Their Mother tongue was Arabic and most of them came from an EFL environment where Arabic is the dominant language in the daily activities .Some students came to Malaysia with their parents who were seeking opportunities of furthering their post graduate studies or looking for a better life.

As I mentioned in Chapter One, there were three types of students in my classroom. Type One refers to high achievers, Type Two refers to reluctant learners, and Type Three refers to low achievers. Most of these students have been living in Malaysia for more than three years. Being in an ESL environment, many parents used to enroll their students in afternoon English centers or they would recruit English tutors to teach their students at home. The following table describes the participants in detail:

STUDENT REFERENCE	TYPE	GENDER	COUNTRY	YEARS of RESIDENCE	PROFICENCY LEVEL
Student A	3	Male	Yemen	3	Low
Student B	2	Male	Sudan	5	intermediate
Student C	1	Male	German	4	Advanced
Student D	2	Male	Egypt	6	intermediate
Student E	1	Male	Syria	6	Advanced
Student F	3	Male	K.S.A	1	Low
Student G	3	male	K.S.A	3	Low
Student H	1	male	Sudan	6	Advanced
Student I	1	Female	Libya	6	Advanced
Student J	3	female	Yemen	6	Low
Student K	3	Female	Egypt	7	Low
Student L	2	Female	Egypt	5	Intermediate
Student M	2	male	K.S.A	3	Intermediate
Student N	2	male	K.S.A	3	Intermediate
Student O	3	male	K.S.A	3	Low
Student P	3	Female	Yemen	3	Low
Student Q	1	Female	Sudan	6	Advanced
Student R	1	Male	Sudan	6	Intermediate
Student S	3	Male	Syria	6	Low
Student T	2	Male	K.S.A	3	Advanced
Student U	3	Female	K.S.A	3	Low
Student V	2	male	Malaysia	--	Advanced
Student W	3	Female	K.S.A	1	Low

Table 3.1 The participants' specifications.

3.5.2 Human Subjects Clearance

The school administration was cooperative enough to allow me to start investigating my problematic area in my class .The school principal was much convinced that the textbook, which the primary–six students were studying, was not at the right level and it would be a good idea if there were any possible alternative supporting programs that could cater for the needs of these students .The principal was also much encouraged to take an action when I informed him about the complaints of some of the parents who were very worried that their children would lose interest in learning English because of the unsuitability of the textbook. Being convinced of the importance of

taking an action to increase students' motivation, the principal kindly gave me a verbal permission to carry out the action research cycles. Believing in the administration's role in making decisions, I was keen to involve the principal and some times any official visitors to give me their feedback on possible alternative practices. Additionally, believing in the importance of parents' potential feedback about their children's learning context, I was also keen on acknowledging them with what was going on in our class. This happened through asking their children to tell their parents what we were doing in our class. Later, I asked the parents to write me their impressions about our practices. The parents' feedback was always a supportive factor as well as a critical element in the sense that they acted as witnesses of the impact of this research on their children.

3.5.3 Trustworthiness

Because qualitative research occurs in a specific setting, it is extremely difficult to replicate studies. Consequently, being a qualitative researcher, I am not concerned with broad generalizations. However, a well-organized, complete persuasive presentation of procedures and results enhances external reliability and external validity (Wiersma, 2000). Given that, Dadds and Hart (2001) advocate the advantage of controlled judgement for some practitioner-researchers to create their own methodological path through their research. They also emphasize the fact that enough attention should be paid to standards of validity and integrity in the choices to be made.

Dadds and Hart (2001) further argue that "we need to ensure as far as possible that our pedagogical approaches match the message that we seek to communicate" (p. 169). In this respect, Reason (2003) argues that:

Quality in inquiry comes from awareness of and transparency about choices open to you and that you make at each stage of the inquiry...Quality comes from asking with others, what is important in this situation? How well are we doing? How can we show others how well we have done? (p.32)

Given that, action research meets the criteria of a scientific research because it can provide evidences on the accuracy of the findings of an inquiry. This accuracy can be obtained by addressing issues like trustworthiness, credibility, and transferability which all contribute to high quality research (Stringer, 2004). The process of identifying a problematic area, imaging a possible solution, trying it out, evaluating it, and changing practice can be possibly turned into a scientifically acceptable action research process provided that I can say why I want to investigate my issue and express my hopes not as abstract objectives but as goals that match with my values (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 2000).

In order to obtain a valid understanding I have to turn the data I collect into evidence that can act as a witness to whether I could live in the direction of what I hoped to achieve or not. The search for valid understanding means that there is evidence that the research really does the things it claims to do and the results are to be believed (McNiff1, 2002).

This evidence is likely to inspire other teachers to also improve their practices provided that their context is relevant. Action research process can construct valid meanings that can be obtained through a democratic voluntarily dialogue among the researcher and other concerned members in the professional community. This communicative dialogue gives legitimacy to the meanings and understandings constructed by the participants in their communicative space (Kemmis, 2006). For maximizing the degree of the trustworthiness of the findings; Creswell (2003:196) suggests the following strategies:

- Prolonged time,
- Triangulation,
- Member checking,
- Using thick description,
- Clarifying bias,
- Presenting negative or discrepant information,
- Using peer debriefing, and external auditor.

3.5.4 Prolonged engagement

I spent more than 33 months for the whole study. The first five months were characterized by being informal and unscientific in the sense that I was observing my students without thoroughly and thickly documenting what was going on in my teaching context. However, I could observe apparent patterns of demotivational behaviors that ignited my desire to think of a scientific approach that could address them professionally. Deciding to have a scientific approach to make my teaching context more transparent to other potential

practitioners, I started to follow some scientific procedures that guarantee trustworthiness of my teaching practices in my context.

These scientific procedures included having a thick description of what my students were doing in and outside my class in the school environment, surveying my students' opinions, interviewing them, asking them to write their own diaries, writing my own diaries, discussing with my critical friends what was going on in my classroom, and reviewing literature to see if there was any relevant explanation for what the data suggest in my context. These procedures took me more than 26 months in order to get a wealth of data whose accuracy was enhanced by being triangulated, analyzed and transferred as we will see in the following chapter.

3.5.5 Triangulation

Having wealth of data, I needed to probe them meticulously before writing sensibly. I wanted to make sure that my findings were accurate. Triangulation was one of the means that I used to establish the credibility of my findings. According to Patton (1990), there are four basic types of triangulation: data triangulation which is concerned with the use of a variety of data sources; the investigator triangulation-the use of different evaluators; theory triangulation; using multiple perspectives to interpret data: and methodological triangulation, which employs a variety of methods to study a problem. Denzin (1978: 308) contends that the basic feature of triangulation is having a combination of two or more different research strategies in the study of the same empirical units. Through this triangulation process, the researcher searches for convergence

of information on a common finding or concept". I used methodological triangulation by using different methods of gathering the same kind of information to help me check the consistency of the findings. In order to determine the consistency in students' evaluative feedback on my teaching practices, I used interviews, informal conversations, a questionnaire and students' diaries comments . This enabled me to avoid misunderstandings and reduce inadequacies in one type of data (Stake, 1995).

3.6 Data collection tools

Because the objective of my first cycle was to identify the motivational factors in my teaching context , there were five motivational factors that guided my focus : attitudes, effort, desire, anxiety and orientations. These factors were identified after studying the findings of Gardner (1985, 2001, 2003, and 2005). However I was also keen on observing other issues that could emerge in my teaching context. To explore these factors, I used four instruments: Participant observation, the mini AMTB, interview, my diary and my students' diaries. Using different data-collection procedures enabled me to increase the plausibility of the case being studied. The triangulation process also helped me assess the truthfulness of the data.

3.6.1 Participant observation

Fraenkel and Walten (2006) argue that "certain kinds of research questions can be best be answered by observing how people act or how things look."(p. 449). Cohen et al. (2003) also points out that "the most widely employed and properly the most generally understood and acceptable method of personality assessment is some form of observation"(p.342). Based on the above arguments, I planned to be an overt participant – observer. I was trying to generate the data from the perspective of the individuals being studied (Wiersma, 2000).

My active involvement in the situation provided insights that are "unobtainable by other means" (Cohen et al., 2003:243). Being a participant observer, I gained first hand information about my students' difficulties, actions and behaviors in relation to my own teaching practices. I was keen on observing any motivational behaviors in my classroom. I was also open to let the elements in my setting "speak for themselves" in the way a qualitative observation allows (Cohen et al., 2000:306). Qualitative observation drew me into the "phenomenological complexity of the participants' world" where connections, correlations, and causes can be observed as they unfold overtime (Adler and Adler, 1994:378).

Reviewing literature pertinent to motivation, I assumed that it would be practical for me to observe some motivational behaviors whose presence or absence could help me identify the state of motivation among my students. These motivational behaviors included students' interest in learning, their anxiety, and their effort in trying to participate in my class. I also took into consideration if there would be any potential differences between female and male participants in the previous defined areas. Focusing on limited number of specific behaviors did not mean that I would not be open to observe any other emergent motivational or demotivational factors.

Literature on action research suggests that there are various approaches to the process of observation. These approaches included systematic descriptive / narrative or technological recording (Simpson and Tuson, 1997). I was able to make use of all the mentioned approaches: Technological recording (e.g. video taping of lessons) provided me with permanent data and a true, unbiased version of events. The video taping enabled me to capture both the verbal and non verbal behavior of the students. To achieve this purpose, I used a BenQ camera with 5.0 mega pixel. I used to put the camera in one of the front corners of the class where recording can be appropriate . Sometimes, I would ask one of my students to record. After two sessions, the participants became familiar with being recorded. Systematic observations, based on motivational factors carefully identified in advance, enabled me to have an objective account of the teaching context since they were less likely to be biased (Croll, 1986).

Descriptive/narrative recording involved making notes on the whole context allowing behavior contexts and the sequence of events to be recognized. Such a method helped me look in detail at the salient observed themes. I tried to have a thick description of the whole surrounding context in terms of who was involved, where the event took place, when the event took place and how the event took place. As Denzin (1989) states:

Thick description goes beyond mere fact and surface appearances. It presents detail, context, emotion and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another. Thick description evokes emotionality and self-feelings. It inserts history into experience. It establishes the significance of an experience, or the sequence of events, for the person or persons in question. In thick description, the voices, feelings, actions and meanings of interacting individuals are heard. (p. 83)

Gardner (1985, 2005) points out that motivated individuals express effort in attaining a goal, they show persistence, and they attend to the tasks necessary to achieve the goals. They have a strong desire to attain their goal, and they enjoy the activities necessary to achieve their goal. The implication of such description is that while I am observing my students, I can consider these potential integrative behaviors in their performance.

3.6.2 Interview

The second instrument I used to collect data was interviewing my participants. The interview was an important way to verify or refute the impressions I obtained through observation. I was aware that interviewing is the most important data collection technique a qualitative researcher possesses (Fetterman as cited in Fraenkel and Walten, 2006).

I adopted semi-structured focus group interview because it was an appropriate method to obtain individuals' views (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). Employing semi-structured interview helped me understand the attitudes of the participants toward the teaching practices and their impact on their motivational behaviors questions. Additionally, I was open to address issues which I might not have thought of in advance but emerged as the interviews progressed. The types of questions I raised included opinion, feeling and behavior questions. I tried to reach some understanding about students' attitudes, anxiety, interests, and expectancy. I referred to the participants' comments on each question I asked. I was also keen on showing respect to the participants by listening carefully their opinions. I did not interrupt them while they were speaking, making questions clear, not making insensitive comments, being natural and developing an appropriate rapport with them . I used semi-structured focus group interview because an individual within a group can be encouraged to express him/herself.

Gall , Borg and Gall (2003) point out that researchers, using focus groups, are finding that the interactions among participants stimulate them to state feelings, perceptions, and beliefs that they would not express if interviewed individually. Compared to individual interviews, Williams and Katz (2001) point out that focus groups elicit a multiplicity of views and emotional processes within a group context. Furthermore, when used correctly, focus groups can generate rich data that can facilitate decision making and provide useful information for the development, evaluation, and modification of curriculum, learning tools, and programs.

To make sure that my participants understood my questions, I carried out the interviews in Arabic. I also tried to ask the same question in different ways. I also asked the participants to repeat an answer or a statement when there was some doubt about the completeness of a remark. Additionally I avoided leading and dichotomous questions; instead, open-ended questions were used. Furthermore, I avoided asking more than one question a time. Believing that a tape recorder was an indispensable part of my research, I used it to record as naturally as possible what the participants had to say. This is why I was keen on recording direct quotations of students' personal perspectives.

In order to enable students to have enough chance to voice out their opinions, I planned to have 3 students a group. Each group was randomly chosen. However, I intentionally put the females together into two separate groups so that they would not feel shy to talk in the presence of other boys. Every interview took 15 minutes. The interviews were carried on different days. After each interview, I used to transcript it and translate it into English.

There were also times when my students and I had informal conversation to voice out their opinions about our practices in the classroom. This informal conversation used to take place during break times. The conversations addressed if there were any interesting things my students liked in our storytelling classes. They also addressed if the parents at home were aware of what we were doing or not. Additionally, students talked about the types of difficulties they faced.

These informal conversations enabled me to interact with my students "in the most trusted way possible-without any explicit authority role" (Fine and Sandstorm, 1988 as cited in Marshall and Rossman, 1999:17).

3.6.3 Mini-AMTB

Believing that a questionnaire is a very useful device in registering the perception, feelings, opinions, attitudes and motivation of the individuals, I used the mini-AMTB of Gardner's (1985) Socio Educational Model in order to measure the components of the integrative motive. It is worth mentioning that the original AMTB contains 130 items. I believed that it would be too long for my children to respond to this long questionnaire. This is why I used the mini-AMTB which included 11 subtests. The major conceptual variables and the subtests designed to assess (1) attitudes toward the learning situation that is measured by the participants' evaluation of the teacher and the course, (2) integrativeness which is measured by students' interest in foreign languages and their attitudes toward the language community, (3) motivation which is measured by motivational intensity, desire to learn the language, and attitudes toward learning the language, (4) language anxiety that is measured by language class anxiety and language use anxiety, and (5) instrumentality which is measured by instrumental orientation.

Previous research with versions of the mini-AMTB has demonstrated highly acceptable levels of validity. For example, in one study, Gardner et al. (1985) tested volunteers from an introductory Psychology course on 8 scales from a regular form of the AMTB and the corresponding mini-AMTB items. Correlations between the regular scales and their corresponding mini-AMTB

items were significant with a median value of .575. At the same time, correlations between the scales within each measuring format were comparable to each other, with medians of .220 for the mini-AMTB and .375 for the regular AMTB format. Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) also used all 11 scales on students registered in an introductory French course. The study revealed similar results. The correlations between corresponding scales using a Likert format and the mini-AMTB were all significant and reasonably high with a median of .720. Furthermore, correlations between the 11 scales within each format were comparable with medians of 0.160 for the mini-AMTB and 0.195 for the Likert form.

Masgoret, Bernaus and Gardner (2001) also used the mini-AMTB with 499 Spanish children in Spain, ranging in age from 10 to 15 years. The participants in this investigation were taking part in a 4-week summer program in English. A 17-item mini-AMTB was constructed to measure the major aggregate constructs from the AMTB. The relationship between each of the aggregate measures and an objective measure of English achievement demonstrated significant correlations with Integrativeness ($r = .13$, $p < .01$), Attitudes toward the Learning Situation ($r = .3$, $p < .01$), Motivation ($r = .25$, $p < .0001$), and Language Anxiety ($r = -.28$, $p < .0001$).

Additionally, Tennant and Gardner (2004) used a computerized version of the mini-AMTB to measure the effect of computer-assisted language learning on the state of motivation and anxiety of first-year French classes. The students participated in a 10 - session independent-study multimedia lab. They

completed the computerized mini-AMTB at the beginning of the fifth and tenth sessions and evaluated their state motivation and anxiety at these times. The results revealed that the relationships among the components of integrative motivation (i.e., integrativeness, attitudes toward the learning situation, and motivation) during both sessions mirrored those obtained in other studies using the standard AMTB.

In a recent study, Bernaus and Gardner (2008) investigated language teaching strategies, as reported by teachers and students, and the effects of these strategies on students' motivation and English achievement. The participants consisted of 31 English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers and their students ($N = 694$) in Catalonia, Spain. The students were tested on their attitudes, motivation, and language anxiety with the mini-Attitude Motivation and completed objective tests of English achievement. Path analysis indicated that integrativeness, attitudes toward the learning situation, and instrumental orientation predicted the motivation to learn English and that motivation was a positive predictor of English achievement. Based on the validity of the use of the mini AMTB, as mentioned above; I used it in my study to measure the five motivational factors of the integrative motive as follows:

1- Integrativeness is measured by three items:

Item	Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
1	I learn English in order to be able to interact with members of the second language community.			
2	I am interested in learning English.			
3	I like to deal with the second language community.			

2- Attitudes toward the learning situation is measured by two items:

Item	Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
4	I like my English instructor.			
5	I like my English course.			

3- Motivation is measured by three items:

Item	Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
6	I work hard at learning English.			
7	I have a desire to learn English.			
8	Learning English is important for me.			

4- Instrumental orientation is measured by one item:

Item	Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
9	I think learning English is good for practical purposes such as to improve my occupational opportunities.			

5- Language anxiety is measured by two items

Item	Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
10	I feel calm in my second language class.			
11	I feel calm when speaking English outside the class.			

Because the students were at different levels of proficiency in English, the questionnaire items were translated in Arabic. There was a rater who checked the accuracy of the translation by using the back translation method. There was some ambiguity about some words like the meaning of (working hard) and (anxiety). So I had to explain to the rater that the meaning of working hard refers to how much attention a student pays during a class, how much persistence a student has and how he/she keeps doing his or her assignments. Also my critical friends advised me to confine the scaling to a three-scale questionnaire as it is shown above. I am aware that the most common scale is 1 to 5. Often the scale will be (1) strongly disagree,(2) disagree,(3) not sure,(4) agree and (5) strongly agree. However, the rationale behind that we were afraid that children at this age would not be able to place their point of view on a scale greater than three.

Before distributing the questionnaire, I explained the purpose and different terms of the questionnaire. During the administration of the questionnaire, I was present physically to monitor and also to clarify to the respondents whatever item they did not understand. I found out that some children needed some explanation for the meaning of anxiety. Although it was translated in Arabic, still the students need some explanation about this construct. So I mentioned to them how confident they would feel in or outside the classroom when they would use English. Respondents were given ten minutes to complete the questionnaire and were informed that the information they gave would help me to modify my teaching practices. So the purpose of the question was made clear that it was mainly meant to gather data that could guide us for a better performance.

3.6.4 Research diary

According to Altrichter et al. (2000), research diary is a very valuable research instrument. First, it can be a companion to the researcher's personal development along the research. Second, it can link investigative and innovative activities. Third, it can document the development of perceptions and insights across the different stages of the research process. Fourth, it can make visible both the successful and unsuccessful routes of learning and discovery so that the researcher can revisit and subject them to analysis. In the same vein, Bell (1999) points out that diaries, in addition to being question-generating devices, can also be an approximation to the method of participant observation and thus produces more worthwhile data by having thick description of recoded incidents.

Bell (1999) further illustrates that thick description involves a description of the activity or discussion recorded in the diarists' own categories, the time of the activity, and the location of the activity and description of whatever logistics are entailed by the activity.

Given that, it seemed useful for me to make use of my diaries to document and describe the critical incidents that took place along my action research. I was aware that diaries could consume much time, but I was much encouraged by the wealth of interesting data that I could gather. I was also aware that diary writing can be interpretive, descriptive, on multiple dimensions, and sometimes unstructured which would make it difficult for me to analyze the data and separate feelings from facts (Holly, 1984). In order to avoid these challenges, I wrote my diaries regularly after each lesson, I expanded my daily diaries by relevant scenes, experiences and ideas that could provide a full meaningful picture, and I used thick description that could provide contextual information, such as time, location, participants' mood, and whatever seems important for the research (Altrichter et al., 2000).

In his essay, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture", Geertz (1973) points out that if someone winks at us without a context; we can not determine for sure what this wink means. It might mean the person is attracted to us, that they are trying to communicate secretly, that they understand what you mean, or anything. As the context changes, the meaning of the wink changes. Geertz (1973) further argues that all human behavior is like this. Therefore, there is a difference between a thin description, which

describes only the wink itself, and a thick description, which explains the context of the practices and discourse within a society. In order to enable others relate to the findings of this study and make an informed decision, Patton (1990) argues that thick description of the experiences and identity development of the participants as well as the definitive exposition of the researcher should be provided.

In order to obtain that thick description, I was aware that the details would be more important than the summary, the particular would be more than the general, and the account of an activity would be more than its evaluation. This is why I gathered all information that would help to develop a more profound understanding of a situation such as considering the student who was involved in the incident, the time and location of the incident, and the surrounding factors during the occurrence of the incident. The objectivity of this description was enhanced by reading it back to my students. Asking them if I was wrong or right in what I encoded and wrote. I also shared my diaries with my critical friends whose discussion gave me deeper insights into the fine texture of the incidents.

By doing so, I was able to understand the implications of the context and make a difference between my description and the interpretation of the data on one hand, and I was also able to provide meaningful context for other practitioners who wish to share with me my findings on the other hand. My diaries in this study were both functional (as vehicles for self-evaluation, awareness of strengths and weaknesses, and documentation of progress)

and educational/developmental (Because all classroom activities were transformed from daily routines into invitations to learn) and they had an impact on the academic and personal lives of the participants because they empowered me to improve their learning conditions.

As for students' diary, I encouraged them to write me on a daily basis every thing they would feel in my class, every thing they would do outside class that was related to our teaching and learning practices. These diaries enabled my students to voice out their feelings and thoughts in a written form. They also enabled me to conclude whether or not my assumptions and observations were in line with students' diaries or not.

3.6.5 Peer debriefing

Wallace (1998) argues that the importance of articulating our ideas to an audience can be motivating and can provide the basis for further reflection. In this respect, Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 308) point out that peer debriefing is "a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind."

Any data I gathered could be interpreted following established theories, and when established theories could not explain what took place, I had to resort to an interpretation that emerged from the data. To ensure that the interpretation I made was not based on my own biases and desires to show that improvement had taken place, I sought the help of my critical friends so that we would be able to agree or disagree about whether my interpretation were justified (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002).

There were two critical friends. One of them was Mohamed Mai who was doing PhD in curriculum design. He was also a teacher in the same school. The other friend was Mrs. Afaf, a teacher in the same school, who has already finished her master in education. Her master was about the role of the smart board on motivating students to learn. It was an advantage for me as my critical friends were keeping abreast with issues pertinent to classroom teaching and learning. Therefore, they were able to explore issues, and relate these to their own research experiences. I had to be extra-critical of my own conclusions in the face of their questions. Afaf was able to attend some classes and observe me and my students during our intervention stages. Mohamed was able to watch the video during our break time and read my students comments and helped me analyze the survey results. This kind of collaboration helped me to reflect on the situation from different angles. I was inspired by both of them to try to integrate technology in my teaching. They both emphasized the role of computer in the presentation of new lessons.

3.6.6 Member checking

In order to guard against my biases, I encouraged my students to evaluate what had taken place (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). I let them reflect on our teaching and learning practices by devoting some sessions to watch the video clips we recorded. While students were watching, I paused the clip from time to time to see if my interpretation of a certain behavior was true or wrong. For example, I would tell a student that he/she was very taken by the lesson to the degree that he/she did not want it to finish. If my interpretation, which I obtained from the student's physical impressions I observed, was right, I

would keep my interpretation as it was. But if a student gave me a different interpretation, I would ignore my interpretation. By doing so, students were aware that they were a part of the research and their views were so important to modify our practices.

To guide their reflection and evaluation, I raised some questions to be reflected upon: "Do you pay attention in the class?", "Do you feel interested in the activity?", "Do you have a desire to participate voluntarily?", "Do you like the teacher's performance?" Students' written comments generated a great deal of reflections. By observing my students, writing down my diaries, reading students diaries, interviewing them and administering the mini AMTB questionnaire, I managed to enhance the trustworthiness of my research by collecting evidence claims from different sources. The flow of the data collection is shown in the following figure

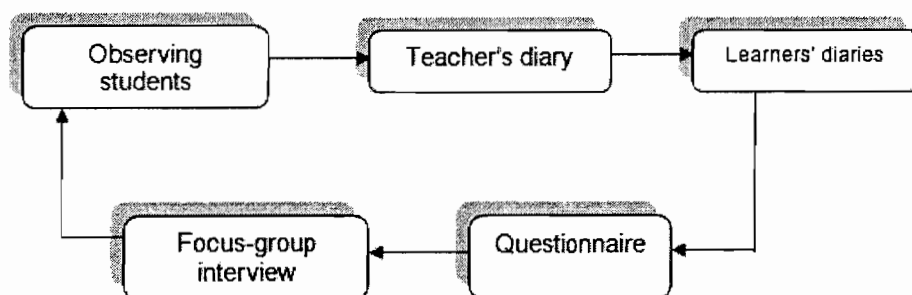


FIG 2.2 The data collection instruments.

3. 7 Transferability and Generalization

As far as the objectives of my research are concerned, it is clear that my initial objective is to identify the motivational factors that are operating in my teaching context. By identifying the motivational factors, I can gain insights and understanding in my specific situation and take actions accordingly. However, improving my performance does not suggest that only my students will be able to benefit from this research. It is possible that other interested audiences can share with me my findings and relate them to their context (Burns 1999). By sharing my experience with other teachers who have similar contexts to mine, the findings of my study can be applicable and they can replicate my teaching practices. In that respect, McNiff (1988) points out that "action researchers see generalization in terms of shared forms of life" (p.124). The process of sharing can be possible when the situation in this study is compared to other situations to see the extent that the interpretation of the findings might be applicable in such settings or at least helpful for readers to understand other situations (Yin, 2003). The greater the similarity between the cases, the greater is the degree of transferability. As such, it would be necessary to provide "Thick description" as mentioned previously, to enable the readers to determine whether transferability is possible or not (Geertz, 1973).

3.8 Data analysis.

Wiersma (2000) points out that data analysis in qualitative research is a process of categorization, description, and synthesis. In the same vein, Altrichter et al.(2000) illustrate that analysis in research is a kind of rereading of existing data with the intention of reorganizing, interpreting and evaluating

them with the research interest. In analyzing the students' behavior during the study, I looked for the motivational behaviors of my students during the research. In order to understand the data, I developed some categories that were related to the integrative motivational factors. I was also aware of any other categories that emerged from the data itself. The coded themes produced useful data in describing and understanding the motivational factors in the teaching context. I conducted both macro- and microanalyses of the data. For the macro –analysis, I extensively reviewed all the data to have a holistic sense of what was happening. In order to obtain this holistic view, I had to read and reread the diaries many times, keeping in mind the salient emerging themes. While I was focusing on the main themes in my data, I was also considering my research questions and how the data could answer my enquiries.

For the microanalysis, I searched for key words, revealing actions and behaviors, critical incidents, and pivotal events during my intervention. I described particular behavior, actions, patterns, and episodes that revealed students' perception of their learning experience. I wrote these themes in a narrative way, supported by categories that provided the context in which each category occurred. These categories have been grouped and named. Quotations are used for exposition and clarification of major themes. In keeping with ethical considerations, pseudonyms are used in place of real names of students.

Additionally, descriptive statistics are employed. They are numerical representations of how participants performed on the mini AMTB (Brown, 2001). All the interviews were transcribed and coded according to the interview schedule questions. Content analysis was adopted for the analysis of the data obtained from interviews. Certain key phrases or words were counted, then they were coded according to specific themes, the frequencies of responses were analyzed and examined. The selection of these phrases or words depended on the possibility of constructing understanding to the results of the pre-and post – questionnaires and the other data collection tools. I created categories for grouping items of data. I spent dozens of hours viewing the videotapes, listening to the interviews, reading critically the students responses, using and casting aside various categories until I found some clusters of characteristics that accounted for the students' motivational behaviors. These characteristics were based on Gardner's (1985) description of the true motivated learner.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, a true motivated learner is the one who expends effort to learn the language. This effort can be observed by persistently and consistently learning the material, doing homework, seeking out opportunities to learn more, and doing extra work. Also ,the motivated individual seeks to achieve a goal and strives to get it , yet within the process of getting the goal, the individual will enjoy the task of learning the language and will say that it is fun , a challenge, and enjoyable. Given that, when I notice a certain behavior that frequently reflects persistence, effort, interest and enjoyment in learning English, I can claim that this behavior is a genuine

theme in my data and I should cite evidence from the different data instruments to make sure that my induction is reliable and valid.

3.9 Conclusion

In the process of answering my initial research question, I employed qualitative methods. They were survey, observation, my diaries, students' diaries and focus – group interview. The employment of more than one instrument was meant to obtain trustworthiness, credibility, and transferability of the findings. Instead of worrying about generalisability, I was of the opinion of Kernmedy (1988) that the research need not be concerned with generalizing the data—it should be left to those who wish to apply the findings to their own situations (as cited in Merriam, 1998). I intended to provide a thick description of my teaching practices in my learning context believing that it would help my readers to determine the transferability, applicability and reliability of the findings of this study (Wellington, 2006).

I also anticipated that readers of my research would try to relate to the context in which the research was conducted. "They can form conclusions based on their experience and understanding that are private" (Stake, 1995: 8). Chapter Four describes the first cycle in my research. My investigation will be guided by Gardner's (1985) conceptualization of integrative motive. Also, since this is a fact-finding cycle, the potential findings will guide my future intervention and direct my attention toward potential alternative solutions.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FACT FINDING CYCLE

4.1 Introduction

McGroarty (1996) points out that if teachers want to water the right roots of motivation, it would not be wise for them to start any intervention that is based only on prior assumptions about students' interests and motivation. Teachers should exert efforts to discover the possible factors which shape motivation in the specific situation in which they work in. Given that, in order to discover the motivational factors that are affecting the level of motivation of my students in their learning situation, I used the mini AMTB and focus group- interview. It is worth mentioning that the findings of the questionnaire and the focus group interview are meant to guide the course of my research. Based on the students' responses, I can discover the reasons behind their lack of interest and I can start looking for potential solutions. Thus, the findings of this fact finding cycle are meant to guide and not to end the research.

Because the students were at different levels of proficiency in English, the questionnaire items were translated in Arabic. There was a rater who checked the accuracy of the translation by using the back translation method as mentioned in Chapter Three. Also, in order to give a clear picture about the motivational factors operating in my context, I addressed each component of the integrative motive separately. Then I presented all the results of the

integrative motive together by using a bar chart to have a whole view on the situation in my classroom. According to Gardner (1985), the concept of integrative motive incorporates five motivational variables :(1) Motivation, (2) Integrativeness, (3) Instrumental Orientation, (4) Attitude toward the learning situation, (5) and Anxiety.

1. Motivation was measured with three positively worded items to measure the desire to learn English, motivational intensity, and attitude toward learning English.
2. Integrativeness was measured with three positively worded items to assess: student's integrative orientation, their attitude toward the target language group, and their interest in learning English.
3. Instrumental orientation was measured by one positively worded item to measure students' instrumental orientation.
4. Attitudes toward learning situation were measured with two positively worded items to assess the student's attitude toward the language teacher and the course.
5. Language anxiety was measured by two positively worded items to assess English classroom anxiety and English use anxiety.

4.2 Integrativeness

In order to measure the integrativeness factor among students, they are asked to state (1) to what degree they learn English in order to interact with members of the second language community, (2) to what degree they are interested in learning English, and (3) to what degree they like the second language community.

Item	Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
1	I learn English in order to interact with members of the second language community.	14 60.9%	1 4.4%	8 34.8%
2	I am interested in learning English.	20 87.0%	2 8.7%	1 4.3%
3	I like to deal with the second language community.	20 87.0%	1 4.4%	2 8.7%

Table 4.1 Integrativeness

Pondering over the students' responses whether they learn English in order to interact with members of the second language community, 60.9% of them expressed that they don't learn English in order to interact with members of the second language community while 34.8% of them like to interact with second language community. As far as item 2 is concerned, students are asked to respond to what degree they are interested in learning English. Their responses revealed that 87.0% of the students are not interested in learning English while 4.3% expressed that they are interested in learning English. Studying students' responses to item 3, it appears that 87.0% of the students do not have an orientation to deal with members of the second language community. It is only 8.7% of the participants who are willing to be open to the

second language community. It is also noticeable that 4.3% are not sure if they like to deal with members of the second language community or not.

4.3 Attitude toward the learning situation

In order to measure students' attitude toward the learning situation, they are asked to respond to two positively worded items as follows:

Item	Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
4	I like my English instructor.	22 95.7%	1 4.4%	0 0
5	I like my English course.	21 91.3 %	1 4.4%	1 4.4%

Table 4.1 Attitude toward the learning situation

Studying the above table, 95.7% of the participants do not like the English instructor. As far as the English course is concerned, 91.3% of the participants do not like it.

4.4 Motivation

Motivation is measured with three positively worded items, (1) Motivational intensity, (2) the desire to learn English, and (3) attitude toward learning English. The following table shows the results of the three items:

Item	Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
6	I work hard at learning English.	16 69.6%	6 26.1%	1 4.3%
7	I have a desire to learn English.	18 78.3%	2 8.7%	3 13.0%
8	Learning English is important for me.	3 13%	2 8.7%	18 78.3%

Table 4.2 Motivation

Studying the above table, it is evident that 69.6% of the participants do not feel that they work hard at learning English. Students' unwillingness to exert effort at learning English is clear when we know that only 13% of the participants show a desire to learn it. In spite of the fact that they do not like to learn English, 78.3% of students believe that learning English is important.

4.5 Instrumentality

Instrumental orientation is measured by asking students to express whether they learn English for instrumental orientations. The following chart shows the results of this variable:

Item	Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
9	I think learning English is good for practical purposes such as to improve my occupational opportunities.	3 13.0%	5 21.7%	15 65.2%

Table 4.3 Instrumentality

It is obvious that 21.7% of the participants are not quite sure whether learning English is going to help them for getting a job or not. However, 65.2% of them believe that learning English is useful for future employment. It is only 13.0% who do not think that learning English can be relevant to their future career.

4.6 Anxiety

Anxiety is measured by asking students to express to what degree they feel calm in and outside their second language class. The following chart shows the results of this factor:

Item	Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
10	I feel calm in my second language class.	19 82.6%	1 4.4%	3 13%
11	I feel calm when speaking English outside the class.	21 91.3%	2 8.7%	- -

Table 4.4 Anxiety

Pondering over the above table, it is manifest that 82.6% of the participants feel anxious during the English class while only 13.0% of them feel calm. Such a result indicates that the level of anxiety in the English class is very high. As far as using speaking English outside the class, 91.3% of them feel anxious while only 8.7% of them feel calm.

4.7 Discussing the findings

The above findings described the percentage of responses to each item separately. The following bar chart presents a comprehensive picture of the percentages of the means of the eleven integrative items together. In order to get the percentages of the means of the eleven integrative items together, I first got the means of each item of each motivational factor. After getting the

means of the items of each motivational factor, I counted the average of the total means of each motivational factor. These steps are shown as follows:

- I divided the scale into three responses: disagree, neutral and agree.
- I gave a value for each response: disagree= 1, neutral= 2, agree = 3.
- I counted the number of SS (students) who disagreed x 1+ the number of SS who were neutral x 2 + the number of SS who agreed x 3 = The total of the responses ÷ The number of the whole sample (23 SS).
- I counted the average of the total of the means of each motivational factor ÷ 3 (the scale) X100 = The percentage of each motivational factor.

The following table shows the value of the percentage of the means of every motivational construct:

ITEMS OF THE INTEGRATIVE MOTIVE	MEAN	% OF MEAN	Std. DEVAIATION
Item 1	1.74	58.0	.964
Item 2	1.17	39.0	.491
Item 3	1.22	40.7	.600
MEAN of Items 1-3 (Integrativeness)	1.3768	45.9	.55327
Item 4	1.04	34.7	.209
Item 5	1.13	37.7	.458
MEAN of Items 4-5 (The Learning Situation)	1.0870	36.2	.32516
Item 6	1.35	45.0	.573
Item 7	1.35	45.0	.714
Item 8	2.65	88.3	.714
MEAN of Items 6-8 (Motivation)	1.7826	59.4	.44505
Item 9 (Instrumentality)	2.52	84.0	.730
Item 10	1.30	43.3	.703
Item 11	1.09	36.3	.288
MEAN of Items 10-11 (Anxiety)	1.1957	39.9	.44566

Table 4.6 (The percentage of the means of the motivational factors in the first cycle).

The following graph shows the motivational factors and presents the percentage of their means.

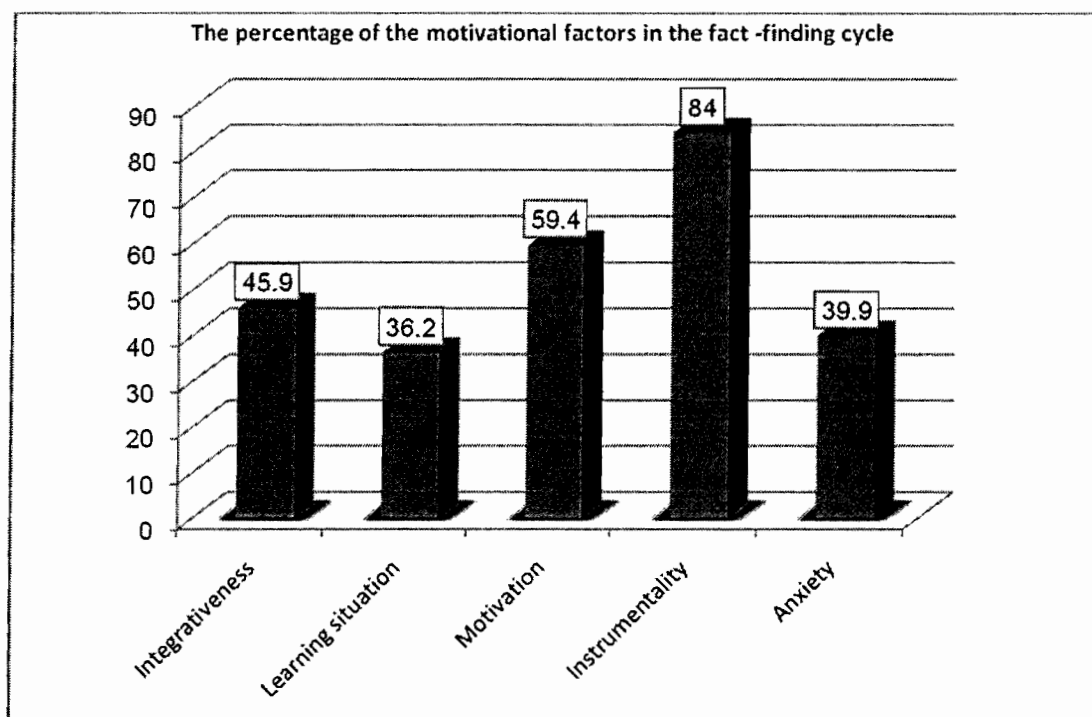


FIG 4.6 The Integrative motivational factors

Pondering over the above chart, it is obvious that students are highly instrumentally oriented. They believe that studying English is important for getting a promising job in the future. However, it is noticeable that this instrumental orientation did not positively affect the other motivational factors. Reflecting on this result, I started to wonder why the other motivational attributes are very low although children believe that English is important for them. In this respect, Brewster et al. (2003) argue that at four, eight or twelve, children do not have specific foreign language needs and some of them may be under pressure, usually from their parents or the school system, to pass English language examination.

Brewster et al.'s (2003) explanation suggests that the belief that English is important for future professional requirements may have been acquired from their parents' instructions and the system of the school which emphasizes the importance of English for having a successful professional life. However, having an instrumental motivation does not seem to have a strong impact on students' motivational state: 59.4 % of the students reflected that they did not work hard to learn English and did not have persistence and desire to learn. The contradiction between believing in the importance of English and unwillingness to work hard at learning it brings into light the truthfulness of Gardner's (2005) argument that being instrumentally oriented does not mean that an individual is really learning the language.

The findings also suggest that student's belief in the importance of English is not enhanced by intrinsic rewards which spring from the possibilities for deriving personal satisfaction from literacy activities (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). In the absence of interesting activities, it is not surprising that only 36, % of the students had a positive attitude toward the learning situation. It is also worth mentioning that 40.6 % of the participants do not feel confident when they use English inside and outside the classroom. This result suggests that these children experienced school learning as very separate from their real lives and the learning experiences failed to cater for authentic stimulating tasks that can establish confidence and risk taking so that students can be able to relate to personally (Bruner, 1996).

The findings also suggest that many of these students who are not successful in the classroom encounter difficulties in social situations. In this respect, Brophy (1996) points out many of these unmotivated students' exhibit shyness, withdrawn or depressed affects which further inhibit language and social emotional development. The common thread in this case is the comfortable use of language. The connection between low motivation and low achievement is clear. According to Moffett and Wagner (1983), only intense involvement in language and language-based activities can solve the problem of poor motivation. However, the findings suggest that the participants did not get involved in meaningful activities. Given that, there is a need to maximize learning and provide both support and challenge in learning (Nunan and Lamb, 1996, Cameron, 2001). To be able to do that, Brewster et al. (2003) point out that teachers should be "well-informed about the physical, emotional, conceptual and educational characteristics of children" (P. 27).

4.8 The Focus –Group Interview

Although the results of the questionnaire can give us an initial impression about the situation in the classroom, there is still a need to uncover some explanation for the state of demotivation among the participants. To have deep understanding of the results of the questionnaire, I conducted a focus group – interview. The language used was Arabic so that students could express themselves clearly. Coding the themes, I found out that there are four major themes: (1) the unsuitability of the textbook and learning tasks, (2) language use anxiety, (3) unchallenging activities, (4) unauthentic Learning.

4.8.1 The unsuitability of the textbook and learning tasks

The first question in the focus – group interview is meant to investigate the students' attitude toward both the textbook and the English language instructor. I mentioned in Chapter One that my students showed lack of interest in studying the textbook and I highlighted that the textbook was designed for beginners who are to study the English alphabets. My question was: "What is your attitude toward the text book and my teaching practices?"

Because the textbook was not at the right level of the students, most of them mentioned that the textbook and the learning tasks are not meaningful nor challenging enough to capture their interest and meet their needs. The students stated that the textbook and learning tasks are not suitable and below their level. A sample response is as follow:

I learnt some few words and how to pronounce them, but this is not enough. I learnt this book in grade one, two, three .I feel I am repeating myself. Our books should enable us to talk in the community, so what we will do if people outside asked us to talk with them and we could not? What can we say? I try to memorize words but I forget! I memorize and memorize but I forget and forget what should I do? (Student B)

It is boring to learn words that were known to me, the English class is boring. I know you try to make it exciting but it is boring. I want to learn new things to be able to talk with my friends (Student L).

I do not like the book because it is not useful for speaking. I need a book that is full of information to help the nation in the future and solve the Muslims' issues with the foreigners and the enemies of Islam. I also need to learn the correct pronunciation (Student R).

The book is not useful, the words are few, the topics are few and the information is little. This book fits young children like grade two and three, the lessons are about colors and A, B, C and we already know these things in grade two and three. The book does not develop my skills and the lessons included are old, known to me and they are few in number (Student Q).

I feel that the book does not develop my skills. I am sorry for being frank with you but this is what I really feel. The book does not encourage me to learn that language and it reduces the skills of the students because of the small amount of information in it. The syllabus is weak. I need activities like having stories for example. Not stories made of one line or two but I want stories made of four or five pages because if that happened, I would learn words I did not know before (Student I).

Reflecting on the students' comments, it is clear that that they need a textbook that enables them to talk in the community, develop their skills and enrich their information. But the fragmented exercises of the textbook clearly do not prepare the children to learn English. The students' responses bring into mind Ghosn's (1997) argument that most of the textbooks fall into two categories texts intended for children learning English in the United States, and texts for children learning English as a foreign language in areas where English is not the language of the community. As far as the EFL texts are concerned, Ghosn (1997) argues that they were limited in content and were structured around vocabulary and grammar exercises-even when the aim was to address communicative aspects of language. Furthermore, the content of these texts is also inappropriate for young children.

4.8.2 Language use anxiety

On asking students: Are you confident when you speak English in and outside the class? The majority of students stated that they are not confident enough to speak in English. On asking them: "Why do you feel anxious when speaking English? Some of the participants attributed that state of anxiety because of being unfamiliar with the language. A sample response is as follow:

I feel anxious because this language is not our language, it is difficult. I need something that is neither too easy nor too difficult. Even outside it is difficult for me (Student A).

Sometimes I want to say something I am not able to say it (Student G).

Some of the participants expressed that they were afraid of being giggled at by their classmates. Most of these students are low and intermediate achievers. In reference to this, students pointed out the following concerns:

I feel anxious in the class because I do not know some words so I fear that my classmates laugh at me (Student L).

I feel anxious because you may correct my mistakes and students laugh at me. This is why I do not participate in the English class .If I do not know the answer 100%, I can not try. I feel so shy and I do not like my friends laugh at me (Student W)

Other participants expressed their fear to speak with the outside community.

Most of these students are advanced learners. In reference to this, students pointed out the following responses:

I do not feel anxious inside the class because we are friends and the levels of my friends are like mine and sometimes is lower than me ,so why I feel anxious . But outside, I feel anxious because people may chuckle at me. Their level in language is better than mine. This is why I sometimes do not understand them (Students Q).

I do not feel much anxious inside the class. Sometimes I fear making mistakes but no problem you can correct me. But outside it is so embarrassing that people correct my mistakes, they will laugh at me (Student T).

Fearing from embarrassment from classmates and from outside community members raised the affective filter of many students in my class. In this respect, Krashen (1985) claims that low motivation, low self-esteem, and debilitating anxiety can combine to raise the affective filter and form a mental block that prevents comprehensible input and thus acquisition. Krashen (1985) points out that when the filter is 'up', it impedes language acquisition. On the other hand, high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety are better equipped for success in second language acquisition. Krashen (1985) illustrates that successful language acquisition can only occur when students' affective filters are low. Given that, having an encouraging, non-threatening classroom environment will eliminate discomfort and stress for students. With low affective filters students will most likely feel free to express themselves and experiment and take risks, not solely in the target language, but also social risks.

Stanton (2002) emphasizes that teachers should create an environment that welcomes students' input, encourages them to take risks and accept constructive feedback, and offers a dynamic, collaborative dialogue rather than a one-way transmission of knowledge from teachers to them. She further highlights that this pedagogical style has long been the accepted norm in language teaching, where vigorous student participation is recognized as the most effective means of acquiring oral proficiency, and the fear of embarrassment as the most formidable barrier to such participation.

4.8.3 Unchallenging textbook

Having a simple textbook that mainly focuses on the alphabet and the numbers, students felt that doing the homework or paying attention inside the class is meaningless because they already know the information. Some of them may drift off in class. On asking them: "Do you work hard at learning English?", students pointed out the textbook is too simple to challenge. In reference to this, students stated:

the book is so silly. It has nothing but very trivial questions that are useless, we need lessons that we can learn from. The homework is so easy that I waste my time doing it because I do it easily (Student T).

I am sick of this book; this book is not at my right level: it is for children, children, and young people. Sometimes I read it to waste my time (Student H).

I do not ignore the fact that I learnt some new words from the book. But studying only the book is not enough for me because it is very easy. I need to learn new words so that I can be able to talk with those who speak the language. I wish that other activities should be added to the book. The

book alone is boring. Studying the book alone makes the school life boring and this makes me dislike learning English (Student B).

I like the pictures in the book, but I find out that I know all the words in it .This is why I feel bored sometimes (Student C).

I want to tell you that the book is very easy. I wish you can change that book because I finished all the questions to the end of the book in just one hour (Student Q).

The students' responses suggest that having a simple book that does not create a rich learning environment is responsible for the students' feeling of boredom. The text book does not hook into their interests and their lives. In reference to this, Delisio (2006) points out that very few researchers have formally studied the impact of using books that are too easy for talented readers and too little research has been conducted on books that are too hard.

Delisio (2006) further argues that teachers currently have students who read several grades above and below grade level in the same classroom and most feel that they are not able to effectively differentiate instruction for students of all levels of achievement. Delisio (2006) also highlights that children need the opportunity to encounter challenges more often. However, there are two central challenges for educators: number one is identifying the correct levels of academic difficulty for each student. Number two is finding methods for ascertaining whether texts are appropriately challenging.

Delisio (2006) further contends that an optimal text is a text that is slightly above a student's reading level, thus requiring the student to make an effort to read the text, and occasionally, to ask for assistance. To achieve optimal

because I already knew the student's name and there was no real information gap to fill.

4.9 Possibility for improvement

Although the questionnaire and the interview suggest that the participants were poorly motivated, there is a glimpse of hope that if alternative approaches are developed, my participants may develop a reasonable level of motivation. This optimistic view is drawn from the fact that most of the interviewees stated that they believe in the importance of English and they think that it is very important for instrumental reasons. This suggests that there are some roots of motivation that need a rich soil and a right way for watering them. Reflecting on the questionnaire and the interview findings, I realized which areas should be watered properly. I started to believe that teaching materials should fit the level of my students. There would also be a need to increase their confidence and lower their affective filter. I do believe that it is teachers' job to keep their students away from being bored and it's not disrespectful for students to say they are bored. However, I am of the opinion that students should also have readiness to be motivated because teachers can not motivate a rock (Gardner, 1985). Active learners are like the sponge that soaks up knowledge while passive learners are like the rock who expects knowledge to come to them. Learners, who act like sponges soak up the information through active participation, demonstrate a positive learning attitude and possess eagerness to learn. On the other hand, learners who act like rocks generally have a negative learning attitude and are, in effect, just occupying space (Beale, 2002).

Brewster et al. (2003) also argues that an ideal learner should be extrovert, talkative, confident, and risk – taker. Having said that, the success of any alternative action would not only depend upon me but also upon how students perceive it as well (Gardner, 2005).

4.10 Conclusion

The fact finding cycle was very vital for me to answer the first research question: What are the motivational factors that are affecting my students in my learning situation? The findings revealed that my students do not have a positive attitude toward the learning situation, they do not have motivational intensity, and their anxiety is quite high inside and outside the class. They also developed a negative attitude toward the target language and unwillingness to interact with the second language community. With such a conclusion, I started to think of what kind of an action I can take to motivate my students to the extent that they want to be in my class, they want to learn English, and they want to open their minds and take in new perspectives in order to develop their own ideas. I fully expected that my teaching style would change and ripen as I gain in experience, and I looked forward to the constant adaptation to my own abilities and energies as well as to the needs of my students that underlie all good teaching. Reflecting on the findings, I also became aware of the three things I needed before I would take an action: I needed knowledge of the best and most effective methods to use, an understanding of the purpose and aim of each method I would use, and confidence and skill in handling these methods, with perseverance and courage to carry on the work with good humor and enjoyment. In order to meet the three above mentioned needs, I needed to review relevant literature

and try to find alternative teaching materials that can motivate my students.
Given that, Chapter Five is dedicated for literature review after the first cycle
had been completed.

CHAPTER FIVE

LITERATURE REVIEW

5.1 Introduction

It was noticeable through students' feedback as well as their comments that the textbook was not meaningful nor challenging enough to capture their interest and meet their needs. As a result, students had a negative attitude toward the learning situation. It was also noticeable that students' language anxiety is quite high inside and outside the class. Reflecting on the results in the fact finding cycle, I held on to the belief that children learn and create language not by sitting at their desks doing pencil and paper tasks in isolation from their peers, or drilling structures out of context, but by engaging in meaningful use of language in a community of language learners. Children need an ample opportunity to interact in a meaningful, interesting context and play with the language while developing vocabulary and structures. They need the collaboration of their peers and teachers in creating meaningful contexts and negotiating meanings in those contexts (Ghosn, 1997).

5.2 How can I improve my performance?

Rothlein and Meinbach (1991) argue that children need to be exposed to works of literature that can excite their imagination and nourish their souls. Ghosn (2002) highlights that literature is not only interesting to children, but also facilitates integration of the language skills. It can also offer predictable

yet natural language which promotes word recognition, as well as opportunities for authentic reading and writing tasks, and it is not grammatically sequenced.

In the same vein, Collie and Slater (1987) point out that literature provides a rich context in which individual lexical or syntactical items are made more memorable. They contend that reading a considerable and contextualized body of text, students become familiar with many features of the written language. Collie and Slater (1987) further argue that the extensive reading required in tackling a novel or long play develops students' ability to make inferences from linguistic clues and to deduce meaning from context. Furthermore, on reading different sorts of materials, learners become aware of the range of language itself.

In this respect, Rosenblatt (1994) argues that children can link a literary work to their lives by being given the authority to understand the literary text in the light of their experiences, feelings and attitudes. Thus the process of making meaning from literature is highly personal and idiosyncratic. Rosenblatt (1994) further illustrates that each reader can bring to a text a unique set of prior knowledge, personality traits and present moods that determine how they construct their understandings. Thus a novel or a play remains merely inkpots on paper until a reader transforms them into a set of symbols.

Every time a reader experiences a work of art, it is in a sense created anew. So in literature, the text is no longer the only authority for understanding, but since it is highly suggestive literature speaks different meanings to different people. It means that each learner's interpretation has validity ; also because each person's perception is different, much interactive discussion is guaranteed (Maley and Alan, 1989).

Having said that, the meaning of literature should not be viewed as coming directly from the text to the reader, nor as merely being a reflection of the reader. Rather, both reader and text have a reciprocal relation (Farris and Hancock, 1991). In this way, the reader is not passive but he/she is an active part of the reading act, combining experience, prior knowledge, and feelings with a serious attempt to understand and interpret the author's word. Thus the literary texts can create genuinely interesting and motivating topics to explore in the classroom and they can be open to multiple interpretations and hence provide excellent opportunities for classroom discussion (Funk and Funk, 1992).

In this respect, reading is not only a matter of deciphering letter symbols on a page and constructing words from them. It requires the reader to interact with the words and to construct meaning from them. To be able to do this, the reader makes use of his/her prior knowledge on which to base that interaction. The words must create a link to something with which they can identify, something they can visualize, for them to gain comprehension. Literature, therefore, provides a different reading experience than do typical

textbooks. In this respect, "a literary work comes into being when there is a transaction between text and reader in which personal experience with the work is primary. Such reading provides pleasure and contributes to a shared culture" (Boomer; 1985, p.169).

Being inherently human and presenting the universality of human experience and stimulates readers to be continually renewed by their experience, literature can overcome many barriers between cultures and exposes them so that readers may become more responsive to them and improve their communication across cultures (Sage, 1987). Additionally, pondering over the themes tackled by literature, it is evident that they are common to all cultures, though the treatment of them may be different. Moreover, there is much similarity in the genres, conventions and devices employed by literature across cultures (Talif, 1995).

So the universality of the issues tackled by literature make it able to empower the reader to overcome the limitations of sex, race, or culture (Rosenblatt, 1994). Literature can be also helpful in the language learning process. Engaging imaginatively with literature enables learners to shift the focus of their attention beyond the more mechanical aspects of the foreign language system which is essentially analytic, piecemeal, and, at the level of the personality, fairly superficial. However, when a novel, play or short story is explored over a period of time, the result is that the reader begins to feel close to certain characters and shares their emotional responses "The fiction summons the whole person into its own world" (Collie and Slater, 1987, p.5).

When students read literature, "horizons of possibility" come to mind. Moving them to reflect on and interpret ideas at hand: Students raise questions, recognize problems, seek causes and solutions, and make connections. Because it taps what they know and who they are, literature is a particularly inviting context for learning both a second language and literacy (Langer, 1997). Additionally, Sage (1987) contends that through literature, students encounter nearly every kind of communicative techniques speakers use or think of using. Having said that, literature displays a broader range of such communication strategies than any other single ESL teaching component. Hillman (1995) further argues that literature does not only contribute to language learning but to all kinds of learning. It can transmit the knowledge of any discipline. This knowledge is not limited to factual information or theories but it can include all sorts of knowledge (Sage, 1987).

5.2.1 Concluding thoughts

Considering the above arguments, I started to believe that literature can be used with my students because (1) it is potentially motivating, (2) it is authentic (3) it has general educational values, (4) it helps students to understand another culture, (5) it is a stimulus for language acquisition, (6) it develops students' interpretative abilities, (7) students enjoy it, (8) it expands students' language awareness, (9) and it encourages students to talk about their opinions and feelings. Based on these reasons, literature can be an appropriate vehicle for language learning and development and it can create a motivating meaningful context in my classroom. But this raised another question to me: What kind of literature should I use in order to teach English?

5.3 Storytelling

Ghosn (2002) argues that "A syllabus that draws heavily on authentic children's stories, provides a motivating medium for language learning while fostering the development of the thinking skills that are needed for L2 academic literacy "(p.172).

Ghosn (1997) further contends that children are naturally drawn to stories and children's literature can present a multitude of discussion topics- from the literal to those that transcend the story and allow children to link the story to their own lives. Literature is abundant with evidence that storytelling can introduce children to the pleasures of literature and can excite them about books and reading (Greene, 1996), and without opportunity for oral storytelling and discussion, according to Rooks (1998), my children would indeed be cut off from their most natural and comfortable way of learning

Stories have been used for centuries because they "teach by attraction rather than compulsion; they invite rather than impose, they capture the imagination and touch the heart" (Lickona, 1991: 79). Given that, I hold to the belief that storytelling creates an interest in reading by choice rather than by requirement. Because stories are a fundamental part of human experience (McRae, 1991), they provide a context for us, a backdrop against which to measure our efforts; we learn through these stories or narratives--about the world, our ancestors, and our geographic region, our values, beliefs and ideas, good and evil (Hochstetler, 2006).

Personal storytelling can serve as an effective bridge into early literacy, and it can enhance reading skills by inspiring children to search for a told story in a text (Rosen, 1988). Additionally, there are many mutual or shared benefits in the reading and the telling of stories. They both help build knowledge of how stories work and an understanding of the special language of story, they stimulate the imagination, they offer opportunity to extend vocabulary and explore the sounds of language, its rhyme and rhythm, and they both assist in the development of phonological awareness (Bayly, 2004). Many of the children who have difficulty learning to read have weak listening skills. The use of oral storytelling allows them to practice these skills as they engage with the teller and the story. They become more sensitized to both the spoken word and the story (Bayly, 2004). So storytelling teaches and reinforces both oral and listening skills. The pleasure that children can receive by listening to stories helps them associate listening with enjoyment and learn how to be respectful listeners (Caulfield, 2000).

Storytelling also can enhance the speaking skill. Many adults in today's society are afraid of speaking in public. When children are involved in oral presentations, they become more comfortable with public speaking as they grow older. Thus, storytelling can help foster self-confidence and reduce anxiety (Caulfield, 2000). The more oral participation in class, the better speaking improvement a student obtains. This oral practice in language classrooms is important to language learners' oral language development, especially for EFL learners since most students language practice happened only in the language classroom (Tsou, 2005).

Additionally, storytelling is an oral art form that gives significant input toward oral language competency along with many significant links to written language. This art employs literacy conventions, such as point of view, plot, style, characterization, setting and theme (Mallan, 1991). Thus, retelling a story can add a critical stage to the writing process. When a student retells a story, he/she tries out words and phrases; connectives that make logical, chronological or causal links between events and structures to organize the complete speech in a coherent way that reflects how much he/she is able to construct understanding. The strategies adopted in oral storytelling can be used in the process of writing from generating first ideas through to editing a final draft. So storytelling is a valuable and valid language activity in its own right, but it can also be used as an optional additional stage in the whole writing process (Bernice, 2006).

Additionally, storytelling helps students understand the differences between the ways a story is orally recounted or related and the ways that it is written. Students, thus, can explore the shifts in patterns and characteristics from informal talk through more formalized spoken language as when employing the strategies of storytelling for an audience, and onward into the territory of written language, where the decisions required of the writer usually relate to quite specific conventions of vocabulary, style and textual organization, depending on genre (Bernice, 2006).

Furthermore, regular storytelling experience increases young children's vocabulary because they encounter a big number of words through the story. Having a good command of vocabulary results in developing writing skills. In addition to that, when children can sound out the letters, the syllables and the words through whole word recognition and rhyming word play, they can easily learn to write as well as read because their spelling ability will be extremely enhanced (Louise, 1999).

Additionally, incorporating word play, rhymes, repetitive patterns, and storytelling can give children meta- phonological and early spelling awareness (Dyson, 1993; Snow and Tabors, 1993). Also children gain an understanding of syntactic structure and organization when they listen to stories that can then act as a reference framework for them when they create their own stories. Given that, a told story is thoughtfully crafted in a fashion that goes beyond the level of conversation (Mallan, 1991). Moreover, storytelling does include activities like rhyming language which can extremely contribute to early spelling because children will likely repeat these words as a means of fun for many days or weeks after (Dyson, 1993). Additionally, Ellis and Brewster (1991) argue that by listening to stories over and over again, children can acquire key structures and vocabulary in an enjoyable way. Because stories provide teachers with a variety of contexts, students can revise new vocabulary in an interesting way and they can develop the child's listening and concentrating skills.

Because thinking is the essence of reading and writing (Cunningham et al. , 2004), being exposed to stories, students can look for main points and supporting details; compare, contrast, look for cause-effect relationships and evaluate the whole context. By doing so, students can also develop their thinking skills (Chosn, 2002). Furthermore, listening to stories gives children practice in visualization. As children listen, they create the scenes, the action, and the characters. The ability to visualize and fantasize is the basis of creative imagination. It also appears to have a positive effect on social and cognitive development. Children with a strong predisposition toward imaginative play seem to empathize with other children more readily (Greene, 1991).

Furthermore, Ellis and Brewster (1991) point out that stories are motivating and can help develop positive attitudes towards the foreign language and language learning, they exercise imaginations which can develop the students own creative power, they can link imagination with the reality, and they can encourage social and emotional development. Ellis and Brewster (1991) also illustrate that learning English through stories can lay the foundations for secondary school in terms of basic language functions and structures, vocabulary and language-learning skills. Stories can be used to reinforce conceptual development in children, reinforce thinking and study skills.

5.4 Concluding thoughts

Based on the above arguments, I held the belief that language input and class activities can be driven exclusively by the telling of interesting, understandable stories. Students hear and see numerous stories, and as a consequence are exposed to a wide a variety of vocabulary and structure which are recycled naturally as different versions of the story are told. This can offer students multiple opportunities to encounter the target language. Eventually, as students become able to produce language spontaneously, they begin to write and tell their own stories (MaQuillan and Tse, 1998).

5.5 Empirical studies on storytelling

George (1992) used storytelling with his seventh-grade students to inspire them to talk, write, perform, listen and learn. The project took six weeks. Students formed small groups of storytellers to produce and perform their own stories for folktales for other groups of students. Some students who could not work well in a group became solo storytellers. Many of these students, who had experienced little success previously, became successful by performing for others. Comparison of pre and post-test indicated that students learned about plot, narration, dialogue, characterization, setting, and point of view by writing and performing stories and folktales. The findings revealed that the students were largely motivated by the storytelling classes. Looking at George' study , it is noticeable that the storytelling, in spite of the short period of intervention, successfully enhanced the students' thinking skills by giving them the chance to express themselves and relating their personal experience to the story.

This helped them also develop their four skills. Since the less confident students felt shy working in groups, the teacher gave them another option to participate individually. This also highlights the flexibility of the activities a storytelling class can create. Additionally, in order to promote children's narrative skills, Benjamin (1991) conducted a storytelling program in a four-year-old classroom that included 17 students. Out of the seventeen, Benjamin (1991) examined the cases of four children by using the sociocultural perspective. The program included workshops, child-teacher conference, and adult and child performance. The children listened to adult-told stories, repeated their own stories with a teacher, and then performed their stories before the entire class. The results suggested the importance of establishing a shared focus on problem-solving to further children's narrative ability.

The findings also revealed the usefulness of adult models of performance in both motivating children's participation as well as furthering their abilities. Reflecting on Benjamin's study, it is clear that the researcher used the adult storytellers to scaffold and help the young learners in internalizing knowledge until mastery occurs. These findings suggest that students can observe how a story is told and consequently they can retell the story using their personal feelings and experiences.

By doing so the researcher tried to make use of the concept of the zone of proximal development which refers to the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1986). Similarly, Britsch (1992) implemented a storytelling based program, where both adults and children told and shared stories. Britsch (1992) studied a group of three to four- years old who experienced storytelling for one year. From this experience, she discovered the supreme value of talk story exemplified by cooperative narration of a story by two storytellers at the writing table. At the age of three and four, these children would have been recording their stories with symbolic images. The children dictate their stories to a scribing adult. By doing so, Britsch (1992) allowed reading and writing to emerge within play situation rather than imposing it. This developed a sense of community and nurtured the culture of the group.

This finding also suggests that if the advanced learners in my class could narrate their stories to the low achievers by putting them in pairs or in groups, a sense of community can be nourished and by doing so their level of anxiety can be lowered. As far as language skills are concerned, Mello (2001) conducted a study on a fourth grade class over a year to investigate the impact of storytelling on students' children' self-concept. The researcher told stories which were selected from multicultural sources that included myths, folk and fairy tales, sections of epics, legends, and fables. The students

discussed preferences and reacted to the qualities of characters in stories. They also discussed the plots of stories by relating them to their own life experience.

After each storytelling session, students met in small groups for in-depth interviews. They represented their thinking, and voiced out their thoughts. The Interviews and stories were taped and transcribed. The findings revealed that by participating in storytelling, students increased their knowledge of self and others. They did this by reflecting on images and conditions in stories and linking them to their lives.

Elley and Mangubhai (1983) used a story based EFL program for intermediate and elementary school students in Fiji Islands. The experimental courses included illustrated books with stories that were told and read by children. The program produced significantly higher gains in almost all areas of language proficiency. These results were replicated among more than 3,000 intermediate EFL students in Singapore, nearly 5,000 students in South Africa, and 2,600 pupils in Sri Lanka (Elley, 1991; Elley and Foster, 1996; LeRou and Schollar, 1996). Also studies on beginning and intermediate – level- L1-and L2 readers in Thailand achieved superior results in terms of literacy when compared to more traditional language and literacy teaching methods (Walker , Rattanaovich and Oller, 1992).

Rooks (1998) conducted a study on a sample of six children including three from year 3 and three from year 4. The study aimed at investigating the impact of storytelling on enhancing speaking and listening skills to storytelling classes. The researcher carried an action research project. She asked the children to write a story at the beginning of the project and over a period of six months three more stories were written.

During this period regular storytelling sessions took place where children would first tell their stories to a regular storytelling partner and then to the whole class. Rooks (1998) used field diary observation, interview and taping the stories told by the children to monitor the children's' progress. Her findings gave empirical evidence that there is a clear link between oral storytelling and story writing. She further argues that in her experience, storytelling is not only instrumental in the development of story writing; it also encourages co-operation and increases motivation, confidence and self esteem. These findings support Louise's (1999) argument that regular storytelling experience increases young children's vocabulary, develop their writing skills and create a motivating learning environment.

In another study, Rosen (1988) conducted a study on using retelling Greek myths with a Friday afternoon class of poorly motivated secondary boys. The findings revealed that storytelling and retelling stories created opportunities for self expression. Similarly, but at a higher level, Chen (2006) carried out a project which used children's literature to engage EFL university students in reading and writing stories through a task of story reading and writing. The participants were two cohorts of first-year English majors (n=43) from a

national university in southern Taiwan. The study was conducted in a required composition course for English majors. The students met two times three hours a week. The project, which lasted for four weeks, aimed at building up students' writing ability and confidence through assorted tasks such as narration, classification, comparison and contrast, and argumentation.

The first week focused on reading stories, the second week focused on drafting stories, the third week focused on peer reviewing and revising, and the fourth week focused on conferencing and revising. In addition to story writing, students were required to post their weekly journals at the course forum on the Internet. Students' opinions were gathered from their reflective statements and interviews. The majority of the students considered that the selected stories were good writing models, the process of story writing was rewarding, the web postings nurturing and the authors' computer chair were empowering.

Tsou (2005) developed a multimedia storytelling website to study how web-based technology can assist EFL teaching and learning process through storytelling and story recalls. The website was implemented in one elementary school. The storytelling website was used for both the EFL instructor to compose stories for telling in the experimental group and for EFL learners in the experimental group to compose story recalls. In the control group, the teacher applied only a regular storytelling process without any assistance from the storytelling website. The findings revealed that students easily comprehended the story and recalled the story structure with or without the assistance from the storytelling multimedia web. Second, with the multimedia

computer-assisted process, students retained more words, phrases and sentences. Third, through the multimedia storytelling website, students received extra visual and audio stimuli through still pictures, animation, music, and/or sound effects. These stimuli not only provided easier access for story recalls but also facilitated students' creativity in recreating stories. Fourth, students in the storytelling website group tended to include more details in recalls.

Reflecting on Tsou's (2005) findings, it is noticeable that storytelling is motivating and the use of technology much accelerates the benefits students can gain. The findings of this study draws my attention to the possibility of using computer as a tool for telling stories and as a medium of continuous communication among my students when they finish their school day. Mages (2008) provided a concise distillation of the methods and measures used in the studies that manipulated story dramatization as an intervention for language development in the classroom.

Because research investigating story dramatization only began in the middle of the 1960s, Mages (2008) selected the publication year 1960 as a strategy to ensure that his review of the empirical studies since that time will be comprehensive and relevant. Mages (2008) review revealed that, in studies such as (Cullinan et al., 1974; Niedermeyer and Oliver, 1972; Saltz et al., 1977; Saltz and Johnson, 1974; Strickland, 1973; Yawkey, 1979; Pellegrini and Galda, 1982; Silvern et al., 1986; Williamson and Silver, 1990; Nielsen, 1993), stories are read or told to the participants. Then the participants are invited to enact dramas based on the stories that they have heard.

Mages (2008) argues that 79% percent of these studies explicitly state that the children in the intervention dramatized stories, 48% report using traditional tales, folktales, or fairy tales; 44% report using modern children's literature; and 26% report using child-authored stories, 7% of the studies report using adult-authored literature do not specify whether the stories used were traditional stories or modern stories. Additionally, some studies combined the use of both modern tales and folktales.

Mages (2008) review revealed that these studies suggested that there were noticeable qualitative progress in students' narrative abilities and comprehension when they acted their stories. These studies also support the claim that acting stories facilitate oral language development. However, Mages (2008) contends that there are some methodological shortcomings associated with this group of studies.

Mages (2008) points out that some authors do not give full reference to the literature they used. Second, some authors do not provide information about whether the illustrations were shown to the participants or not. Only 24% of story-based studies that employed adult-authored literature mention whether or not the participants viewed illustration of the text. Third, the findings of these studies are difficult to compare because they differed in the number of times the children were exposed to each story and the kind of literature the children dramatized. Some studies had the children enact each story multiple times. Others studies had the children dramatize each story only once. Finally, a few studies reported age effects that may actually be attributable to an artifact of the study's design. Reflecting on Mages' (2008) review, I much

agree with him on the methodological concerns mentioned above. For example; the insufficient information about the type of stories used, and whether illustrations were included or not, and the undetectable role of age in interacting with stories makes it difficult for future replication and classroom implementation.

In this respect, Mages (2008) review serves two functions. First, it provides empirical evidence that dramatizing stories and telling them do develop language skills in young learners. The second function is that it draws attention to the importance of providing sufficient information about the type of stories to be used and the pedagogical procedures to be adopted in carrying out an intervention. Without providing sufficient information about the mechanism of change in a certain context, the replication of the findings may be thwarted.

Arguing in a similar vein, Bragger and Rice (1998) point out that it is all very good to acknowledge the advantages of teaching storytelling, yet the key to success in conducting a storytelling depends on the stories selected and the approaches used in teaching them. Thus simply introducing literary content into language programs does not lead automatically to the desired outcomes. There is a need to know the criteria for selecting stories and the appropriate approaches to be used.

5.6 Selecting a suitable story

Hochstetler (2006) emphasizes that stories should be selected with a great deal of care and critical thinking. Since narratives are powerful ways of passing along cultural values and ethical standards of excellence, one must think carefully about how the stories will be used in a particular sport and which stories should be included. Collie and Slater (1987) argue that the criteria of suitability clearly depend ultimately on each particular group of students, their needs, interests, cultural background and language level. Bishop and Kimball (2006) further argue that when choosing a story, the age of the audience should be considered. They argue that young children love stories with repetition and pleasing word sounds, whereas older children prefer stories that have action, humor, and suspense. Furthermore, the selected story should have a definite beginning, middle, and end. Folktales, myths, legends, hero tales, humorous stories, and realistic stories are especially suitable for storytelling. Nesamalar et al. (1999) suggest three aspects to be considered in the process of selecting texts. A good selection should take into consideration students' age, the linguistic stage, and the cognitive and social interests. Also, the content and the language of the text should be considered as well. There is also an agreement among many scholars that the key to success in using stories in EFL classrooms dwells heavily upon the stories that are selected. The majority of the scholars agree that easiness, accessibility and relevance are very necessary elements to make a storytelling experience successful (Collie and Slater, 1987; Lazar, 1993; O'Sullivan, 1991; McKay, 1991; Brumfit and Carter, 1991).

Collie and Slater (1987) point out that foreign students may not be able to identify with or enjoy a text which they perceive as being fraught with difficulty every step of the way because they have both a linguistic and a cultural gap to bridge. So language difficulty has to be considered. Collie and Slater (1987) further argue that in the absence of curriculum or exam constraints, it is much better to choose a work that is not too much above students' normal reading proficiency. If the language of the literary work is quite straightforward and simple, this may be helpful but is not in itself the most crucial yardstick. Interest, appeal and relevance are all more important. Additionally, Lazar (1993) suggests that instructors should keep in mind three main areas in the process of selecting stories: the type of course, the type of students, and certain factors connected with the text (e.g., relevance, availability, linguistic complexity, length).

In the same line, O'Sullivan (1991) argues that there would be few benefits if the text is too difficult in linguistic or cultural levels. To overcome the linguistic and cultural problems, there should be some simplification by which the original book is shortened in characters, situations and events. Furthermore, McKay (1991) suggests that literary texts should involve students to enjoy the literary texts at a level appropriate to them. She also emphasizes that students might feel discouraged if they are given texts that are too difficult for them to understand. She also points out the importance of selecting themes that should be highly relevant to students. Moreover, Brumfit and Carter (1991) argue that texts should not only be easy and accessible, but they should also enable students to assume, react, understand and form their expectations according to their individual differences.

Lazar (1993) further illustrates that “we should look not only at the grading of the language in the text, but at its specific literacy qualities and whether our students can navigate their own way through these” (p. 54). Lazar (1993) also emphasizes the importance of not making the texts a disruptive element of the thoughts of the learner. This goal can be achieved by linking the text with the rest of the syllabus. Additionally, Isbell (2002) points out that many stories that work well with children include repetitive phrases, unique words, and enticing description. These characteristics encourage students to join in actively to repeat, chant, sing, or even retell the story. This kind of voluntary oral classroom participation is believed to correlate positively with students’ academic achievement. Ghosn (2002) contends that there are five criteria to be taken into consideration concerning the selection of stories:

1-Theme

The story should address universal themes so that children everywhere can identify with and allow for a variety of spin-off activities.

2-Storyline

The story should have clear, uncomplicated story-line with a satisfying, and melodramatic conclusion.

3- Important

The storyline should appeal to children .A story which allows for a variety of interpretations and is thus enjoyable to various age groups.

4-Language

The story should include a certain amount of amusing and predictable repetition, especially for beginning learners. Repeated grammatical structures and formulaic expressions should be made clear in the story context.

5-Illustrations

The story should include aesthetically pleasing illustrations that help to clarify the text and provide opportunities for discussions in which the key vocabulary can be exploited.

5.7 Concluding thoughts:

Certain criteria should be taken into consideration in the process of selecting stories for primary aged children. The appropriateness of the texts selected for a particular class remains a crucial factor in the success of the approach. Texts should not be too long, not too linguistically complex, not too far removed from the world knowledge of students, and not too anachronistic. Additionally, the language used should be accessible to children but should also make demands and extend their language capabilities. In fiction, the story should be capable of interpretation at a number of different levels, so that children can return to the book time and again with renewed enjoyment in finding something new. Most important, the stories selected must be those which children enjoy. Print should be bold and easy to read. Illustrations should be clear and attractive. Another factor is to consider whether a particular work is able to stimulate the kind of personal involvement by

arousing the learners' interest and provoking strong, positive reactions from them. If it is meaningful and enjoyable, reading is more likely to have a lasting and beneficial effect upon the learners. Although the selection of stories is an important factor in the success of a teaching project, this does not suggest that the right selection is the panacea to solving the complexities associated with the teaching of stories. Still the pedagogy to be used is more important because if the story and the language are suitable whereas the pedagogy is not interesting, students will hardly enjoy the literary experience (Nesamalar et al., 1999). This raises a compelling question: How can I teach stories effectively?

5.8 Approaches to Teaching stories

Reflecting on the abundant presence of theories and approaches of teaching stories, I found myself captured by a diversity of thoughts and feelings. This diversity is based on the fact that every approach tries to emphasize certain aspects of language over another. For example, while the Formalistic Approach suggests that the meaning resides solely in the text and each text has only one, true accurate meaning, the Reader- Response Approach basically contends that the reader is the author of the text and his/her background or the past experience rather than the text is of paramount importance during the reading process (Rosenblatt, 1994). Whereas the Biographical Approach emphasizes the importance of focusing on the biographical life of the author, The Literary Historical Approach focuses on the historical period in which the author wrote the story. Whereas some approaches focus on addressing very complicated literary contexts, other

approaches try to develop awareness of the moral and philosophical significance behind a literary work (Talif, 1995).

Reflecting on the above approaches in teaching stories, I found myself at a crossroads with no specific choice of which road to take? In order to get myself out of the turmoil of these thoughts, I started asking myself: Why am I reviewing this part of literature? Do I want to prove the tenability of a theory over another? Am I looking for a theoretical gap to fill? Am I conducting a comparative study? Looking again at my research concerns, I started to restore my focus and get clear about my objectives. In this moment of reconciliation I realized that I needed an approach that could effectively motivate my students, introduce a comprehensible, yet, challenging, and relevant input. I needed to make my students less anxious when using English. By meeting these needs, I could motivate the three types of students I talked about in Chapter One. Reviewing literature, I found out that the Narrative Approach would be more relevant to my concerns and it would be worthy to consider its practical implications.

5.9 McQuillan and Tse's (1998) Narrative Approach

McQuillan and Tse (1998) developed the Narrative Approach which agrees in principle to take comprehension-based language teaching from the theme-specific vocabulary and specific-task lesson to the telling of captivating, understandable stories. This Narrative Approach is designed for beginning to intermediate-level language classes. The theoretical and methodological goal of the Narrative Approach is to provide as much fully comprehensible input as possible by telling stories and using individuals or groups of students as

actors. Observing the teacher or the students while they are acting facilitates the comprehensibility of the language used and creates a more realistic exposure to language. This theoretical background incorporates aspects from a wide variety of foreign language learning theories such as Krashen's (1983) Natural Approach and The Total Physical Response Storytelling Approach (TPRS).

Krashen (1985) argues that language items can be unconsciously acquired by learners being naturally exposed to it in the same way a child acquires his/her first language. This implicates that much emphasis on teaching grammar and new vocabulary list does not represent the natural way children learn their first language. This also carries the implication that a learner can rely primarily on the natural exposure to language items. Krashen (1985) also argues that learners need comprehensible input in order to acquire a second language. Having comprehensible input will positively impact learners' attitude and lower their affective filter. This affective filter refers to the way a learner interacts with a learning situation. If the learner's affective filter is low, it means that he/she is comfortable and less anxious. But if the affective filter is high, it means that the level of anxiety is high.

As far as TPRS is concerned, language is presented through the use of comprehensible interesting stories. Grammar and vocabulary items can be presented and repeated in a context that is both meaningful and comprehensible to the learners. Ray (1998) points out that lessons in TPRS go through seven consequent stages. In the first stage the target vocabulary, which should not exceed 3-4 new words a day, is presented. These words are

taught through gestures and actions, which the whole class is supposed to practice.

In the second stage, the teacher makes sure that students comprehend the new vocabulary by giving a sequence of orders. In the third stage, the teacher tells a story, using the target vocabulary of the day. Students act the story and actively represent the story told by the teacher. By acting the language used in the story, students make sure that they understand the language without necessarily having to translate it into their native language. The teacher also keeps checking for comprehension by asking questions about the story. This generates new ideas in the story. In the fourth stage, the teacher retells the story and asks more questions, while acting out the story him/herself.

This step serves provide more chances for indirect rehearsal of the target words and allows the actors to view the story from the point of view of the audience. In the fifth stage, students retell the story instead of the teacher either individually or in pairs or in groups. In the sixth stage, the teacher retells the story again from a different perspective. This can take place by changing either the subject or the tense, which allows for the introduction of different verb conjugations and tenses. The grammatical discussions are integrated into the stories. The same grammar point may be explained in the context of various different stories, or even the same story if needed. Thus students are constantly being made aware of the existence of specific grammatical structures in a multitude of meaningful contexts. In the final stage, students are asked to retell the story from the new perspective as well. Thus TPRS students produce language output in the form of retells, free writes,

discussions and answering questions during the stories. Thus, in the process of a TPRS lesson, students are flooded with comprehensible input and then progressively given more chances to use and modify the new words and stories they learn in a meaningful way. As far as the Narrative Approach is concerned, there are four main stages to be taken in teaching stories: (1) telling the core story, (2) revising the story, (3) the class tells the story, and (4) students create stories and books independently.

5.9.1 Telling the core story

McQuillan and Tse (1998) illustrate that teachers can start with telling a very short story which is considered the core story. Teachers can also make use of illustrations and drawings. The story needs to be very simple in the beginning. Teachers can display it on the overhead projector. Teachers are supposed to tell the story by dramatizing it so that it can be comprehensible from the beginning. In order to demonstrate the story's meaning, teachers can make use of their body language, pictures, gestures and props. Teachers retell the story two or three times. With the second and third telling, teachers should add more details to the core story to maintain students' interest. By the end of the third telling, the core story may have tripled in length and detail.

5.9.2 Revising the story

McQuillan and Tse (1998) illustrate that after telling the core story, teachers can tell different versions of it that are similar enough so that students can capitalize on the language acquired from the core story but distinct enough to constitute separate stories. Additionally, McQuillan and Tse (1998) suggest

that revising the story can be done by telling the same story with different characters' or endings.

5.9.3 The class creates a story

McQuillan and Tse (1998) suggest that in the third step teachers guide students in creating a class story, using blank frames on the overhead projector or on the board. Teachers draw the frames of the story as it develops. This step allows for student participation from the first day, even in the initial stages when students are not able to produce the target language. As students begin producing short phrases or simple sentences, teachers are required to act as an artist and ascribe while students take charge in creating the story. McQuillan and Tse (1998) illustrate that teachers should encourage students' creativity and foster students' ownership of the stories as much as possible. By doing so, students are more likely to gain confidence in their language ability if they feel that they have been authors from the initial stages of language acquisition.

5.9.4 Creating stories and books independently

McQuillan and Tse (1998) point out that after having students created a story, either in small groups or individually, students are given blank story forms to illustrate their story lines. When students are not yet able to produce language, they illustrate stories, and teachers are supposed to fill in the text and narrate them for the rest of the class. McQuillan and Tse (1998) expect that some more advanced students may write words or short phrases in the target language. At higher levels, students themselves may write the text for their stories and volunteer to narrate the stories for the class. In this stage, the

Narrative Approach moves students from merely listening to guided participation to independent story creation and narration. McQuillan and Tse (1998) argue that with supplying them with stories in ample quantity and of high interest, students will pay attention and will acquire the language necessary for communication, as the stories will contain a wide variety of natural language rich in vocabulary and grammatical complexity.

5.10 Conclusion

Talif (1995) does emphasize that teachers must be flexible in selecting and implementing the approaches that would best serve the learning outcome. She further illustrates that teachers should have to relate the approach to acquired pedagogical principles that serve as guiding principles for teachers. Talif (1995) further points out a more stimulating student-centered and process-oriented approach should be adopted to allow students to experience and appreciate the process of discovering and inferring from the context itself rather than being told by the teacher. Looking for pedagogical principles that can create a student –centered learning situation, I believed that The Narrative Approach is suitable to my students' learning context. The teaching procedures attempt to guide learners to salient points, provide support, and can be meaningful for all levels since the activities are challenging and everybody can participate. Based on this conclusion, I planned to conduct my storytelling classes using The Narrative Approach. Using storytelling in my classroom led to raise the second research question:

Q2. What effects would storytelling have on motivating my students?

CHAPTER SIX

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NARRATIVE APPROACH AT THE INITIAL STAGE OF THE INTERVENTION

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss my storytelling practices and the students' perceptions about the classroom activities and the motivational themes that emerged during the storytelling classes. In my discussion, I focused on the salient behaviors that caught my attention during my data collection period which lasted for more than two months in this initial stage of intervention. These behaviors were indicators of the motivational level among my students.

Owing to the various data collection tools used in this study, the data is presented under the instrument used to collect it. However, looking at the data as a whole, all the instruments were meant to complete and support each other without being trapped in any kind of redundancy. Being a participant observer enabled me to have "a critical lens" (Esposito and Winters, 2007, p.221). As I assumed the role of participant observer, I became the research instrument, attempting to produce a broad spectrum of details of storytelling sessions in my classroom in order to generate a thick description of spoken thoughts, actions and interactions of students. I was not only able to see how students were responding to the storytelling classes, but I was also able to interpret such responses according to the context they occurred in.

I used a brand new BENQ digital camera that was focused on the students' faces. The camera looked as one of the class furniture. But for me it was a reliable source for obtaining rich data. Observing the classroom through this camera enabled me to notice motivational behaviors and body language signals not observable from the insider's position as a classroom practitioner. Additionally, I was keen on recording my field notes. These tools together enabled me to release many emerging themes and acted as a check on my inferred themes. These themes were not only restricted to the classroom, but to the effect of the learning situation outside the class as well. These themes were not only focusing on the participants but they were also addressing how I was reacting as a language instructor with the ebb and the flow of the behaviors and reactions of my students. Using thick description and trying to have an understanding to the emerged themes was an exciting and an inspiring experience for me. By using thick description I was able to explore how, when, where and sometimes why a motivational behavior increased or decreased.

6.3 My storytelling practices

There were three periods for storytelling a week. Each period was almost 40 minutes. I held a discussion with my students about what stories we should tell. Some students mentioned that they had interesting stories at home. Some of them asked me to give them a chance to go shopping and purchase the stories they would like. I welcomed all students' ideas but I was worried if their selection would not be in line with the criteria I learnt from my literature review as mentioned in Chapter Five. So instead of sacrificing my first

democratic dialogue with my students, I took their opinions about four animal tales. These stories included "The Donkey Who Thinks He Is Very Clever", "The Little Monkey Wants The Moon", "The Talkative Mynah", and "The Fox In The Vineyard" respectively. These stories were published by Arwana Publications. The language used in these stories was neither too difficult nor too easy. The length of the stories varied from 15 to 16 pages. The font was big enough to read. The themes of the stories were relevant and meaningful for all levels. These themes addressed moral values presented in a funny style, an exciting context and were illustrated by colorful pictures. Each story included different activities such as singing, dancing, acting out, reading aloud individually and in groups, checking comprehension, and relating the story to students' life, all of which were in compliance with the Narrative Approach. Some variability existed with regard to vocabulary and complexity of language among the stories.

I asked my students about which story they would prefer to start with. I also promised them that if we finished the four stories, every body would be free to bring his/her own story to present in the class. The students liked this idea and they all preferred to start with the story entitled: "The Donkey Who Thinks He Is Very Clever". In order to present each story effectively, I was keen on tasting every word I would say ; for me, every sentence was a small drama: every sentence needed a vivid imagination ; I was thinking how I could say it ,how I could act it ,how I could maximize both enjoyment and understanding. I was doing that because I wanted to present, according to Krashen (1985) an interesting comprehensible input that could capture students' interest.

I also believed in the argument that good teaching is one –fourth preparation and three-fourths theatre (Pua-Africa, 2007). I was also much inspired by the argument that there is a wide variety of classroom activities that can elicit good responses from the child who has low verbal skills. A child can pour and measure. He/she can work on a puzzle, sing a song, and classify materials into sets. But to get the child to use more words in longer sentences, he/she must use the words within the context of action. The action should be strongly motivated that the child is impelled to speak in order to be part of the action (Paley, 1987 as cited in Mages, 2008).

I was keen on activating students' prior knowledge before telling the story. This practice depends on the empirical evidence that students can significantly recall more content details if they are given a chance to use their prior knowledge about a certain theme (Cunningham et al., 2004). I was keen on obtaining a picture for each word in the story. Using pictures was one of the strategies that helped me remember the incidents of the story I planned to tell. I used the Web as a resource to obtain these pictures that were relevant to the stories I planned to present. I used to ask students to predict what the story would be about based on these pictures. In order to generate ideas and involve as many students as I could, I would ask my students about what they could see in each picture. Every answer was welcomed. The low achievers used to respond in a simple way by giving me one single word.

In order to maximize the benefit of such practice, I responded to the students 'simple answers in a positive way, and then I would generate other new questions. For example:

Teacher: What do you see in this picture?
Student: A donkey.
Teacher: Good, but what is the donkey doing right now? Is he playing?
Student: No, he is walking.
Teacher: Excellent, but where is he walking?
Student: In a field.
Teacher: Wonderful, the donkey is walking in an orchard. Does your father have an orchard?
Student: No.
Teacher: Ok, no problem. But why is the donkey walking in the orchard?
Student: He wants to eat.
Teacher: What does he want to eat? Hamburger, chips, or cake?
Student: No of course. (Laughing)
Student: He wants to eat this green color.....What is it in English?
Student: Grass.
Teacher: Right. The donkey is looking for some grass to eat. Put Your hands on your stomach and act as if you are hungry
Students: (Acting and laughing)

In case there were some difficult words, I would type them in a big font and drill them four times till I would make sure that my students could read and pronounce them fluently. Then I would tell the story by dramatizing sentence by sentence. In order to demonstrate the story's meaning, I made use of my body language in addition to using pictures, gestures and props. I used to move quickly or slowly, jerkily or smoothly, with grand gestures, or with minor movements of my eyebrows. This all depended on the nature of the story. I adopted a different voice for each character. I used to raise and lower my voice. I was also keen on stressing the important words in a sentence. I was also keen on speaking slowly and enjoying the sound of the

words. This helped me convey the meaning vividly and capture students' attention.

I expanded the structure of the sentence gradually. For example:

Teacher: Once there was a donkey. (Acting the movement of the donkey)
Students: Once there was a donkey.
Teacher: Once there was a donkey walking in an orchard. (Acting and pointing out to the picture of the orchard)
Students: Once there was a donkey walking in an orchard.
Teacher: Once there was a donkey walking in a very big orchard. (Using my hands to show that the orchard is big)
Students: Once there was a donkey walking in a very big orchard.

In every new sentence, I would add more details to the core story to maintain students' interest. Gradually, the story grows in length and detail. This practice used to take 2 periods. During these periods, students would have participated by responding to the questions I raised, acting the part of the story that was narrated, or anticipating the incidents of the story and commenting on its incidents. After telling the incidents of the story orally, students would be asked to read the final script. Students would read the script loudly in groups. Then I would ask them to read it individually.

In the third period, students were asked to tell the whole story either in groups or individually. While students were presenting their stories, my role was mainly to support their trials, give them positive feedback and focus on their body language. In the fourth and fifth periods, students were asked to create different versions of the story they learnt. Students were allowed to capitalize on the language acquired from the core story but distinct enough to constitute different characters' and endings.

In the sixth period, students were encouraged to come up with their own stories. Some of them downloaded stories from the Web and presented them by using Power Point. Others were completely creative and made up their own stories without using the Web. Because of the different levels of students, their new stories showed a wide variety of differences in terms of the richness of the language and its grammatical complexity. However, all stories were welcomed and encouraged. By doing so, students gained confidence in their language ability because they felt that they were the authors of their stories. The more excited students were, the more excited I was. Such feeling turned my sense of obligation into pleasure and my sense of responsibility into a celebration of life. Having well-defined series of steps guided me along the way. The notes I made on my students' motivational behaviors were distilled into the following themes.

6.2.1 The increase of the motivational intensity of my students.

The increase of the motivational intensity of the participants was a salient theme during the storytelling sessions. Motivational intensity was measured by observing how much attention my students paid to me while I was teaching, how much they voluntarily participated and to what degree they were persistent to carry out challenging tasks (Gardner, 2005). Every time I had to retell the core incidents of the story and try to expand the structure a little, I had the feeling that some students would run out of patience. I was afraid, as McQuillan and Tse (1998) point out that students would look at the activity as a pedagogical exercise rather than a real natural story.

As a typical example of such type of students, student (B), a Sudanese student, said, with his crinkled eyebrows: "Come on teacher; tell us quickly what is next". Student (B) used to have quite good oral skills but his only problem was that he was that sort of a student who liked movements so much; he could not stay with a task for an extended period of time without disrupting the activities of other students. Many teachers looked at student (B) as a "trouble maker" and a "naughty" boy. If it happened that he was absent, teachers would live in peace! He himself told me that the principal was about to kick him out of the school!

One day his mother, a social studies teacher in the same school, did not allow him to play football. Being unable to stand being away from his friends, who were playing football in his neighborhood, he jumped from the third floor! I am narrating such an incident because it does reflect how overactive this boy is. However, being overactive did not mean that Student (B) was a stupid boy. On the contrary, there is evidence that the most naughty ,non-conformist boys are often among the most intelligent students and a lot of the intellectual energy of adolescent boys is directed at making lessons fun by off-task behavior. Fontenelle (1983) points out that some children whose level of intelligence falls within the middle limits of the superior range of intelligence above 1Q of approximately 125 and higher show overactive characteristics. Such children are often curious and talkative.

Fontenelle (1983) further illustrates that these children talk out of turn, do not pay attention, do not complete seat work, and refuse to do repetitive activities. They may be bored if the materials presented are not challenging enough. These overactive behaviors in these children come with their high level of intelligence. These children learn rapidly and easily but often prefer to learn by creative means rather than from an authority. Consequently, they seem to want to do their own thing in the classroom. Arguing in a similar vein, Pua-Africa (2007:4) points out that:

Children have shorter attentions spans, do not listen as well, and are not persistent, often jumping from one task to another, without finishing the other, their message is loud and clear, they are telling us that a lesson which has good content is not enough: for them to learn, they need to be entertained.

Previously, before conducting the storytelling sessions, I used to control this student by having very firm rules in the class. These rules included asking him to stand in front of the class if he talked without permission or, sometimes, he would be physically punished. But when I started the storytelling sessions, I found out that student's (B) movement was a part of my teaching approach; using body language and facial features gave such a boy, and many others, a chance to move and act in a very controlled way but still interesting. When a story started to uncover new incidents, student (B), like the rest of the class, was keeping his mouth open waiting to see what would come next!

After six sessions of storytelling classes, following the steps of the narrative approach, using my body language, starting from simple to more compound structures, well supported with interesting content, student (B) was volunteering in front of the class acting the role of a hen, a fox, a rabbit, and a goose. Student (B) was jumping and moving here and there, the class was filled with sounds of animals, the quack of the duck, the moo of the cow, the neigh of a horse, the baa of a goat, the cluck of a chicken, the meow of the cat..., everyone was laughing. "Who will tell us a story next time" I said. Student (B) was always among those students who voluntarily raised their hands and showed their interest in trying a new role in a new story.

After viewing a video tape of six consequent storytelling sessions, I noticed that student (B) could stay in a storytelling activity for an extended period of time. My whole attitude about student (B) changed to a much more positive one. One day I met him on the stairs of the second floor of the school during the break time; he looked at me anxiously and said: "Teacher, do we have a class now?" I replied: "we have already had our class!" Student (B) replied: "Oh teacher, I need more!" The student's (B) desire to have additional storytelling classes was vivid for me. By the passage of time, Student (B) had been accepted by his classmates as a contributing member that always brought fun to the class by the roles he performed in the storytelling classes. One day I was teaching the fourth grade , a different class, it was the third period, all of a sudden somebody knocked on the door of the class , I was very happy when I saw student (B) bringing me a new story he wanted to read.

In such a case like student (B) , I agree with Mycroft's (1971) argument that:

In caring for another person I encourage him, I inspire him to have the courage to be himself. My trust in him encourages him to trust himself and to be worthy of the trust. Perhaps few things are more encouraging to another than realize that his growth evokes admiration, a spontaneous delight or joy, in the one who cares for him. He experiences my admiration as assuring him that he is not alone and that I am really for him. His awareness of my delight in his efforts to grow has a way of recalling him to himself: help him realize and appreciate what he has done. It is as if I said to him " look at yourself now, see what you did, see what you can do (Mayeroff, 1971, as cited in, Loring, 1997, p.143).

Student (B) was a typical one of many participants who did not have the ability to keep their attention for an extended period of time. The element of suspense was a source of keeping the students attentive the whole storytelling session, paying attention and impatiently waiting for the next incident. The students were scrupulously paying attention to the movements of my hands, my lips and my body language. It was not surprising to me when I found that the students unconsciously started to copy the way I spoke, moved and behaved. Making use of my students' prior knowledge enabled me to bring about a rich motivating environment for participation. Students were encouraged to predict the story characters and their behaviors by eliciting their hypotheses based on initial interactions with story material (such as title, pictures, and their knowledge of story concepts). Every student was able to say something about the story.

To make sure that students like to exert effort in learning English, I asked the participants to prepare stories to tell in the class. To my surprise, the response was positive from all types of students, the low achievers, the high achievers and the reluctant readers. Student (S), a very quiet student, said to me one day: "I always train myself before the mirror". This indicated to me that these students can persist in learning something they like to do. I was also surprised when I took some books from my bag and said: "Who is interested to read a story?" All the students raised their hand and shouted: "Me, teacher! Me teacher! Feeling the need for more stories, the administration provided the students with a small reading corner in the second floor. When students started to bring new stories to the reading corner, I started to believe in the argument that children learn for themselves when they are personally involved and committed to activities that are meaningful to them. Young children are curious and come to school eager to learn. Educators' task is to build on this natural motivation (Cunningham et al., 2004).

6.2.2 Students' interest in having storytelling activities

Students became more interested in having storytelling classes. Of all the categories into which the data in this study fell, interest was the most obvious. I can claim that this category reached more students immediately than did any other theme. The far –reaching effects of this category were felt in every other theme observed within the classroom. There was spontaneous display of

enjoyment, enthusiasm which spilled over from every storytelling activity. Time was running fast and nobody would tell me "the bell rang!"

One day while students were busy watching one of their classmates telling a story, I was busy looking at their faces. Student (E), a very enthusiastic boy, caught my sight; he was moving his right toes up and down; he was dancing while he was sitting listening to a song a storyteller was singing. Moving his toes was not a sign of anxiety because his facial features were also telling me how happy he was. Enjoyment and enthusiasm were contagious components of a storytelling class. When "once upon a time" was said, students would be all ears and would start gazing at me trying to know "what is next", while I was gazing at them trying to read their faces to look for any sign of motivational attributes. The reactions of the students toward the storytelling classes made me believe in Brown's (2005:2) argument that:

A child leans forward, head cupped in hands, eyes wide with anticipation, listening to a story: This is an image for all time. Whether that child is seated beside an open fire in the Stone Ages, on a rough bench in a mediaeval fairground, or in a modern day classroom, the message of the image is the same: Children love a good story.

One of my concerns during the storytelling sessions was the time of some periods and the seating of some students in the class. As a matter of fact, on Mondays, one of my English classes was always scheduled the sixth period which was the last period in a long school day. To cap it all, my students used to have a sports class before their English class. After playing for forty minutes, students used to come to my class sweating, tired, and thirsty. It was a real challenge for me to keep these haggard faces active. Surprisingly, the

desire to hear a new story and the eagerness to enjoy a new adventure outweighed students' feeling of being exhausted. Students' desire to participate during these periods in spite of being tired made some of them feel unlucky if the chance for answering a question was given to somebody else. "I always raise my hand, but you don't allow me to answer, I feel unlucky, but no problem, I will try next time" (Student S).

I was also very concerned about those students, who were sitting in the back of the class. I was worried that they would lose their interest and could not keep their attention for long. But to my surprise, there was participation from all directions; in the back, in the middle and in the front of the class. I felt that the class was a big stage although it was four meters by three meters wide. Students' interest in the English class was vivid to me when more than a student asked me to take additional periods: "Please, take the Math period" Student (B) said." Why do not you take the third and the fourth periods? Student (K) said. This desire for taking additional storytelling classes never extinguished!

6.2.3 Self confidence and Low Anxiety

Finding a way to get Type Three students feel more confident and less anxious was a real challenge for me. One example of the low achievers was student (F) who, one day told me:

Dear teacher, my problem is that I do not understand everything you teach in English. I need you teach me in Arabic every sentence. Teach me the important words. This is my problem if you teach in English. Teach me in Arabic, I

will participate more and more (Student F, the sixth session).

According to Collins (1996), having weak language skills often exacerbate students' feelings of unworthiness and result in withdrawn behavior. There is evidence that there is connection between academic achievement and self-esteem. Low achievement, for even a short period of time, results in a lowered self-concept. Conversely, a lowered self concept results in less academic success. Consequently, these students feel psychologically unprotected and are unwilling to take the academic risks necessary to achieve in an academic situation. Additionally, the way students regard themselves strongly influences their success in learning (Borba, 1989).

A false view of their capacities makes them overly timid .These beliefs prevent them from developing habits that are conducive to learning (Ruggiero, 1998). In order to deal with these students, Ron (1992) points out that it is very important to deal with them individually so that they can express their best way of learning. They also need to be literate in order to feel successful (Collins, 1994). Furthermore, they need to be encouraged to "replace the attitude "I am inherently wise and good" with "I have the capacity to be wise or foolish, good or evil. Which I am in any specific situation, or typically, depends upon my choices" (Ruggiero, 1998:49).

I was much inspired by Vygotsky's (1986) scaffolding concept. According to Vygotsky (ibid), a scaffold is anything that a teacher or more capable peer provides that enables the student to perform a skill or master a concept. In order to encourage the low achievers, I met them together during the break time to read and discuss what I would present in the coming sessions. Margolis and McCabe (2006) argue that although it is often important to provide assistance before, during, and after the mandated lessons, often the most important time is before. Assistance before the lesson allows teachers to proactively reduce difficulty and to instill confidence. It allows teachers to find and eliminate barriers to success, such as unknown words or insufficient background. I gave the low achievers stories written in a big font so that they would feel relaxed when they read them. I also wrote each sentence in one piece of paper. I read the sentences for them, I let them repeat the sentences many times and understand their meaning.

Sometimes I used Arabic to translate some difficult words. Once the students understood the stories, I would ask them to prepare themselves to participate in the coming sessions. When it was time to present a new story in the class, the low achievers would have a sufficient background about it. Although the story would be no longer new to them, but feeling that they understood the meaning of the story was a good way to eliminate the low achievers' anxiety.

Feeling that they could narrate their story to others was also a motivating element for students. In this respect, Booth and Barton argue that:

Children are in a privileged position as they develop into storytellers and storymakers, not fitting easily into stages or ages, but working with stories in order to understand the process of building life narratives, telling their tales out loud to find out what they have said and how they could say it more effectively (p.23)

Students were empowered when they started to develop a belief that success or failure was within their control. In the beginning the low achievers were shy, but after six sessions of individual tutoring during the break time, mostly everyone wanted to go up to tell a story. They changed from a state of "external locus of control" into a state of "internal locus of control". A locus of control orientation is a belief about whether the outcomes of actions are dependent on what people do (internal control orientation) or on events outside their personal control (Hans, 2000). After successful individual tutoring sessions with student (F), he could tell a story in front of the class. A week later from his presentation, I asked him if he desired to tell a new story in front of the class. He said: "Teacher I was anxious before because I was afraid of the trial. But when I felt myself successful I started to believe that it is not difficult, I can do it". After eight consecutive sessions of storytelling, I observed that the low achievers were encouraged to overcome some psychological barriers; they noticed that moving from a simple structure to a more complicated one was a very simple and easy way of building their vocabulary as well as their confidence. When I told a story, as I mentioned before, I gradually built both the structure of the sentence as well as the structure of the story.

This process enabled the low achievers to retell the story confidently. The simplicity of these procedures was one of the salient advantages of the narrative approach. Repeating the story together helped the low achievers participate without having the feeling that such drilling was meant to correct their mistakes or enhance their poor practice. Beale (2002) points out that "in order to learn new information, two factors are needed: time and repetition" (p.117). Cook (2001) also contends that repetitions are more predictable and create a more relaxed atmosphere, and are therefore a central feature in language play. By the sixth session, the low achievers felt that the task of telling a story was not that difficult but it was an interesting challenge that they could try without being criticized. They became able to retell the story in front of their friends regardless how short they could talk. In order to maximize their confidence, I asked the students to tell their stories by making use of the PowerPoint program.

There is a growing evidence to suggest that children are engaged in a wide range of digitized literacy practices from birth (Marsh, 2004). A major US study conducted for the Kaiser Foundation surveyed over 1000 parents of 0-6 year olds. They found that young children were using screen media (television, video/DVD, computers, console games) for approximately two hours per day. Young children are also accultured to family social practices which utilize a range of contemporary technologies (Rideout, Vandewater and Wartella, 2003).

By the time they start nursery education; many children are already competent in using a wide range of technological artifact and have developed understanding about their uses in wider social practices. However, this knowledge is not always recognized or built upon meaningful ways (Plowman and Stephen, 2003).

I wondered if storytelling can be presented by PowerPoint program so that students can use their multiple intelligences while they are presenting their stories. Research in UK suggests that high ICT use leads to a change in learners' learning style and students become able to study better by themselves and get more independent and not so reliant on teachers to give them answers (Prashnig, 2006). Additionally, although face-to-face interaction is one of the most important ingredients in reading readiness, using computer helped my students learn to read; the PowerPoint presentation helped reduce the state of anxiety of many students in my class.

In this respect, Macaulay (2002) points out that some researchers suggest that the adverse effects of anxiety on learning can be compensated for, using memory strategies. However anxiety can also negatively affect the effectiveness of memory strategies while relaxation improves it. Macaulay (2002) further argues that this implies that a treatment comprising anxiety reduction and memory strategy components ought to both reduce anxiety and improve learning performance. So for me, when students made use of the PowerPoint program when telling their stories, it worked as an auxiliary to recall their thoughts, express their ideas and enrich their imagination.

Additionally, I realized that when every time a student used PowerPoint in telling his /her story, there were some motivational factors working behind: students were to prepare the slides, type the script of the story, know how to read the script, know how to act the script. Moreover, some of the students were creative in supporting the script with very reflective pictures. A clear example of students who became more confident to participate were student (A) and student (P), very shy Yemeni twins. Student (A) and Student (P) used to be too shy to talk; they were sitting in the back of the class. Student (A) used to be sitting in the fifth row in the right corner while student (P) used to be in the last row in the left corner. Every time I asked them to participate, they would not dare to look in my eyes and they would put their eyes down instead; they were trying to send me a signal of retreat from that risky participation. These signals indicated that they wanted to "hide out" (Brozo, 1990).

After starting my storytelling classes, I noticed a drastic change in their performance and their self-confidence. After attending six sessions of storytelling classes, Student (A) was keen on sitting in the second row of the class, his eyes were focusing on me, sending me new signals that would say: "I am closer now, teacher". Student (A) became able to acquire new words and new structures. He was also able to complete a sentence or act a word. Such noticeable participation grew step by step and story by story: Instead of sitting in his desk, raising his hand to answer a question, complete a story, or suggest an end, he went beyond my expectation; he asked me voluntarily to

come out in front of the whole class to tell the story: "The Donkey Who Thinks He Is Very Clever".

On starting his acting, I asked the class to give student (A) a very big hand. When he started telling the story he was able to come up with the main ideas. He sometimes stopped to recall one word or another, I was reinforcing him: "good, go on". Student (A) was responding well, he was acting, he was using his hand and his head, sometimes when he forgot what to say he would hide his face by his right hand, but he was able to face his audience again, he could successfully complete the story, I shouted loudly: " You did it!", "Give him a big hand". In this moment, student (A) managed to overcome his affective filter and gain more confidence. By the course of the intervention cycle, I was keen on following student's (A) progress and how his experience with storytelling grew: The following quote was a part of what he said:

I learnt a lot and a lot. I had the feeling that I wanted to learn. I felt that I participated in my English classes more than I did in the other subjects. When I was raising my hand, completing a sentence, retelling a story, I was caught by a strange feeling that I cannot describe (silence). You see? I don't ignore the fact that I was sometimes afraid I may make mistakes but I was able to participate because the classes were interesting. Now when my mother goes shopping in China Town, I always speak with the salespersons in English, I think I can bargain well". (Student A, after eight sessions)

The above quotation drew my attention to the fact that student (A) did not only manage to overcome the state of anxiety inside the class, but also he managed to speak English outside for pure communicational purposes which is one of the positive motivational factors I planned to achieve.

Student (P) was another classic example for a poor girl who experienced success after a long time of fear of trial. The difference between student (P) and her brother, student (A) , was that she had to overcome two barriers; barrier number one was how she could tell a story and she never did that before; barrier number two, like many girls in the class, she was afraid that boys would laugh at her if she made a mistake. To help her experience succeed and fear nobody, I sat with student (P) alone and read her the story entitled "*The Frog and the Bull*". I typed the main incidents of the story in a big font so that she could read them easily. I printed out the script and handed her over. Having the script written in big font was a good strategy to help her read well. After reading the sentence five times for her, I asked her to train herself to present the story in the coming session. She suggested using the PowerPoint program. It was a good idea that appealed to me so much. After 11 sessions, student (P) presented her story. She did not want to be in front of the boys, she insisted to stand in front of the row of the girls instead.

She could not use her body language and her voice was little bit low. However I was astonished at her creativity in matching the incidents of the story with very expressive slides. I asked her how much effort she exerted in preparing her PowerPoint presentation, she answered: "May be half an hour, or an hour, I am not sure of the time, but it was easy!" I appreciated her successful trial and as usual I shouted: "give her a big hand". She could participate and experience some confidence.

Looking at the confidence that the low achievers developed, I held to the belief that it is crucial for the low achievers to be routinely given materials and assignments on which moderate effort will likely produce success (Guthrie and Davis, 2003; Guthrie and Humenick, 2004; Linnenbrink and Pintrich, 2003; Margolis, 2005). It is also crucial to highly motivate them to deal with the difficulty of the language (Okada et al., 1996) and it is important to make them feel comfortable to lower the level of their anxiety (Oxford and Shearin, 1996). I tried my best to establish an atmosphere of informality in the sense that everybody could say what he/she wanted to say since there was no one correct end for a story: every end was acceptable and every imagination was highly appreciated. The students felt that their work, their ideas, and their voices matter. They believed that their input would be respected and that their mistakes would not be held against them but treated as learning opportunities.

I was keen on appreciating my students' work and not making them feel intimidated. I remember when student (I), a very talented extrovert girl, was retelling her own story. She was very confident of herself. But in her slides, there were some spelling mistakes, like "toll tree" instead of "tall tree". Some students in the class raised their hands to point at these spelling mistakes but I deliberately paid a deaf ear to them and I elaborated how creative that girl was. After finishing her presentation, I read her slides again and I pointed out that there were some typing mistakes that would not underestimate the creative work the girl did.

I wanted to enrich a deep appreciation for what the girl did. I was keen on protecting students' fragility by encouraging their personal success. In this respect, McTaggart (1994) points out that teachers unlock a realm of opportunities for success in the classroom. Their very willingness to be accepting without displaying a negative devaluing of efforts builds a risk-free environment in which students can thrive and grow. In such an atmosphere, my students enjoyed a sense of informality that stimulated them to produce their best work. In this respect, Maslow (1970) argues that if teachers could give up their demand for perfection from their students, and they, in turn, could give up their demands for perfection from their teachers, how much more teachers might accomplish in the short span of time they are entrusted with their care (Maslow, 1970 as cited in Margaret, 1994). This atmosphere created the concept of community especially among boys who could fumble and make mistakes without being scorned or laughed at (Peterson, 1992).

The sense of community among the boys was maximized when they could tell stories in groups; every one could have a role to play or tell the story from his/her point of view. There was a sense of integration among them; each one was completing the role of the other. The theme of integration was the fruit of a sense of community in the classroom. In the story of *The Proud Hen*, four boys were performing different roles, one was performing the proud hen, the second one was a duck, the third was a goose and the fourth was an ostrich. I did not choose them; they selected themselves by themselves. However, what caught my attention was that they were coming from different countries : student (E) , Syrian, was a very fluent boy at English, student (D) , Egyptian, was an average student, student (A) , Yemeni , and student (F) , Saudi, were

low achievers. But in the context of the story, their identities were not as important as the roles they were playing. There was much focus on the performance rather than the performer; there was much laughter on the action rather than the actor! Every body was quite sure that his role would never be complete in isolation from the others; they were looked at as a group in a community. A group that was capable of hosting individuals of different types: the high, the average and the poor! The low achievers were genuinely involved in the work of the group, even their abilities were undeveloped and their contribution was small. The identities of both the novice and the advanced are bound up in their participation in the community. They are motivated to learn the values and practices of the community to keep their identity as community members (Woolfolk, 2007).

My then objective was to enable the positive learning-self-concept cycle to begin. I was sure that success breeds success (Lumsden, 1994). I believed that when a student experiences success, he or she will begin to evolve a more positive self image which can eliminate his feeling of anxiety. As a result, he or she will be less afraid of failure, and can mingle in the community and use academic successes to improve self-concept. Higher self esteem then results in increased academic achievement (Cove and Love, 1996).

6.2.4 Positive attitude toward the Teacher

Being a member in the classroom community, I felt a warm relation between me and my students. There was a positive attitude toward the English instructor. Joining the Director Generals from Saudi Arabia in their visit to Malaysia for exchanging their experience in the field of education, I could not come to the school for some days. Back to school, before I stepped into the class, three girls saw me coming upstairs. They happily cheered: "the English teacher is back". I read in my students' eyes their strong desire for new stories. Student (B) shook my hand, held it firm, and with a smile on his lips, he said: "We missed you teacher. Never do it again". Another girl said: "Why did not you come that long time?" The smile was drawn on my students' faces and I even felt the wall, the board and the desks sharing the students their pleasure for a new story to be told. I wondered: "Why do students like my teaching now?"

The most interesting thing students liked much about me was the way I acted the stories: "You act very well. You make us understand the story by acting. Your voice is also expressive." Student (A) said. I felt that my students were really interested. It was not a theory, but it was a fact reflected on my students' faces! I did not use any extrinsic rewards to motivate my students. Intrinsic rewards were driven from their readings and storytelling classes. Although the school used to give every teacher artificial banknotes to motivate students in the classroom, I did not use them at all and no student asked me either.

I do not ignore the fact that I sometimes felt that I was over enthusiastic about making every participant enjoy learning. Such desire was sometimes accompanied by a feeling of extreme exhaustion; however the desire to accomplish my goals as a teacher was an extremely rewarding experience. I wanted to feel satisfied knowing that I had given all that I could into enabling my students' motivational behaviors. I would feel encouraged to know that my passion had become someone else's; I started to work as an actor in the sense that a big part of my job was to properly convey my passion for English. I saw a large part of my job as remaining excited about my teaching. I was of the opinion that teachers should never make their students feel that their performance was not up to their expectations (Ross, 1996). I was also of Pua-Africa's (2007:4) opinion that "happy teachers are fun teachers; they use everything in their arsenal to teach-songs, drama and the use of a magical storytelling voice to transport their students to the places in books". She also emphasizes that teachers who cannot keep students involved and excited in the classroom should not be there. She further points out that teachers can influence learning by the way they conduct themselves as teachers. Pua-Africa (2007:4) concludes that "the moment our students' faces reflect their excitement, we will know we have connected". After 24 sessions of storytelling, telling and acting, watching my students perform their stories and presenting them, I felt and observed that I "have connected"; a voice inside my head sometimes screamed: "It worked". I kept that voice alive inside me trying to balance the different hats I had to wear: teacher, participant/observer and researcher. I was also keen to hear other voices straight from the participants themselves.

6.3 The findings of the survey

The purpose of the survey was to consolidate my reflection which was based on my observation as well as my diaries. The Survey was administered after two months of the intervention.

6.3.1 Integrativeness

In order to measure the integrativeness factor among students, they were asked to state (1) to what degree they learn English in order to interact with members of the second language community, (2) to what degree they are interested in learning English, and (3) to what degree they like the second language community.

Item	Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
1	I learn English in order to interact with members of the second language community.	- -	1 4.3%	22 95.7%
2	I am interested in learning English.	1 4.3%	2 8.7%	20 87.0%
3	I like to deal with the second language community.	1 4.3%	3 13.0%	19 82.6%

Table 1.1 Integrativeness

Pondering over the responses to item no.1, it is evident that 95.7% of the participants agree that they learn English in order to interact with members of the second language community while only 4.3% are neutral. Considering the response to item no.2, it is crystal clear that 87.0% of the class agree that they have interest in learning English, 8.7% are not sure, and only 4.3% disagree that they are interested in learning English. As for item 3, it is quite

clear that 82.6% of the participants have motivation to deal with members of the second language community, 13.0% are not sure and only 4.3% of them do not show readiness to be open to the second language community. As far as the first three items are concerned, they measured only the level of integrativeness among the participants.

6.3.2 Attitude toward the learning situation

In order to measure students' attitude toward the learning situation, students were asked to respond to two positively worded items as follows:

Item	Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
4	I like my English instructor.	1 4.3%	3 13.0%	19 82.6%
5	I like my English course.	3 13.0%	- -	20 87.0%

Table 6.2 Attitude toward the learning situation

Studying carefully table 6.2, it is evident that about 82.6% of the participants are satisfied with their language instructor, only 4.3% of the participants do not like the English instructor and 13 % of the students are neutral. Although only 13.3% of the participants are satisfied with the course, it is obvious that 87. % of them like it. This suggests that storytelling classes are motivating. As far as the fourth and the fifth items are concerned, they measured only the attitude of the students toward the learning situation.

6.3.3 Motivation

Motivation is measured with three positively worded items, (1) Motivational intensity, (2) the desire to learn English, and (3) attitude toward learning English. The following table shows the results of the three items:

Item	Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
6	I work hard at learning English .	3 13.0%	4 17.4%	16 69.6%
7	I have a desire to learn English.	1 4.3%	3 13.0%	19 82.6%
8	Learning English is important for me.	1 4.3%	1 4.3%	21 91.3%

Table 6.3 Motivation

Pondering over the results in the above table, in spite of the fact that there were 13. % of the participants who were not exerting effort in learning English, 69.6% of them agreed that they work hard in learning English. It is also noticeable that 17.4% of the participants are not sure about the effort exerted to learn English. It is also evident that only 1% of the participants do not show a desire to learn English while more than 82% like learning English. It is also evident that more than 91% of the participants think that learning English is important. These findings indicate that interest in learning English is very high in comparison with the previous results of the first questionnaire. Only 4.3 % do not think of the importance of English and 4.3 % are not sure about whether they will need English in future or not.

6.3.4 Instrumentality

Instrumental orientation is measured by asking students to express to what degree they learn English for employment.

Item	Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
9	I think learning English is good for practical purposes such as to improve my occupational opportunities.	1 4.3%	3 13.0%	19 82.6%

Table 6.4 Instrumentality

Studying the above table, it is obvious that the percentage of the participants who want to learn English for instrumental orientation is still high. 82.6% of the participants think that English can help them get a good job while 13%. Of the students are neutral. Additionally, 4% of the participants do not study English for instrumental reasons.

6.3.5 Anxiety

In order to measure the level of anxiety among my students, they were asked to state to what degree they feel calm in their second language class and to what degree they feel calm when speaking English outside the class.

Item	Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
10	I feel calm in my second language class.	5 21.7%	1 4.3%	17 73.9%
11	I feel calm when speaking English outside the class.	2 8.7%	2 8.7%	19 82.6%

Table 6.5 Anxiety

Having a critical look at table 6.5, it is noticeable that 73.9% of the students feel confident in the classroom while 21.7% of the participants still feel anxious. Such a result indicates that the level of anxiety in the English class became lower after the intervention. Similarly, 81.8% of the participants feel confident to talk in English outside the classroom. However there are still 8.7 % of the participants who do not have that confidence. As far as the tenth and the eleventh items are concerned, they measured only the level of Anxiety. Although the previous results describe the percentage of responses to each item separately, it is very useful to have a holistic view on the results as a whole. The following graph shows the means of the motivational factors together.

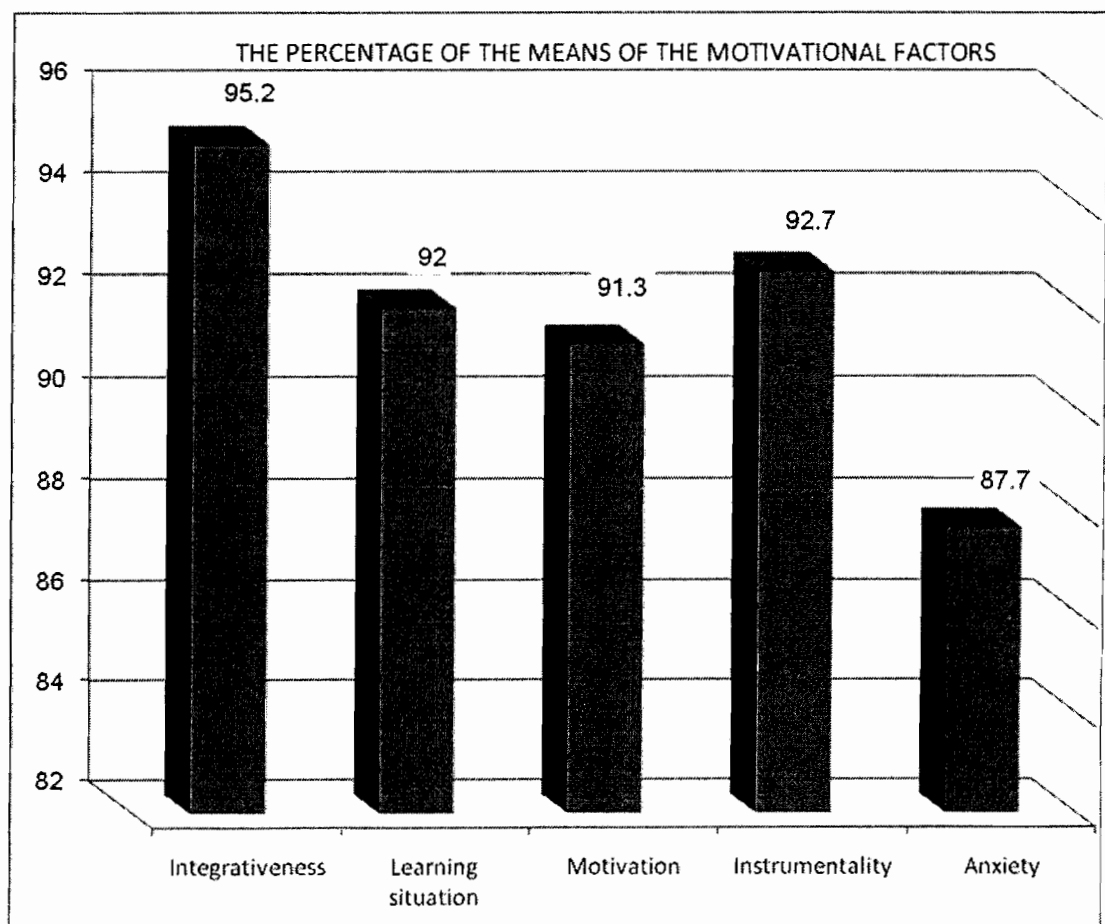


FIG 6.1 The integrative motivational factors

Looking at the above chart, 92 % of the participants have a positive attitude toward the new teaching practices and the storytelling classes. Such new practices helped so much in attracting students' attention and could successfully increase the motivational state of 91.30% of them. Students' positive attitude toward the new practices and the storytelling classes could be attributed to the fact that there was some learning in all the fun they had in the storytelling classes. It also seems that the nature of the practices in a storytelling class could address the physical, emotional, conceptual and educational characteristics of my participants (Brewster et al., 2003; Nunan and Lamb, 1996; Cameron, 2001).

Also it is evident that the new teaching practices resulted in establishing an encouraging atmosphere that helped increase the confidence of my students. Such fact is illustrated by considering that more than 87.70 % of the participants expressed that they experienced confidence inside and outside the class. Such rise in confidence seemed to have encouraged 96% of the students to desire to use English outside the classroom. Because of an intense involvement in language-based activities, it is also clear that many of these students were comfortably using English in the classroom. Because of that comfortable use of language, the state of motivation got much better (Moffett and Wagner, 1983). By having a comparison between the states of students' motivation before after the intervention, we can draw a decisive conclusion that students' motivation noticeably rose.

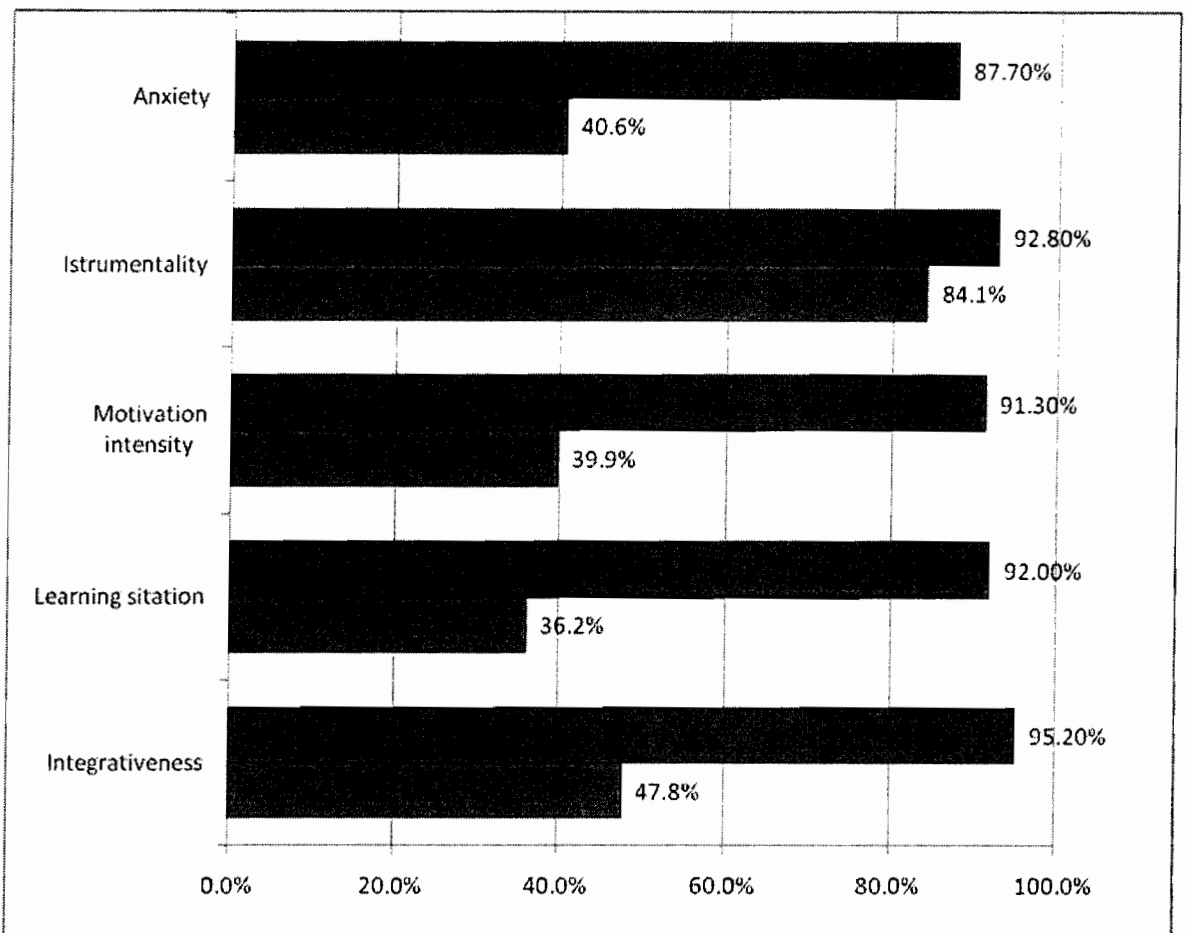


FIG 6.2 Comparison between the first and second cycle.

6.4 The Focus –group findings

In order to substantiate the results obtained from observation and the questionnaire, I conducted a focus group- interview. Coding the themes, I found out that they were in line with the findings of the survey and the observed themes. The themes were categorized and coded based on the feedback of the students.

6.4.1 The learning situation

Attempting to know students' real impression about the storytelling classes and my teaching practices, I asked: What is your opinion about the storytelling classes and my teaching practices? In order to have a clear picture about students' responses, I recorded the interview and transcribed so that I can code out the themes. There were three themes obtained from students' responses. (1) There was fun in the storytelling classes, (2) there was learning in the storytelling classes, and (3) there was challenge in the storytelling classes. Having these three elements, fun, learning and challenge, made the new teaching practices very motivating. The following responses are examples for these themes:

	Fun	Learning	Challenging
Students' responses	"It is exciting. I like your body language" (Student B).	Your teaching was very useful to me. if I did not understand English, I could understand from your gestures" (Student W).	"I was also laughing when you sometimes cross out some words from the sentences and ask us to fill them quickly. I was also very interested when you were asking us to retell the whole story" (Student Q).
	Your teaching makes use enthusiastic to participate" (Student F).	"From the effect of your teaching I imagine the story and live with its incidents as if they take place in front of me .it is full of incidents. It makes me talk"(Student A).	"I liked the way you used in the English classes. You used to start with simple short sentences and then you make it bigger. You erased the sentence and ask us about them to see who can call them back. You asked us to write on the board the stories. They were fascinating" (Student I).
	"I did not feel bored because of the pictures you used" (Student I).		
	I liked so much your way of acting and singing" (Student C).		

Table 6.6 The learning situation

These findings support the argument that stories do teach by attraction rather than compulsion and invite rather than impose, and capture the imagination and touch the heart (Lickona, 1991: 79).

6.4.2 Motivation

In order to know to what degree students work hard at learning English, I asked them the following question: Do you work hard at learning English? Students' responses revealed that there was a desire to learn English and an intention to exert effort.

The stories were fascinating. I am among those who want to learn English. I love it I hope that if I grew up, I will join the English Department (Student J).

Because it is really interesting. I read stories from a long time. But now I like to read more." I need to have many stories but not during the exam days. I was paying attention. I must learn more and more so I can be able to interact with the people outside (Student L).

6.4.3 Confidence

On asking the students: Are you confident when you speak English in the class and outside the class?, students mentioned that they gained much confidence .On asking them: How did you gain this confidence?, they attributed that state of confidence to the simplicity of the teaching, the clearness of the instructions, the easiness of the stories and the fun the stories brought. The following responses are examples for this claim:

The stories were not hard. I participated many times (Student A).

The stories were clear and simple, I tried to participate, I correctly answered some questions and I could not answer some of them (Student W).

I learnt that who wanted to write a story or make up a tale, he or she should exert some effort to make it interesting (Student Q).

6.4.4 Instrumentality

On asking my students: "Do you think learning English is important for you?" most of them expressed that they believed in the importance of English and they thought that it would be very important for obtaining a good career. Their attitude about the importance of English was quite stable and there was no noticeable difference between before and after the intervention.

6.4.5 Conclusion

The second circle was very vital for me to answer the second research question: What effects would storytelling have on motivating my classroom students? It is clear that students were motivated during the storytelling classes, they had challenging and meaningful tasks. Consequently they had a positive attitude toward the learning situation. The storytelling classes hooked into their interests and lives. They had ample chance to use English in a comfortable way. The affective filter was quite low. Consequently, students felt free to express themselves, experiment and take risks, not solely in the

target language, but also social risks (Krashen, 1985). Also the selected stories successfully matched with the different levels of academic difficulty for my students. Type One students were given the chance to tell their own stories and feel free to change the ends of the stories the way they liked. Type Two felt that the selected stories were interesting and funny. They were not forced to read them but they were caught by seeing the stories being acted in front of them.

Consequently, the pleasure driven from the storytelling presentation made them eager to tell their own stories as well. Carried out in a democratic way and their opinions were heard to. Moreover, it is evident that the Narrative Approach was effective in conducting the storytelling sessions. As for the low achievers, they became confident after they were encouraged to retell the stories I trained them on. Based on my reflection in the first cycle, my teaching style changed and ripened in the second cycle .It changed in terms of deciding a new effective approach to use, understanding the procedures of that approach, and having confidence and skill in handling that approach with perseverance and courage to carry on the work with good humor and enjoyment .Given that, I answered the second research question. However, although such change in my teaching practices could successfully bring about a motivating atmosphere among my participants, I noticed that some of the girls in my class were very much worried about the presence of the boys and such feeling was affecting their performance.

6.5 Boys and girls don't want to work together

Out of a class of 23, there were eight girls. Although I was trying to use teaching methods geared toward both sexes, I observed that girls were not comfortable with the presence of the boys; if it happened that a boy passed by one of them, she would keep herself as far as possible till he could pass by despite the fact that there was enough space to move freely. Also if I accidentally put a boy's book on one of their desks, they would express their disgust. Moreover, I noticed that the girls in my class could not use their body language in telling their stories.

To my surprise the Math teacher for the same class also observed that the relation between the girls and the boys was not encouraging. "Girls did not feel comfortable in the presence of the boys" he said. To cap it all, I was terribly shocked when a Yemeni quiet girl who said : "teacher: you let the boys talk more than the girls and you are focusing on them more than us, it would be much better if we have our own class." (Student J, after two months of storytelling).

At that stage, I was not fully aware of the boys' dominance in my class. But Student's (J) comment made me reconsider the argument that boys dominate classroom space and teacher attention (Francis, 2000; Warrington and Younger, 2000; Skelton, 2001) and belittle girls' contributions (Lees, 1993; Skelton, 2001). It seemed true that girls' participation was qualitatively and quantitatively different from that of boys (Condravy, Skirboll, and Taylor, 1998). With more reflection, I realized that boys used to claim more my time, even when I was making a conscious effort to be even-handed. But to me it was not

an issue of preference to the boys as Student (J) thought. But owing to the fact that the number of the boys outnumbered the girls, some of the girls felt that the class was much dominated by boys. Student's (J) complain made me also reflect on the argument that the extensive research on "sex segregation among children" suggests that when boys and girls have a choice of companions, they more often separate than integrate (Thorne, 1993).

Children bring the knowledge that they are differently gendered, along with the need to display their difference in particular ways, into the earliest stage of schooling. What constitutes sex role appropriate behavior is confirmed by, and negotiated through their interaction with other children (Millard, 1997).

Oakley (1972) provided the conceptual tools for understanding the role of gender in the field of education. According to Oakley (1972), gender is a social construct and its links to socialization can be understood primarily as an aspect of gender identity formation. Within this social construct, the concept of cultural identity began to emerge as a much more complex element in the study of male and female youth's lived experiences of schooling. I started to wonder whether the issue is a matter of identity or inequity. I mean was the girls' concern related to their sense of their own sexual identification and their resistance to the presence of other identifications (Weir, 1997), or the issue was related to the girls' feeling that I was not fair in paying them the same attention the boys received. In other words, was the problem concerned with the feminine - masculine paradox or was it more related to my unconsciousness of being unfair with the girls?

These questions brought to mind the concept of the hidden curriculum which acknowledges that learning extends the boundaries of the official curriculum and may have inadvertent effects. The concept of the hidden curriculum implicates that within the context of the school much informal learning takes place concerning issues of gendered identities (Kehily, 2001).

These questions also brought to mind the importance of accounting for gender inequalities and the issue of marginalization in schools (Gordon, Holland and Lahelma, 2000). The idea that boys and girls are quite different in character was a key organizing principle in the education system in Britain. Up to and including much of the twentieth century, girls and boys were often educated separately (Purvis, 1991).

To explore the situation, I planned for the girls to critically begin questioning why they continued to let the boys do most of the talking in class discussions, why some of them tied so much of their identity to their appearance. I also began incorporating free writing which give them the chance to share freely what they were feeling and thinking about being in a mixed class. It was through this writing that I saw the most empirical evidence that the students were reflecting on the learning situation. The feedback of the girls were much in support of the idea of segregation. These were the main reasons they mentioned:

I have one single problem which is I cannot act and sing in the presence of the boys (Student Q).

I prefer to have one class for the boys and another for the girls. Because the boys make fun of the girls especially if one of us makes a mistake (Student L).

I think we will feel at home to act and participate in the absence of the boys. I wish we take our classes alone so that we will be your only focus (Student J).

On asking the boys about their impression about the presence of the girls, I was surprised that they had overwhelmingly preferred to be separated from them as well. They mentioned some behaviors girls used to do that I was not aware of:

The girls' voice +boys' voice =headache, girls always call us ugly, awful, idiot .They say that in all languages (Student D).

They used to close us in and throw us with papers, erasers and insult us, when we correct their mistakes, they call us names (Student V).

During the break we keep standing outside until they get into their class and sit on their seats fearing we may fight each other (Student E).

Reflecting on the boys' comments, I realized the truthfulness of the argument that everything appears normal to the casual observer of a typical elementary classroom; Girls and boys behaving as they should, going about daily routines and assignments. If an observer's perspective is more in line with gender bias issues, however, a very different and startling picture is painted. It sounds that the girls were teasing the boys as well. In this respect, Thorne (1993) argues that teasing makes cross-gender interaction risky, increases social distance

between girls and boys, and has the effect of marking and policing gender boundaries.

Thorne (1993) further points out that three major explanations have been set forth to explain why children may prefer to be with others of the same gender, and/or want to avoid those of the other gender: (1) behavioral compatibility (2) psychoanalytic processes: (3) and the cognitive dynamics of gender labeling and identity.

6.5.1 Behavioral Compatibility

Thorne (1993) points out that it has often been assumed that through a combination of biological factors and cultural learning, girls and boys develop different types of temperament, styles of play, and/or sets of interests. Because of such sex/gender differences, it has been argued that boys find it more rewarding to interact with boys, and girls to interact with girls. In this respect, Maccoby and Jacklin (1987) conclude that gender segregation is more a "group phenomenon" than the result of characteristics of individual children. Several researchers doing observations and experiments with children of pre-school age have found that at an age as young as three, girls can influence other girls but have difficulty influencing boys, whereas boys tend to be successful in influencing both girls and boys. This may indicate that girls felt that the boys were able to exercise their influence on them. Maccoby and Jacklin (1987) speculate that this pattern of male dominance in mixed-gender interaction may lead girls to avoid boys and turn their attention to girls,

whom they can influence with greater ease. In short, girls, at least initially, may separate from boys in order to avoid being dominated.

6.5.2 Feminist Psychoanalytic Theories

Thorne (1993) points out that feminist psychoanalytic theorists have argued that boys are motivated to separate from and to devalue "things feminine" in order to gain separation from their mothers. Because mothers do the bulk of primary parenting, both boys and girls initially identify with and are strongly attached to a woman. Girls have special difficulty separating from their mothers, partly because they are of the same gender. Thorne (1993) further argues that feminist psychoanalytic theorists suggest that boys, in contrast, develop a separate sense of self founded on acute awareness of being a different gender than the mother; this motivates boys to deny female attachment and to devalue girls and women. By bonding with other boys and derogating girls, boys mark separation and seek to consolidate their somewhat shaky gender identities. Reviewing explanations of gender separation among children, I started to believe that childhood gender segregation may help girls to grow and develop outside the confines of male dominance.

6.5.3 Gender Classification

Thorne (1993) points out that the cognitive awareness of being a girl or a boy is clearly a prerequisite for creating separate girls' and boys' groups. Two interrelated dimensions of gender: the culturally constructed dichotomous gender categories (male/female, girl/boy, and man/woman) and core gender identity or the deep sense of self as either male or female—are the only gender differences that are fully binary. Thorne (1993) points out that a number of scholars have argued that the sheer knowledge that one is a girl or a boy, an awareness that consolidates around age two, and the child's growing ability to use and apply gender categories in relation to others may set processes of gender separation into motion. Differences of age and of gender are concrete and visible and socially marked from a young age. Each girl comes to realize that she shares a category with others labeled "girl," and each boy realizes he shares a category with others labeled "boy." That awareness, these theorists suggest, in itself may lead girls to want to be with girls, and boys with boys. Pondering over the previous arguments and relating them to my teaching context, I started to realize that the boys and the girls fashion their personhood based on the stereotypical gender rules in their same –sex peer group in order to establish a sense of belonging.

I am aware of the argument that single –sex grouping might reinforce traditional gender stereotypes, and instead of segregation, boys and girls, according to the sex-role theories, can gradually learn appropriate ways of relating to the world around them. But this argument is conversed by the tentative belief that boys and girls invest heavily in demonstrating that they

belong to their own gender and the last thing that the majority want to do is to appear not to fit in with their same –sex peer group (Skelton, 2001). Some research also suggests that teachers should consider pairing boys and girls in group work to get exposed to each others' skills (Bleach et al., 1996). But this suggestion is very problematic in my context because the Arabs culture dictates certain constraints on mixing between the two genders especially in this early teenage stage. So looking at the gender differences should be tackled with considering the cultural heritage.

Evans (2008) referred to a report delivered by Dr. Leonard Sax, the executive director of the National Association for Single Sex Public Education, USA (NASSPE). The report referred to four huge researches on gender differences in education. In May 2007 researchers at Stetson University completed a three-year pilot project comparing single-sex classrooms with coed classrooms at Woodward Avenue Elementary School, a nearby neighborhood public school. All relevant parameters were matched: the class sizes were all the same, the demographics were the same, all teachers had the same training in what works and what doesn't work, etc. These students were learning the same curriculum in the same school. On the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), the results were as follows:

Sample	Score
Boys in coed classes	37% scored proficient
Boys in single-sex classes	86% scored proficient
Girls in coed classes	59% scored proficient
Girls in single-sex class	75% scored proficient

In June 2005, a four –year study of gender differences in education was done by researchers at Cambridge university .The research covered 50 schools, representing a wide variety of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. The researchers found out that the single-sex classroom format was remarkably effective at boosting boy's performance particularly in English and foreign languages, as well as improving girls' performance in math and science. In July 2002, the National Foundation for Educational Research was commissioned to study the effect of school size and type on academic performance. The foundation studied 2,954 high schools throughout England, where single-sex public high schools are widely available. The results revealed that both boys and girls did significantly better in single sex schools than in coed schools. In 2001, the Australian Council for Educational Research compared performance of students at single-sex and coeducational schools. Their analysis, based on six years of study of over 270,000 students, in 53 academic subjects, demonstrated that both boys and girls who were educated in single –sex classrooms scored higher than did boys and girls in co-educational settings. The report also documented that boys and girls in single-sex schools were more likely to be better behaved and to find learning more enjoyable and the curriculum more relevant. Based on the above empirical studies, I started to believe that exploring issues of segregation in a more sustained way would be useful. But considering students' feed back, I decided to separate the boys from the girls. I found out that it would be useful to go through a third cycle and attempt to answer the third research question:

Q.3 What effects would storytelling classes have on motivating my classroom students when boys and girls get segregated?

CHAPTER SEVEN

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NARRATIVE APPROACH DURING THE SEGREGATION STAGE

7.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the effects storytelling classes had on motivating my classroom students after boys and girls had been segregated. In order to present credible data, I made use of my observation and field notes, students' diaries, and parents' feedback in addition to the mini AMTB.

7.2 Procedures

After I had had reflective discussions with my students about the issue of segregation, it became clear for me that both the boys and the girls were much inclined to get separated. Considering the students' points of view, I approached the school principal to request his permission and to make some schedule arrangements. The new schedule meant that I would teach more classes than before because girls would have their classes and boys would have their classes separately. However, as soon as I had started my storytelling classes, I observed that both boys and girls were motivated being in single sex classes. This conclusion is based on my observation, students' feedback and survey.

7.3 Observation

My role as a participant observer as well as a storyteller did not change during the segregation process. But in this stage, students were given the freedom to select their own stories and present them themselves. I did not select any story. If any one needed help, I would intervene as a facilitator and as a councilor. Students who planned to present would come and consult me how to act and read the new words. They would prepare their stories in advance. Their sources of selection were from their own personal collection or from the Web. In this stage, students started to depend on themselves and feel more confident. During my observation, it was noticeable that there was evident rise in students' motivational intensity, decrease in their anxiety, and desire for self-learning. These themes are salient components of the integrative motive.

7.3.1 The increase of motivational intensity and the decrease of anxiety

Right from the first class after segregation, I noticed that there were two main themes that were working side by side. These themes were the increase of motivational intensity and the decrease of anxiety. I became aware of these two themes when I noticed that there was significant change in the way the girls participated. During the storytelling sessions before segregation, the girls used to enjoy the storytelling presentation, but when they wanted to present a story, they were very worried about the presence of the boys. A vivid example for that when I mentioned that student (P) tried to present her story in the first intervention. The girl preferred to stand before the girls rather than being in the middle of the class.

Furthermore, being embarrassed by the boys, the girls were not able to make use of their body language. Paechter (2001) points out that the ways in which bodies are used reflect the discourses in which that use takes place. The widely held belief that girls are less boisterous than boys, actively constrains the ways in which young girls are able to use their bodies. These girls would not try to actively use their body language because this act would not confirm with the assumptions of the discourse that girls should be quite. However, during the first session after segregation, I observed that the eight girls were able to wiggle their body to the rhythm of the songs they practiced, they performed with high pitches, they were childishly jumping in their chairs, enthusiastically clapping their hands, they were loudly laughing, their faces also demonstrated deep involvement in the story, there was much eye contact, and they were fully engaged. Every girl was watching her peers attentively.

There was a very friendly rapport with me as a teacher. I was worried about the effect of my gendered position among the female students. I had the feeling that if I were out that female society, they may have exhibited and performed more naturally. However they looked up to me as a father. This feeling was culturally based. In our eastern culture, a teacher is looked up to as a father. Thus, my presence was not as sensitive as the presence of the boys. The girls appeared to feel quite comfortable in asking questions in class; if a girl did not know an answer, she would comfortably whisper to her peer about the meaning, they were nodding their heads to demonstrate understanding, they were blurting out their answers when they thought of

them. There was much interaction from all. They showed much enthusiasm and did raise their hands many times to participate. They definitely seemed to be in their comfort zone and in their strength when they were alone. However, opposite to the argument that suggests that boys tend to have a more individualistic view of self and may view competition as a goal that fits well within their conceptualization of positive social relationships (Thorne, 1993), I observed that boys who were friends outside the classroom were also partners in storytelling inside the class room which indicated that they were sensitively aware of their social position among their peers.

Urdan (1997) points out that recent research suggests that friends can either positively or negatively influence each other. Literature also suggests that peers can either encourage adolescents to view their school experiences positively, or encourage them to see school as an uninteresting or hostile place. Urdan (1997) further points out the links between students' social relationships and their motivation to achieve in school may depend on how (a) achievement is defined, (b) how the self is defined in relation to others, and (c) the interaction of (a) and (b). Urdan (1997) contends that if achievement is defined as learning something new, improvement, or taking on a challenging task, this definition will have positive implications. Believing that working cooperatively with friends may improve one's knowledge or skills can create a complementary relationship between social and achievement motives and disperse the sense of competition and rivalry.

The storytelling practice was a task-oriented activity more than an ability-oriented. One story can include different actors whose roles may differ in the level of difficulty and involvement, yet once the story was successfully told; all the participants would receive the same applause. One of the important findings I had in reflecting upon the data and outcomes in this stage was that the boys were extremely motivated by their peer relationships. The storytelling helped to incorporate this social relation.

As for the relation among the girls, they demonstrated individualistic view of self and sometimes they successfully developed a more collectivist value. I observed that the relation among the boys was more stable than the relation among the girls. This observation brought to mind the argument that friendships between girls are more fragile than those of boys so that girl best friends can become enemies at the drop of a hat (Besag, 2006).

Besag (2006) argues that the picture girls present is very different from that of boys. Boys do not normally go to teachers with their emotional troubles; girls seek adult arbitration and may come back to them again and again as their relationships change. The very notion of a best friend is much less common among boys: they have mates instead, yet the emotional repercussions of verbal bullying among girls can be more destructive and longer lasting than those of the more obvious fights among boys. However, in spite of the vulnerability of the emotional warmth among the girls, the segregation stage revealed very positive themes.

7.3.2 The increase of students' motivational intensity

It was also noticeable that there was an increase in students' motivational intensity. The reason behind this increase may be attributed to the fact that students' attention and their participation were drastically maximized. Before, the number of boys outnumbered the girls; there were 15 boys and only eight girls. Being in a class that was predominately dominated by girls, the girls felt confident that no boy would laugh at them whatever sounds or roles they would perform. The girls overwhelmingly preferred to sit at the front of the classroom, face to face with me, imitating my way of pronunciation and my manner of acting. This concentration helped them easily acquire the new vocabulary more easily than before.

Consequently, as Gardner (1985) points out, having a positive feeling of achievement, helped decrease the level of students' anxiety. As a classroom teacher, it was my concern that both females and males maximize their performance. I witnessed girls and boys who have hidden skills that they showed them up only when segregation took place. I realized that my students started to reconstruct the mores that define and govern their new social contexts in the class. Student (Q) was a very classic example of the drastic effect that segregation brought about in the classroom. Student (Q) was a very fluent girl at English but when she was participating in the presence of the boys, there was a hidden skill she could not fully show. That skill became clear to me only when segregation took place. That skill was using her body language to the limit.

Student (Q) was confident enough to act like me even better; she was able to visualize every event in a story, cry and laugh, jump and dance, show vividly her emotions. She could use every skill a storyteller needed to impress her /his audience. What surprised me in the performance of student (Q) was more than speaking English fluently or telling a story! I was much busy thinking about how she was performing, how she affected her peers and how I was caught by her performance. When I pondered at her performance, I started to believe that her performance was more interesting than mine; I heard a student saying: "Teacher, she is better than you."

Student (Q) was acting in the same way I did but her American accent and her funny character made her able to steal the show even from me. To me it was a victory because once a student competes with his/her teacher; this victory is the teacher's not only the student's. I wondered why these skills were hidden before, why she demonstrated her ability at acting then. The reason, student (Q) said, was because "I feel free". They are my sisters and you are like my father." To me, I could not help applauding when she was performing a storytelling activity in a very expressive way. Being experienced in TV direction and having a long experience in theater, it was not easy for me to be caught by anybody's performance. But frankly speaking, I was laughing from the bottom of my heart. I was looking at the seven faces sitting with me; they were clapping their hands and laughing loudly as well. Out of admiration, I promised student (Q) five points in her oral exam. These five points were not extrinsic rewards to push an unmotivated student. But they were an appreciation for the performance she did.

Student (Q) became a model to be followed by her peers. Later on, I asked her to administer extra storytelling sessions in the library with her friends. The reaction of her peers was extremely positive. When she had the chance to position herself in a new context where no boys were watching her, student (Q) was able to shift her thought, and act to project resistance to gender stereotypes in that new sitting. She found out that there was no need any more to be conservative in a safe atmosphere like that. Dyson (1994) argues that children possess a multitude of social worlds. In the moment of social intersection, children position themselves in a complicated and shifting manner. This process of positioning may be manifested in children's manner of social talk. Children engage in a particular discourse to set up social spheres and a hierarchy of groups. They use linguistic mediums to proclaim who they are in relation to others.

Dyson (1994) further explains that all linguistic narratives, including writing, speaking, listening, reading and performing reflect the momentary and shifting identity of the learner. Making a decision to step onto the social stage for an artistic performance, such as reading one's work in author's chair or simply informally sharing with a peer, requires a shift in position. In later stages, student (Q) exceeded my expectations when she was able to create her own story without any preparation in advance. "Teacher I have a story to tell, I made it now out of my mind. Please can I say it now" Student (Q) voluntarily said.

She was fervently asking me to give her a chance. I definitely noticed a different girl in the segregation stage. One day Student (Q) wrote me "Nobody can challenge me—I believe that I am a good actor. I was very pleased that I could teach the other girls. There was much excitement." Reflecting on student's (Q) words, I could vividly see that she had experienced "self-achievement". She experienced a sense of pride and achievement in having set up very impressive successful storytelling sessions. She liked the way she performed. She told me that she used to be a couch potato; glued to TV for long hours, but now she realized that there was a meaningful reason to be a part from the TV now. Every time we had a story, she would go home and present it to her mother. I was very happy when I received a letter from her mother that reads as follows:

Dear Mr. Mohamed,
I would like to start my letter with my deep appreciation of your care to our sons and daughters in your respected school. This care resulted in producing some of the skills of our schoolboys and school girls which were not apparent to us before. I recently noticed that there is a new methodology in the school. What my daughter presented in front of me was vivid evidence. I only recently realized that my daughter had all these fantastic skills. I was very pleased with that new creative and outstanding approach. I see that making use of the skills of students and academic subjects will produce a unique smart student. Go ahead and I wish you success.

(Student's (Q) mother, July, 2006).

Student (Q) was not the only girl that could bring her talents and skills into practice. Student (I), a fluent Libyan girl, was also another positive example of developing new skills in the new segregated environment. In all her presentations previously, she was always speaking so quickly. She could finish telling a story in three minutes. But She hardly used her body language effectively .She depended so much on her fluency. Although this reflected how good she was at English, that command was not enough to keep the low achievers interested at her story. Sometimes the girls could not follow her presentation because of using difficult words. These words were sometimes above the level of her peers. I remember one day in one of her stories, she used a word like 'notorious food'. Owing to her ineffective skills in presentation, she sometimes felt frustrated when she told a funny joke and some of the girls did not laugh.

To help her enrich her presentation skills, I asked student (I) individually to follow my way of using her body language. I also asked her to train herself at home before the mirror, and let her family watch her at home. Student (I) liked the idea very much. After three days of training, at home and at the school, student (I) became good at using her body language when narrating a story. She became slow in her presentation; she was taking in her consideration the level of her peers. She became extremely fond of storytelling in that new way. Every school day, she used to tell me how her sister at home liked the new stories she presented.

One day student (I) told me about her experience at home:

First, after I had printed the story, I acted it two times. Then I called my sister and acted before her. My sister told me "it is very interesting but keep training and you will be better" then I trained myself again and I asked my sister to say her opinion: She said "now you are better". I trained myself another time to show my mother. My mother told me "you are extremely exciting". When I told my mum that my teacher wanted me to train myself, my mum said it is good so that "You cannot feel anxious inside the class" (Student I, the fifth session after segregation)

In the end of one school day, I was standing at the school gate, busy arranging students to get back home. All of a sudden student (I) came by in a hurry and said: "teacher, I prepared a very good story for tomorrow session, can I present it?"

What caught my attention were the time and the location of student's (I) request. When every student was rushing home, every student was thinking about what delicious lunch would be served, student (I) was thinking of her coming storytelling class. I was much surprised when I saw student (I) and a friend of hers, student (L), an Egyptian girl, in the second floor hall, using the projector and was telling her story to take some feedback. I noticed how keen student (I) was on using her body language and dramatizing her story. It was apparent to me that student (Q) and student (I) were very unique in their participation during the segregation stage.

However, one Friday, both student (I) and student (Q) were absent from the school. English was the first period. I had only 6 girls to teach, all of them were low achievers. I thought the class would be less active because of the absence of student (Q) and student (I). But to my surprise the rest of the girls participated in a very satisfactory way. The girls did participate well. But what caught my interest was the performance of student (J) who could recall and tell the story of "*The Turtle and The Proud Bear*" very well. She was smiling and using her body, the eyes of the girls were full of surprise, they clapped when she finished, and I asked her in front of the girls "Where have you been for that long time?" Her answer was a surprise to me:

teacher I could participate efficiently because of the absence of Student (Q) and student (I). When they are in class, they dominate the class because they know better than us. But now I was able to participate efficiently and even student (U) had tried to participate (sixth session after segregation).

Contemplating over the problem, I started to believe in Hedge's argument (2000) that extrovert students benefit from oral work in small groups where their assertiveness enables them to dominate and their willingness to take risks facilitates practice. Hedge (2000) therefore suggests that "the important implication for the teacher is to balance these personality differences by ensuring an equal share of attention and opportunity to contribute" (p. 20). Hedge's argument inspired me to make use of student (Q) and student (I) as facilitators to their peers; instead of dominating the class, they could lead the other girls and help them understand the difficult words.

By doing so the rest of the girls would not think that they were usurping their time but they were helping them. I was very happy when student (I) and student (J) worked together in presenting a story. Student (Q) told me that student (J) became so interested in chatting with her during the break in English. Reflecting on this change, I started to believe that the relation among girls is very sensitive, they sometimes demonstrated individualistic view of self and in other times they successfully developed a more collectivist value.

7.3.3 Self-learning

Student (U), a Saudi ambitious girl, had expressed that she had difficulty reading new strange words herself. I was surprised by student's (U) openness with me because students usually prefer to be perceived by others as being able but not having tried hard (Omelich 1979, as cited in Covington, 2000). But in student's (U) case, she was expressing the opposite: "I am unable and I want to try hard". Student (U) said. I found out that student's (U) request was a teachable moment. Cunningham et al. (2004:131) points out that:

a teachable moment is a time –honored phrase referring to incidents when students 'readiness to learn is at peak. Conditions are just right for instructional input as learners feel need to know something. Teachable moments can be cultivated and they begin with learner's openness.

Student (U) would not be able to speak as openly as she did if there were boys in the classroom. I found out that the girls were open to new practices that could help them identify new words depending on themselves. I

witnessed that openness when they started to act and use their body language naturally.

I witnessed that openness again when student (U) was looking for a way to identify new words. However, her request was an indication for a genuine desire to exert effort in learning new words. Feeling that it would be more useful for my students , boys and girls, to explore strategies that could help them promote independent learning of vocabulary, I was of the opinion of Cunningham et al. (2004) that:

Students need opportunities to encounter on their own thousands of words in meaningful contexts .They need to capitalize on the opportunities language –rich environment offer. Students require the ability to go it alone in understanding and remembering words. Students require independence in vocabulary learning (p.140)

In the same line, Graham, S., & Weiner (1996) point out that strategies are plans for accomplishing a task and effective strategy instruction helps promote active student involvement while engaged in task-specific behavior. Strategies can provide extensive, structured, and explicit instruction that meets students' needs. As far as learning new vocabulary is concerned, Cunningham et al. (2004) suggest that it is very important to activate students' prior knowledge, consistently connect what students already know with new ideas, use context and use morphemes. I applied this strategy in my storytelling by personalizing the incidents of the story. For example : I asked my students: " If you were in the same situation in which this character was now , what would you do ?".

I activated their prior knowledge by asking them to anticipate the incidents of the story, to look at the pictures and tell me what they see and what memories such pictures remind them with. Also I asked my students to use dictionaries in order to know the new vocabulary. Cunningham et al. (2004) point out that having students memorize definitions of words as a means of building their meaning vocabularies cannot succeed, because understanding a word means that you don't have a definition stored in memory for it. Instead, reading dictionary definitions can remind us of meanings we already understand or can refine or add precision to meanings we already have. The use of a dictionary can also be a useful resource to help sustain exposure to print and in turn develop reading skills (Stanovich and Cunningham, 1992).

I used Oxford digital dictionary, English version, and started teaching how words could be looked up. This practice took one separate session in order to help students be familiar with the use of dictionaries. I took them to the computer lab. The purpose was to teach how they could learn using dictionaries in learning new words. After I gave them clear instructions on using dictionaries, I gave them a list of words to look them up. These words were selected from the stories they learnt. I moved around them to see if they had any difficulty understanding the meaning of the words. By helping them develop dictionary skills, I was able to establish self-learning among boys and girls.

The patience to look up for new words, the desire to narrate a story, and the desire for the students to log into the internet and look for sites for stories all indicated that my students became self-dependent learners. In the last two classes in the second semester, I witnessed much self-dependence from students. It was noticeable that students were in a stage they felt that they became responsible for each lesson they attended. That was clear for me when I observed how student (P) was writing down every word she would hear. I did not ask her to write. But I found that she was keen not to miss any new word: "I want to know the new words, please" she said. Students were not only able to read and narrate their stories but they were also able to take leadership.

Students were able to take charge of their storytelling classes themselves. This took place in the final stages of the semester when a supervisor, from the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, came to supervise the school. The headmaster asked him to visit me. As usual it was supposed that I would teach my students and he would observe me. But I did not do that. I asked him to attend a class where the boys were conducting a storytelling class by themselves. I introduced the supervisor to my students and I left them together. In my absence, the students acted some stories they learnt in front of the supervisor. Most of the boys participated and presented all the stories they learnt before the supervisor in my absence. I also invited the supervisor to attend a class for the girls. I left them together.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



مملكة البحرين
وزارة التربية والتعليم
(٢٨٠)

الوقت: ٢٠٠٧ / ٤٩
التاريخ: ١٤٢٨ / ٤ / ٢٤
المستندات:

(شهادة شكر وتقدير)

المكرم الأستاذ / محمد أحمد عبد القادر (معلم اللغة الإنجليزية)
حفظه الله

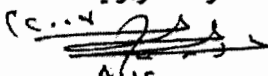
السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ، وبعد:

يسعدني أن أقدم لكم بالشكر الجزيل على ما رأيته منكم خلال زيارتنا لكم في مايلى :

- (١) استخدام أسلوب تمثيل الدور .
- (٢) استخدام البرمجيات الحاسوبية.
- (٣) تفعيل دور الطالب في محور العملية التعليمية من خلال النشاط الصفى .

سأللاً الله لكم الإبداع والتميز في أداء رسالتكم التعليمية والتربوية .

,,,,,, والله يحفظكم ويرعاكم ,, ,,,,,,

المشرف التربوي

٥١١٢
عويد الزغبى

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The supervisor's letter mentioned three main points that caught his attention:

- Making use of dramatization.
- Making effective use of computer.
- Activating the role of student through being involved in the classroom.

When the supervisor informed the headmaster about the performance of the students, the headmaster planned to visit me in my English class. I also asked the boys and girls to take charge of the storytelling session themselves. I left the headmaster with my students to evaluate the situation himself. The feedback was very positive and consequently I was given another letter of appreciation from the school principal. The letter mentioned four points that attracted him during his visit:

- Students showed accurate use of vocabulary.
- They acted their roles in a distinguished way.
- They were confident while they were acting.
- They were interacting with each other.

The principal's letter is as follows:



المكرم الأستاذ / محمد أحمد عبد القادر (معلم اللغة الإنجليزية) حفظه الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ، وبعد:

الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على المعلم الأول صلوات الله وسلامه عليه.
لقد قمت بزيارة الصف السادس الابتدائي لدى المعلم الفاضل محمد عبد القادر في مادة اللغة الإنجليزية وكان الدرس عن قصة " الدب والسلحفاة " ولقد سرتني ما رأيته مما اكتسبه الطلاب من مهارات ومعارف مثل الطالبة عزيزة العالي والطالبان عبد الله العلمي والطالب عبد الله هاشم . ومن أحمل ما رأيته :

- ١) اكتساب الطلاب حسن التعبير اللفظي للدرس (القصة) .
 - ٢) تميز الطلاب في إتقان تمثيل الأدوار وعرض الموضوع .
 - ٣) ثقة الطلاب بأنفسهم أثناء عرض الدرس .
 - ٤) تفاعل الطلاب المستمعين (المستهدفين) مع زميلهم .
- شاكراً للمربي الفاضل الأستاذ محمد عبد القادر حسن الإعداد والاتقان في إكساب طلابه مهارات التعلم المختلفة ومزيداً من الإبداع والتميز .
سائلاً الله لكم دوام التوفيق والسداد .

مدبر المدرسة
عبد العزيز بن عبد الله الراجحي

The supervisor's and the headmaster's letters were official witnesses to the improvement of my students' performance. Both the supervisor and the headmaster saw the performance, the confidence and the enthusiasm of the students in presenting what they learnt. This improvement was the result of a long journey of my professional development. This result contributes to the academia by ensuring the importance of self-direction in learning because it was not enough for students to be in a stimulating environment; they needed to help create it and directly interacted with it. I was much inspired by the argument that formal schooling starts a process through which students are progressively weaned from their dependence on teachers and institutions and grow the confidence to manage their own learning. When students take ownership by directing their learning in terms of what was personally meaningful, they become their own teachers (Mayesky, 2006).

7.4 The findings of the survey

The purpose of the survey was to consolidate my reflection which was based on my observation as well as my diaries. The survey was administered after two months of the segregation stage.

7.4.1 Integrativeness

In order to measure the integrativeness factor among students, they are asked to state (1) to what degree they learn English in order to interact with members of the second language community,(2) to what degree they are

interested in learning English, and (3) to what degree they like the second language community .

Item	Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
1	I learn English in order to interact with members of the second language community.	-	-	23 100%
2	I am interested in learning English.	--	1 4.3%	22 95.7%
3	I like to deal with the second language community.		3 13.0%	20 87.0%

Table 1.1 Integrativeness

It is evident that 100% of the participants learn English to interact with members of the second language community and 95.7% have an interest in learning English. It is also quite clear that 87.0% of the participants have a positive attitude toward the second language community. The first three items measured the level of integrativeness among the participants.

7.4.2 Attitudes toward the learning situation

In order to measure students' attitude toward the learning situation, students are asked to respond to two positively worded items as follows:

Item	Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
4	I like my English instructor	-	-	23 100.0%
5	I like my English course	-	-	23 100.0%

Table 7.2 Attitude toward the learning situation

Studying the, 100% of the participants are satisfied with their language instructor and 100% of the participants are satisfied with their storytelling classes. The fourth and the fifth items measured the attitude of the students toward the learning situation.

7.4.3 Motivation

Motivation is measured with three positively worded items, (1) Motivational intensity, (2) the desire to learn English, and (3) attitude toward learning English. The following table shows the results of the three items:

Item	Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
6	I work hard at learning English.	-	1 4.3%	22 95.7%
7	I have a desire to learn English.	-	4 17.4%	19 82.6%
8	Learning English is important for me.	-	3 13.0%	20 87.0%

Table 2.3 Motivation

It is evident from the above table that 95% of the participants work hard at learning English. It is also evident that 82% of the participants show a desire to learn English. It is also noticeable that 87% of the participants think that learning English is important. The sixth, the seventh and the eighth items measured motivation as a trait that was noticeably high.

7.4.4 Instrumentality

Instrumental orientation is measured by asking students to express to what degree they learn English for practical purposes.

Item	Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
9	I think learning English is good for practical purposes such as to improve my occupational opportunities.	1 4.3%	4 17.4%	18 78.3%

Table 7.4 Instrumentality

It is obvious that the percentage of the participants who want to learn English for instrumental orientation is still quite high. 78 % of the participants think that English can help them improve their occupational opportunities while only 4.3% do not study English for instrumental reasons.

7.4.5 Anxiety

In order to measure the level of anxiety among my students, they were asked to state to what degree they feel calm in their second language class and to what degree they feel calm when speaking English outside the class.

Item	Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
10	I feel calm in my second language class.	2 8.7%	3 13.0%	18 78.3%
11	I feel calm when speaking English outside the class.	3 13.0%	4 17.4%	16 69.6%

Table 7.5 Anxiety

It is evident that 78.3% of the students feel calm when they use English inside the classroom and only 8 % of the students still feel anxious inside the class. Additionally, 69.6 % of the participants feel confident to use English outside the classroom. However there are still 13% of the participants who do not have that confidence. The findings generally reflect that the level of confidence among the participants grew higher. The level of anxiety as a whole is quite low; 73, % of the participants have demonstrated confidence inside and outside the classroom.

7.5 Discussing the findings

The above findings described the percentage of responses to each item separately. The following bar chart presents a comprehensive picture of the percentages of the means of the eleven integrative items together. In order to get the percentages of the means of the eleven integrative items together, I first got the means of each item of each motivational factor. After getting the means of the items of each motivational factor, I counted the average of the total means of each motivational factor. These steps are shown as follows:

- I divided the scale into three responses: disagree, neutral and agree.
- I gave a value for each response: disagree= 1, neutral= 2, agree = 3.
- I counted the number of SS (students) who disagreed x 1+ the number of SS who were neutral x 2 + the number of SS who agreed x 3 = The total of the responses ÷ The number of the whole sample (23 SS) .
- I counted the average of the total of the means of each motivational factor ÷ 3 (the scale) X100 = the percentage of each motivational factor.

Items of the questionnaire	Mean		Std. Deviation
Item 1	3	100.00	.000
Item 2	2.96	98.67	.209
Item 3	2.87	95.67	.344
Mean of Items 1-3 (Integrativeness)	2.94	98.07	.16368
Item 4	3	100.00	.000
Item 5	3	100.00	.000
Mean of Items 4-5 (Learning situation)	3	100.00	.00000
Item 6	2.96	98.67	.209
Item 7	2.83	94.33	.388
Item 8	2.87	95.67	.344
Mean of Items 6-8 (Motivation)	2.88	96.14	.16233
Item 9 (Instrumentality)	2.74	91.33	.541
Item 10	2.7	90.00	.635
Item 11	2.57	85.67	.728
Mean of Items 10-11(Anxiety)	2.63	87.68	.54808

Table 7.6 A summary of the means of the Integrative Motive.

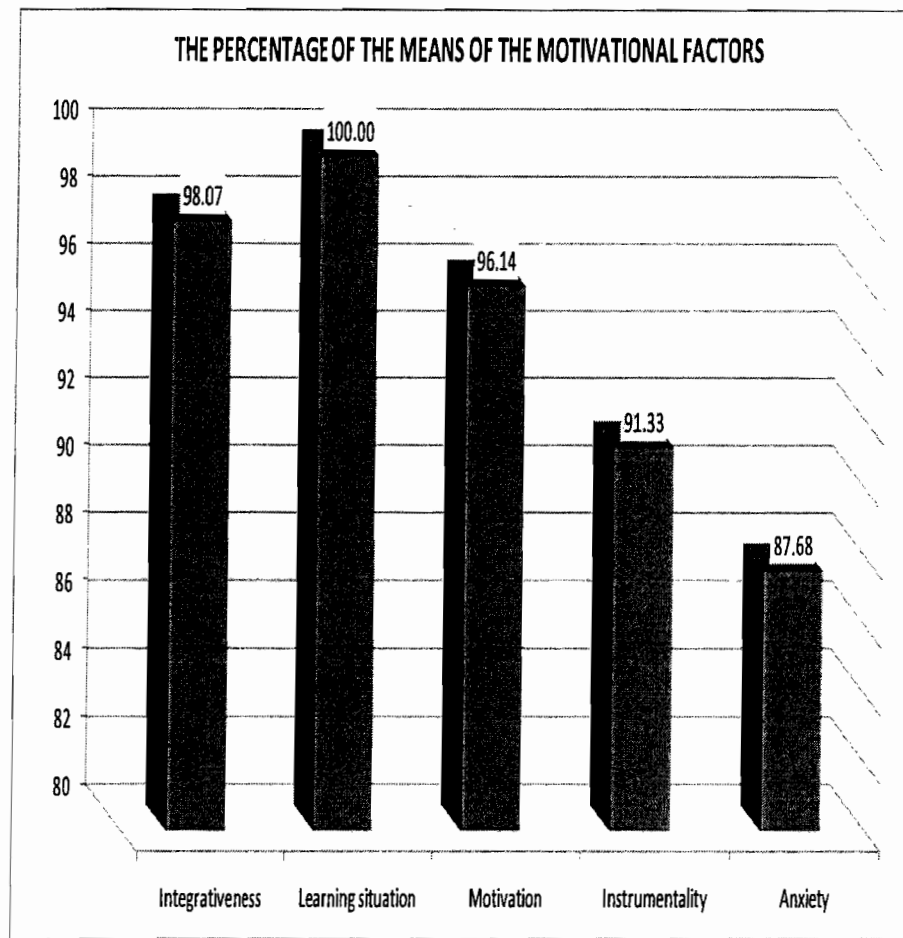


FIG 7.1 The results of all the integrative factors

Although the previous results describe the percentage of responses to each item separately, it is very useful to compare the state of students' motivation in the second and the third cycle:

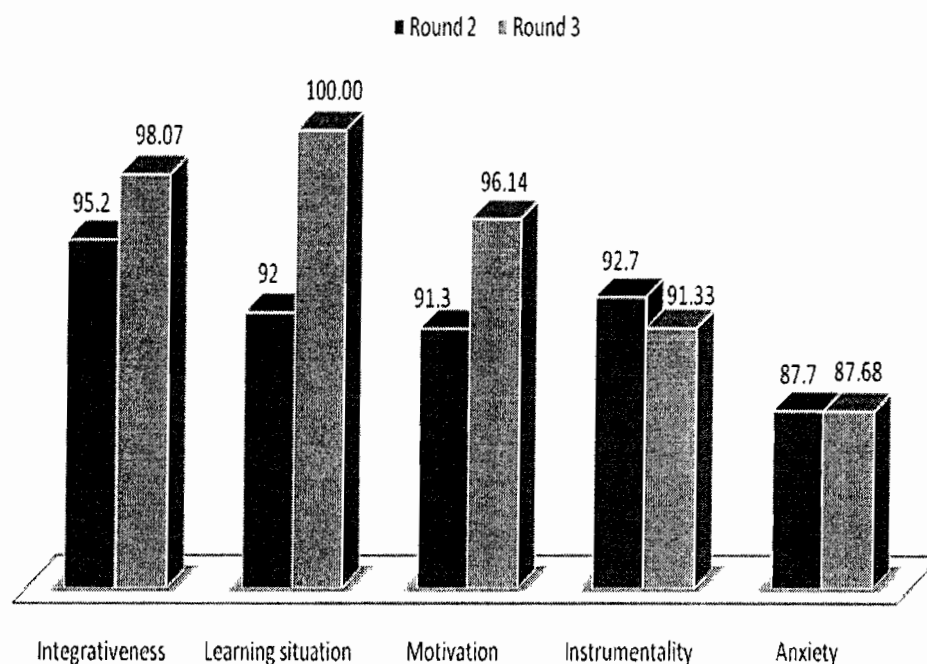


FIG 7.2 Comparison between the second and third cycle .

It is evident that there is more improvement that took place in the third intervention. Pondering over the above chart, we find out that all the participants have a positive attitude toward the storytelling classes in the segregated stage. Such new practices helped so much in drawing students' attention and could successfully increase their motivational state. This is why both the learning situation and motivation show the highest percentage of the eleven given motivational attributes. It is also evident that the teaching practices in the segregation stage resulted in establishing an encouraging

atmosphere that maintained the state of confidence of my students. Such fact is illustrated by considering that more than 73% of participants still expressed that they experienced confidence inside and outside the class. Such stability in confidence encouraged more than 98% of my students to desire to communicate outside with English language speakers.

7.6 The Focus –group findings

In order to understand the noticeable rise in students' integrative motive factors, I conducted a focus group- interview. Attempting to know students' real impression about the storytelling classes and my teaching practices during the segregation stage I asked this question: What is your opinion about the storytelling classes and my teaching practices during the segregation stage? Students' responses revealed two main themes: (1) there was less anxiety, (2) and there was an increase in motivational intensity more learning. The intensity of the two themes seemed to maximize students' other motivational factors. The following responses are examples for the first theme:

Nobody can challenge me. I believe that my acting is very interesting because I was able to teach the girls and they were very active with me (Student Q).

'When we were segregated, it was my first time to have a chance to act because I used to feel quite shy. The most important thing was that there were no boys...there was no noise from the boys (Student I).

I was very happy because there were no girls in the class. I was laughing loudly. I learnt many words and I enjoyed the class so much .I wish we are always segregated. Being away from the girls made me no anxious at all (Student A).

I do not feel anxious because the girls are not there. Girls may laugh at us if we make mistakes. But now I do not care. Also I liked so much the way we act the stories (Student J).

Students also expressed that they participated a lot and learnt more than before. The following responses are examples for the second theme:

The classes were very interesting. I participated a lot. I felt I learnt new words. If we kept to that plan it would be better for me (Student P).

I was encouraged, encouraged and encouraged. I liked the classes. I participated a lot. If we continued doing that, the level of the girls would be better (Student W).

I participated a lot and the class was very interesting in the absence of the girls. I felt that my classmates are friends. I was very enthusiastic. I learnt many new words (Student B).

"Girls used to put their noses in everything...I sometimes felt shy to talk in front of the girls. But now I am much encouraged to talk. If this plan will go on, I think I will get better." (Student C)

Reflecting on the responses of the students, I started to believe that listening to stories in a class is a shared social experience and unlike reading and writing, which are often individual activities; storytelling provokes a shared response of laughter, sadness, excitement and anticipation which is not only enjoyable but can help build up the children's confidence and encourage their social and emotional development (Yaacob, 2006). I also started to believe that stories are not only motivating and fun, but the features of the stories such as the repeated patterns and the rich vocabulary with interesting rhythms and sounds are also stimulating and can create a natural support for language development. Additionally, the context created by the story ,its

predictable patterns of events , language and pictures acted to support listeners' understanding of the unfamiliar words and allowed room for growth in vocabulary (Cameron, 2001).

7.7 Parent's feedback

By the end of the third cycle, I was keen on letting the parents enlighten me about the effect of my teaching practices on the performance and motivation of their students. I was very happy when I received many positive responses that reflect how successful our experience was. The following letter was sent to me from one of the parents.

To Mohamed Abdulkader,
Teacher of English,
Grade 6,
Saudi school .

16/4/2007

At the beginning of grade six, I had voiced my concern that the prescribed syllabus for English was much under my son's ability. At that point of time, my son was already fluent in speaking and well developed in his reading and writing skills, whereas the official syllabus did not surpass a very basic level of vocabulary. My initial fear was that my son would be a very bored pupil at the end of grade Six and probably lose his interest in participating in class, as these seemed to be no intellectual challenge for him. Luckily, now that grade six is nearly finished, I can say that I was wrong in my negative anticipations, as the English teacher did manage to motivate and challenge my son (and, I guess, a number of pupils who already had skills in English). As far as I was able to follow up from the reports of my son, teacher Abdulqader made extensive use of songs, poems and role plays next to teaching the syllabus. Even more effective in terms of motivation was the assignment given to the pupils to produce and present power point presentations: The story presentation was very motivating, stimulated creativity and the satisfaction of having accomplished a task independently. I can only recommend to further develop this method as it benefits all different levels of pupils in the class. The less advanced will be given a chance to learn new vocabulary, and the more advanced will be motivated by sharing their knowledge. Personally, I am very happy to see an enthusiastic and understanding teacher of English in my son's school (Dr. Anke Iman Boutenita, UIA, 16, March, 2007)

The significance of the letter was the fact that this mother was the one who complained about the unsuitability of the textbook in the beginning of the year, as I mentioned in (Chapter One). Her letter was very significant because it reflected on the whole study right from the very beginning. The mother mentioned that she, at the beginning of grade six; she had voiced her concern that the prescribed syllabus for English was much under her son's ability. Her initial fear was that her son would be a very bored pupil at the end of grade Six and probably lose his interest in participating in class, as these seemed to be no intellectual challenge for him. However she witnessed that the English teacher motivated her son and other students. She mentioned that the story presentation was very motivating, stimulated creativity and the satisfaction of having accomplished a task independently. She further recommended to further develop this method as it benefited all different levels of pupils in the class. From her point of view, the less advanced students were given a chance to learn new vocabulary, and the more advanced were motivated by sharing their knowledge. Reflecting on the mother's letter, I believed in the argument that teachers and parents need to obtain mutual understanding about the way literacy is defined, valued and used. Such mutual understanding offers the potential for schooling to be adjusted to meet the needs of families (Cairney, 1997). By maintaining strong links between households and classroom, many valuable lessons can be learned (Edwards, Pleasants and Franklin, 1999).

The mother's letter supports my claim that my students and I could successfully find a way out to our problems. We successfully recognized its presence (fact-finding cycle), we also systematically looked for a solution (First intervention) and we always thought of better outcomes (second intervention). Without going through these dynamic cycles, I think my students would have been unmotivated. Without reflecting on my problematic areas, my students would have been my main victims. Without having professional growth, I would have been contradicting my values (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006). By the end of the third cycle, I was able to answer the third research question and describe how the girls and the boys could maximize their performance in the segregated stage.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

8.1 Introduction:

In this chapter I reflect on the study in its entirety. I reflect on the effect that the action research study had on both me as a practitioner researcher on one hand and on my students' motivational behaviors on the other hand. With that reflection on my past and present, I also consider the implications for future research. The prime objective of this study was to explore teaching approaches that could develop integrative motive among my students. It was clear to me that "motivation is of crucial importance in the classroom, whether learners arrive with it or whether they acquire it through classroom experiences" (Hedge, 2000:23).

What motivated me to improve my performance was the epistemological assumption that the purpose of academic research and discourse should not be just to describe, understand and explain the world but also to change it (Reason and Torbert, 2001). I was aware of the argument that enacting the action research cycle would not involve only the articulation of the context and purpose of the project, and the main steps of diagnosing, planning action, taking action and evaluating, but also reflecting on content, process and premise issues in how the action research cycles were undertaken. I was also aware that the rigor of my inquiry would be demonstrated by how I exposed

these activities to critique and how my conclusions would be supported by my usable knowledge.

In order to take a proper action and have usable knowledge, I had to obtain a conceptual framework to guide my work. The conceptual framework helped me identify and measure the potential motivational factors operating in my teaching context. Adapting a specific conceptual framework was not meant to prove the tenability of the theory or to refute it. It was not also meant to make generalizations and "this in itself a useful insight for teachers given that sweeping generalizations about learners are not uncommon in these areas" (Hedge, 2000: 20). Having a conceptual framework was meant to focus the scope of my research without losing sight of the emergent issues. An operational definition of motivation was carefully established. Reviewing literature, Gardner's Socio-Educational Model (1985) was much helpful in guiding my research.

I was of Gardner's (1985) argument that motivation to learn a second language could not be a matter of simply wanting to learn the language. Many students may want to learn, but their attitudes may prevent them from doing so. Such students need as much sympathy and understanding. Accepting that students' attitudes and motivation influence their degree of second language competence, and their willingness to continue in second language programs (Dornyei, 2000) , it was reasonable for me as a practitioner researcher to create a learning situation that could help my students develop positive attitudes toward the learning situation .

Additionally, realizing that having integrative motive could facilitate second-language achievement and the tendency to continue in the program (Gardner, 2005), I started to believe that it would be effective if I worked on developing integrative motive by actively promoting interesting meaningful challenging activities. Although the integrative motive was a complex interplay of attitudinal and motivational variables (Gardner 1985, 1988; Gardner and McIntyre, 1993; Tremblay and Gardner, 1995; Gardner, 2001; Gardner, 2005), I was driven by the belief that such characteristics could be promoted by making the second language more meaningful to my students as a communicational medium, to make the language come alive and make the course something more than just another school subject (Masgoret and Gardner, 2003). It was significant for me as a teacher "to build positive attitudes to the study of English as a curriculum subject through motivating content and tasks." (Hedge, 2000:20).

It was evident that motivation is a highly complex construct consisting of a number of variables. I started to explore these variables that could be involved in motivating my students. I also wondered what aspects of motivation could be changed and how I could focus on creating successful experiences that would enhance motivation. I began my research inquiry with finding out the level of the integrative motivational factors. The data was collected by using the mini AMTB and focus-group interview. The findings revealed that instrumental orientation was the highest motivational factor among students. However there was a sharp decline in the other motivational factors.

The findings suggest that there was a need to change the textbook and come up with meaningful and interesting activities. Realizing that I had a problem was not a problem; it was a chance to understand reality in order to transform it (Kemmis, 2006). Realizing that my students were unmotivated, I started to ask: "how can I improve my performance and the performance of my students?"

While the ultimate objective was to motivate my students, I started to reflect on the possible factors that could help me improve the whole learning situation. Guided by Gardner's (1985:84) argument that "if attitudes and motivation influence how well someone learns a second language, it is possible that the experience of learning a second language influences attitudes and motivation", I started to consider how my new teaching practices could have an impact on my students' motivation and attitudes.

To achieve my research main objective, which was motivating my students, I needed a flexible authority to officially permit me to take action. According to Hedge (2000:25), "the educational system in which teachers work will be influenced by cultural notions of authority which affect the potential roles of teachers and learners". Because careful study of the administrative requirements can identify opportunities (Margolis and McCabe, 2006), I had to hold discussion meetings with my principal to clarify the rationale behind my intervention and the potential benefits my new teaching practices would bring to my students.

In my case, the school administration was co-operative and understandable. Overcoming the administrative obstacle, I had to think of a challenging meaningful motivating teaching material as well as an interesting teaching approach that could cater for the three types of my students (the high achievers, the reluctant readers and the low-achievers). Reviewing literature; I found out that storytelling (Bernice, 2006; Tsou, 2005; Caulfield, 2000; Bayly, 2004; Hochstetler, 2006; Rooks, 1998; Ghosn, 2002) and the Narrative Approach (McQuillan and Tse, 1998; Elley and Mangubhai, 1983; Elley, 1991; Elley and Foster, 1996; LeRou and Schollar, 1996) would be much motivating in my teaching situation.

Obtaining the permission of the administration and specifying the type of the teaching materials and the teaching approach were very promising steps. I also adopted action research because it has a practical, problem-solving emphasis (Stringer, 2004; Whitehead and McNiff, 2006). In the three cycles of my action research, the data, gathered from the questionnaire and self – report, agreed with the observed behavior. Such a fact could be a positive contribution since it indicates the truthfulness of the data (Hedge, 2000).

8.2 Comparison among the three cycles

To have a clear vivid picture about the findings of the study, the following tables show the noticeable changes that happened in each motivational factor along the three cycles of my action research. To have a clear vivid picture about the findings of the study, the following graph shows the noticeable

changes that happened in each motivational factor along the three cycles of my action research:

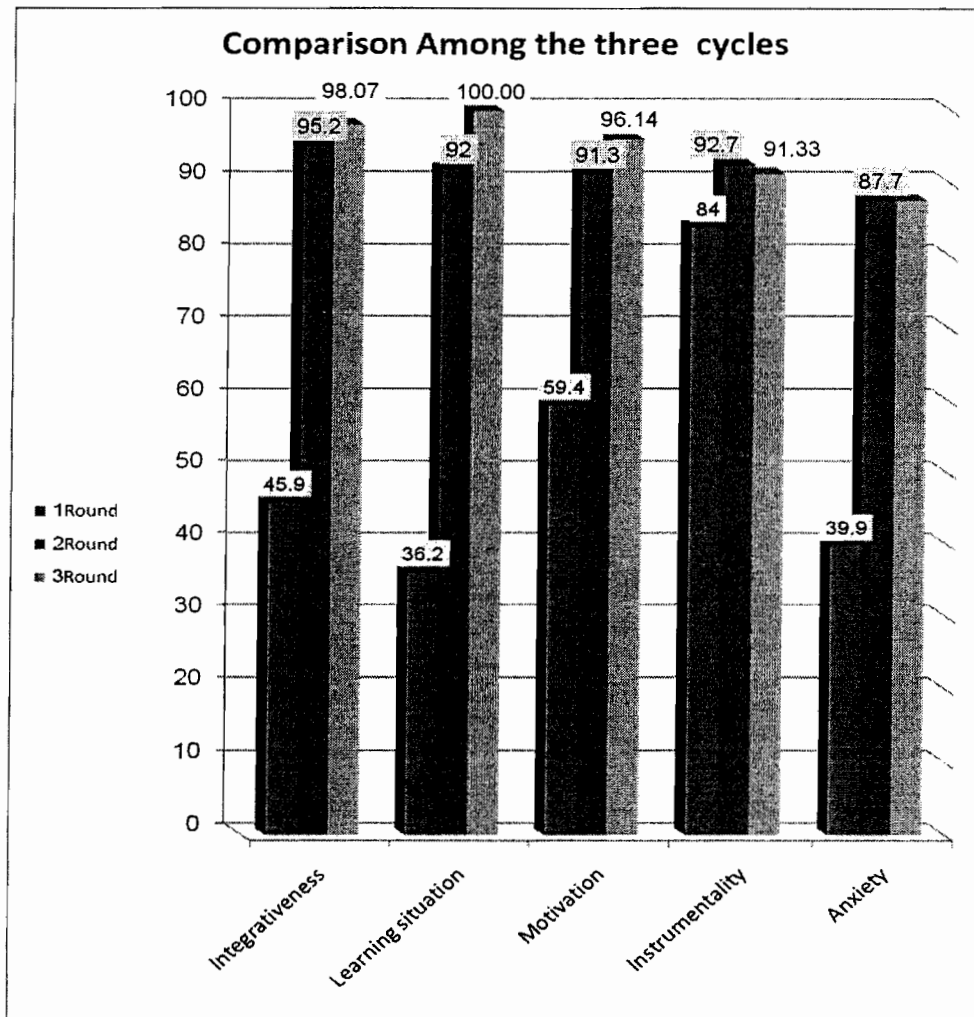


FIG 8. 1 Comparison among the three cycles

8.2.1 The rise of motivation is a result of interrelated factors

Having a comparison among the three cycles, it is evident that there is a noticeable change in the level of motivation among the participants in both the second and the third cycle. Such rise in the level of motivation can be

understood through having a more complete integrated picture of the personality of the learners and their interaction with the learning situation, taking into account the social context of instruction where learning is taking place (McGroarty, 1996). In this respect, Baker (1992) argues that many empirical studies suggest that much depends on the interaction between the person, the nature of instruction received, and the broader language learning context. Given that, the findings suggest that there is an interrelationship among these factors.

8.2.2 The effect of the new teaching practices on integrativeness

Considering the integrativeness factor in both the second and the third cycle, it is evident that it is higher than the first cycle. In the first cycle 45,9% of the students who expressed their desire to integrate with speakers of the target language. However the number of students who became integratively oriented increased to 95% in the second cycle. This number kept rising in the third cycle to mount to 98, 07%. Having said that, it is evident that there are noticeable differences between the first cycle on one hand and both the second and the third cycles on the other hand.

The results of the questionnaire revealed that students in the second and third cycle showed high level of integrativeness. This suggests that they developed an interest in English and they became interested at learning more about the second language community (Gardner, 1985). One of the suggested explanation of the students 'desire to integrate would be up to the argument that children in that age do not have ethnocentric feelings and are not aware

of this ethnocentric conflict. In this respect, Gardner and Lambert (1959) found that ethnocentric feelings played a significant role in forming learners' attitudes towards the target language group. They point out that a really serious student of a foreign or second language who has an open, inquisitive, and unprejudiced orientation toward the learning task might very likely find himself becoming an acculturated member of a new linguistic cultural community as he/she develops a mastery of that other's group language. Gardner and Lambert (ibid) further argue that advancing toward biculturalism in this manner could have various effects on different language learners. For some, the experience might be seen as enjoyable and broadening. Although this argument sounds acceptable, but regarding my teaching context, I wondered: why was the desire to meet and become acquainted with the members of the language target community low in the first cycle while it increased in the second and the third cycle?"

McGroarty (1996:8) points out that "the social context of instruction sets some of the parameters of language learning that affect the presence and intensity of different types of motivation". However this argument still fails to answer why the integrativeness of some students, who have been living in Malaysia for more than 3 years, was quite low as indicated in the first cycle. Believing that the learner's motives, emotions and attitudes screen what is presented in the language classroom (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982), it is plausible that the teaching practices helped my students develop a positive attitude toward the language and the target community as well. This explanation is supported by Gardner's argument (1985:84) that "if attitudes and motivation influence how well someone learns a second language, it is possible that the

experience of learning a second language influences attitudes and motivation.”

Arguing in a similar vein, Abdulrazak (2005) suggests that it is possible that the role of the teacher, method of teaching, instructional material, classroom activities and classroom context have an influence on attitude, motivation and anxiety. Furthermore, Biehler and Snowman (1993) emphasize that the nature of the learning task, the characteristics of the student, the classroom atmosphere, and the personality and approach of the teacher affect students' motivation. In the same line, Crookes and Schmidt (1991) suggest that classroom activities and the teacher's role influence students' motivation. In the same vein, Littlewood (1996) explains that teacher and classroom activities provide learning experiences which influence students' attitudes. Thus, students may have developed positive attitudes towards the language because they were exposed to interesting teaching practices (Gardner, 1985).

8.2.3 The effect of the new teaching practices on Anxiety

The teaching practices also affected students' level of anxiety. In the first cycle, 39.9% of the students felt confident in and outside the class. However, in the second and third cycle 87% of students felt confident to use English in and outside the classroom. It can be assumed that the type of anxiety which was found in the first cycle can be a state anxiety rather being a trait anxiety. In this respect, Spielberger (1983) considers trait anxiety as a stable individual difference in the tendency to perceive situations as threatening; in effect, it represents a proneness to become anxious. State anxiety, on the other hand,

is seen to be more fluctuating, transitory and is more highly dependent on the situation (Spielberger, 1983 as cited in Barnes, Harp and Jung, 2002).

This interpretation is supported by Gardner et al.'s (1987) study which investigated the relationship of different aspects of anxiety and second language production in a relatively non-threatening oral production task. The findings revealed that context-relevant anxiety plays a significant role in second language learning. Gardner (1985) further suggests that it is possible that general anxiety is not an important variable in second language learning and use, but rather that situationally relevant anxiety is a factor. He proposed that situational anxieties such as language class anxiety, language use anxiety and language test anxiety would relate positively to generalize indices of anxiety because of the common anxiety component, but negatively to indices of proficiency in a second language because of the debilitating nature of anxiety in influencing performance.

My students in their storytelling classes were safely secured from three types of debilitating anxiety. They were secured from test anxiety since the activities were not exam-oriented, they were secure from fear of negative evaluation because I was encouraging any kind of participation and I was trying to emphasize the spirit of one community. Finally communication apprehension was reduced because they were using their body language, power point and dramatization that helped them convey their message easily. It seems also that the students could overcome what can be termed as audience anxiety in the third cycle when boys and girls were segregated. With low affective filters, students felt free to express themselves and took risks, not solely in the target

language, but also social risks. These social risks can be interpreted by the desire to integrate with people and be more extrovert once successful communicative tasks could be experienced. (Krashen, 1985).

A successful foreign language curriculum will encourage learners to take risks (Brown, 2001). This principle was evident when my learners voluntarily acted out the stories which required them to comprehend and use new vocabulary. Students were also encouraged to anticipate what would happen next in a story. This risk of telling a wrong answer was a source of creativity rather than being a call for criticism. Finally, students were encouraged to elaborate and change the story however they liked. This gave learners a further opportunity to personalize the stories and to experiment with language forms that may not have been covered in the lesson. Being less anxious, the storytelling sessions proceeded smoothly. Being relaxed and comfortable my students learnt more in shorter periods of time. This finding is supported by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1985) who argue that less anxious learners can learn faster. Given that, the teaching practices lowered the state anxiety and consequently, students lowered their affective filter.

In this respect, Krashen (1985) points out that having an encouraging, non-threatening classroom environment eliminates discomfort and stress for students and gives them confidence to feel free to communicate with people. The storytelling classes also helped keep the learners' affective filter at a low level by having a relaxed classroom atmosphere, where the stress of performing and being judged was kept to a minimum. At the beginning of the storytelling stage, the students' initial response was not oral, but kinesthetic:

when they began to speak, my response was to the content of their messages rather than to their grammatical accuracy. This argument is much supported by Ewald (2007) who contends that Language teachers who introduce practices (e.g. kinesthetic activities or relaxation techniques) from methods such as Total Physical Response or Suggestopedia seek to keep tension at a minimum and, in effect, lower students' affective filter by decreasing their feelings of anxiety.

In the storytelling class, vocabulary was repetitive and recycled in an interesting way. The use of repetitive phrases tended to reduce the amount of new and overwhelming vocabulary and concepts. Gradually my students learnt to be predictors of repetitive phrases with certain texts and be able to interpret the story. This helped my students to easily familiarize themselves with the stories and concentrate on its content. This finding is much supported by the argument that repetitive patterns increase the reading speed and decrease word recognition errors or miscues. When repetition comprehension increases, the decoding challenge diminishes. With less attention focused on decoding and pronunciation, more attention is available for comprehension. (Curtain and Dahlberg, 2004).

Because the Narrative Approach emphasized the repetitions of language forms in multiple contexts, students had the chance to hear the given structures numerous times before they were asked to produce them. This also helped them to automatically and fluently produce their outputs. This finding is in line with Brown's (2001) definition of automaticity that refers to how fluent

speakers do not need to think about what they are hearing or saying, but simply comprehend or produce it.

Brown (2001) further argues that if learners believe that they can accomplish the tasks set before them, they have a greater chance of actually accomplishing them. Sequencing the activities from easier to more difficult ones seemed to incorporate this idea. Because learners likely ask more questions about pictures and story meaning rather than about word meaning (Carney and Levin, 2002) , I made use of the learners' pre-existing knowledge of the world and gestures, actions, pictures, and objects to demonstrate how one can talk about it in another language.

By acting out stories, they were actively participating long before they were able to verbally communicate with me and with each other (Cummins, 1989). In the storytelling activities, I was helping the low achievers during their storytelling classes. I used PowerPoint presentations, pictures and my body language as scaffolds in order to enable the students to perform well (Vygotsky, 1986). The scaffolding stage was removed as soon as students became confident to conduct their stories themselves. Clark and Frances (1984) also point out that slower readers learn most comfortably with materials that are written on their ability level. Also having a reduced number of difficult words: direct, non –convoluted syntax: short passages that deliver clear messages and helpful illustrations, all helped make the storytelling successful.

Margolis and McCabe (2006) argue that when teachers work with struggling students –reviewing materials and words, modeling and directly teaching the strategies needed for success, providing guided independent practice, providing immediate, task-relevant feedback, students feel self-efficacious, comfortable, and enthusiastic about the odds of success. However, understanding my teaching only as scaffolding does not indicate that my students were passive recipients of transmitted information.

My students used to demonstrate some reluctance to learn English before the storytelling intervention. They used to have a negative attitude toward the learning situation. They also used to demonstrate low level of engagement. But once they engaged in telling their stories, they revised their beliefs and reconstructed their views. This change makes me hold the contention that understanding teaching within the metaphoric meaning as scaffolding may be insufficient when students hold beliefs that conflict with the classroom content. In such situations, it will be a more adequate metaphor to understand that my pedagogical practices considered teaching as a persuasion experience and not only as scaffolding technique.

The teaching as persuasion metaphor suggests that teachers should use instructional approaches that support not only knowledge acquisition, but also knowledge and belief revision" (Sinatra and Kardash, 2004). There are two types of persuasion. One involves a change in one's understanding or judgment relative to a particular idea or premise. The second has a negative connotation which involves manipulating and tempting (Murphy ,2001).

In my context, I believe the first connotation was implied in my study. The evidence for this claim is the democratic dialogue that always considered students' views and beliefs. If I had used any extrinsic rewards, students would have felt that they were tempted. But as a matter of fact, gifts and rewards were never put in my agenda along the three cycles. However, I cannot safely claim that my teaching practices were the only source of persuasion in my class. But as, Tomlinson (1998) argues, the teachings materials also played a very important role.

8.2.4 The effect of the teaching materials on student's motivation

Tomlinson (1998) argues convincingly that language learning materials are devoiced and anonymous. However teaching materials have personal voice for each reader. In this respect, my students felt that personal voice in the stories they told; both the content and the activities encouraged their personal participation by revealing their interests and opinions, feelings and emotions and desires and interests. Because stories have colorful pictures, students could relate to their prior knowledge as well.

Dunbar (1996) points out that about two-thirds of our conversations address social topics related to personal relationships, personal likes and dislikes, personal experience and the behavior of other people. My students found that the stories were a medium for communicating meaningful and authentic conversations. The themes tackled in the stories were sociable and global. These themes talked about greediness, wisdom, our concept about nature, our relation with each other, adventures and risks.

Research suggests that passages in texts that are more interesting are remembered better (Pintrich and Zusho, 2002), and students who read books that interest them spend more time reading them (Guthrie 2004). Every time there was a storytelling class, students had a chance to refer to their experience and establish an attitude toward the characters in the story. By doing so, stories could address three types of students' memories : (1) episodic memory which is devoted to events, experiences, visual and auditory images, (2) semantic memory is devoted to information, ideas, attitudes and values, and (3) unconscious memory which includes emotions and feelings (White and Arndt, 1991).

In this respect, Mayesky (2006) confirms that classroom simulations enhance learning because they tie curricular memories to the kinds of real -life emotional contexts in which they will be later used. Also, by matching materials to students' ability to succeed in talking about, teachers increase the chances of success and strengthen students' self-efficacy and motivation (Kotula, 2003; Lipson and Wixson, 2003).

Meaningful learning is a process by which new information is "subsumed" into existing structures and memory systems, creating links between these various systems which foster better retention of the individual forms (Brown, 2001). When my students retold their stories, they recalled grammatical and vocabulary units. For example, in one of the stories, one of the students could use conditional "if" only from the context he heard. He was talking on the tongue of the donkey whose head was hit by an apple. The boy said: "If the fruits were too big, I would die".

The context of the story created a powerful link between the language and its use and consequently lead to meaningful learning that enhanced curricular memories. Additionally, when students were given the chance to read and present the stories they liked, they felt that they had control over what they were doing. This finding is in line with Ivey and Broaddus' (2001) findings that revealed that nearly 60 % of 1,800 economically and culturally diverse sixth graders valued free reading and teacher read-aloud at the top of their favorites. Given that, Ivey and Broaddus suggest that a curriculum centered on teacher-chosen books may limit students' reading experience.

8.2.5 The effect of the new teaching practices and teaching materials on the learning situation

Meaningful language activities develop students' important elements of motivation in language learning (Tremblay and Gardner, 1995). Having effective teaching practices and good teaching materials successfully made students get interested at the course and the instructor. Interest is defined as a psychological state characterized by a high level of attention, intensive effort, and prolonged engagement with an activity and accompanied by feelings of pleasure and a sense of achievement (Hidi, 2001).

Hidi (2001) points out that there are two types of interest in education research. The first type is individual's interest which refers to the individual's psychological disposition associated with her/his preferences for learning. In this sense, individual's interest influences learning behavior and outcome by

providing an information surplus environment where learners rely on their acquired knowledge to self-motivate and self-regulate learning.

This individual interest evolves over time during an individual's consistent interaction with an activity in a particular environment. The second type is situational interest which refers to the appealing effect of characteristics in an activity or object that triggers responses from an individual at the moment of person-activity interaction. Chen and Darst (2001) point out that both types of interest have been found to have a significant influence on student motivation in learning. Yet situational interest can operate in a learning setting where learners depend on the characteristics of novelty, uniqueness and surprises in learning tasks to motivate and regulate their learning.

Chen and Darst (2002) further point out that the success in enforcing the situational interest may lead to a development of new individual interest. The storytelling experience involved the students physically and emotionally and offered opportunities for challenge, success, discovery and creativity. Focusing on students' prior knowledge meant that there was an attention to what students brought to a text. Learning English became effective when language itself was not the purpose of instruction. Reading a story to understand its content or action had a stronger potential for fostering situational interest to learn (Colville-Hall and O'Connor, 2006). Text coherence, ease of comprehension, emotiveness, vividness of text, extent of engagement of the learning process, and student prior knowledge were important sources of situational interest (Schraw, 1997).

Students' motivation rose dramatically in both the second and third cycle. While 36.2% of students were satisfied with the learning situation in the first cycle, 92% of them developed a positive attitude toward the learning situation in the second cycle. This number kept rising in the third cycle to mount to 100% of the students became satisfied with the learning situation. These results are line with Mello's (2001) findings that storytelling is an educative process, one which benefits the listener as well as the teller, and further, that the telling of stories in classrooms enriches both the lives of students as well as the teachers. However, the effects of situational interest goes beyond the entertainment students obtain. Students felt that they learnt new vocabulary and enhanced their skills. This argument is consistent with Wajnryb's (2003:4) argument that:

The value of stories, however, goes beyond the entertainment they offer. Beyond the immediate pleasures of exposure to stories, the uplifting, exciting, moving or thought-provoking qualities of a good story contribute to an educated persons' intellectual, emotional and moral development. The effect of story-one might say, its 'magic'-is to offer an infinite well of vicarious experience with the capacity to transport the reader/hearer beyond all bounties of time, space, language, ethnicity, class or gender.

8.2.6 The effect of the new teaching practices and teaching materials on motivational intensity

The effect of the teaching practices and the storytelling materials seem to have influenced also students' motivational intensity. Examining the results of the comparison among the three cycles, it is evident that there was also a noticeable change in the students' motivation state in both the second and the third cycle.

While there were only 2 students who expressed that they were motivated to exert effort and pay attention in the class and desire to learn English in the first cycle, the number of students who became much motivated mounted to 12 males and 6 females in the second cycle .This number kept rising in the third cycle to mount to 17 males and 6 females. Having materials that are at the right level of difficulty created a challenging learning environment.

In this respect, Tomlinson (1998) argues that perception of relevance could be achieved by relating teaching points to interesting and challenging tasks that could push learners slightly beyond their existing proficiency level through presenting them in ways which can facilitate the achievement of the task outcomes desired by the learners. Making use of computer was a very effective tool ensured strategic investment (Brown, 2001).

According to Brown (2001), people have different learning styles. This means each student is expected to invest in the language learning process in his/her own way. This principle suggests that teachers should use a variety of techniques to ensure that learning will reach a maximum number of students. By using computer in the storytelling sessions, those students, who were much attached to computer, found storytelling a chance to invest their intelligences in designing and preparing for the slides. Additionally, using computer increased students' confidence on one hand and made the storytelling more challenging on the other hand (Kelm,1992; Kroonenberg, 1995).

To produce a good looking product, students spent more time on design. They used to do more stylistic things in terms of how the slides looked, and if there was something they wanted to illustrate, they would add pictures, change the font: they were not just thinking about typing a sentence; they were thinking and feeling how to present their stories in an attractive way. This argument is supported by Warschauer (1996) who surveyed 167 university students in 12 ESL and EFL academic writing classes in the United States, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. All students had been asked about students' feelings about using computers for writing and communication. The findings revealed many benefits of computer-mediated communication such as the feeling of personal empowerment and the enhancement of learning opportunities. The benefits gained from integrating computer activities into the regular structure and goals of the course enhanced students' motivation and consequently students had developed a positive attitude toward using computers for writing and communication in the language classroom.

These findings also support Yelland's (2005) claims that children in comprehensive, technology-enhanced programs make progress in all developmental areas including social-emotional, fine motor, gross motor, communication, cognition, and self-help skills. Many studies looked at the use of technology in the classroom and discovered the positive effects of computer on comprehension. Research suggests that multimedia technology provides many new opportunities for accelerating language learning (Edwards, Monaghan, and Knight, 2002).

Reinking and Schreiner (1985) discovered that the comprehension of intermediate and poor readers improved by the help features in the computer. In a later study, Reinking (1988) discovered that comprehension increased when students read computer mediated texts that expanded their options for acquiring information. Similarly, Miller, Blackstock, and Miller (1994) examined the reading behavior of 4 children, aged 8 engaged in repeated readings of CD-ROM storybook and hard-covered books reported that repeated reading of DISCIS storybooks provided with assistance features seemed to enhance the children's reading performance. Students were voluntarily presenting their own stories in the final stages of the intervention. These Learners profited most by investing interest, effort and attention in the learning activity. Going through voluntarily storytelling presentations is evidence that my storytelling were meaningful.

This meaning is consistent with the findings reported by Vallerand (1997) who argues that a person is motivated to engage in an activity when it supports a valuable component of her/his self concept. Positive student engagement is not an easy term to define, yet we know it when we observe it. Students are engaged when they "devote substantial time and effort to a task, when they care about the quality of their work, and when they commit themselves because the work seems to have significance beyond its personal instrumental value" (Newmann, 1986: 242).

This definition is in line with Masgoret and Gardner's (2003) definition of a real motivated person:

When one is attempting to measure motivation, attention can be directed to a number of features of the individual. [b] The motivated individual expends effort, is persistent and attentive to the task at hand, has goals, desires, and aspirations, enjoys the activity, experiences reinforcement from success and disappointment from failure, makes attributions concerning success and/or failure, is aroused, and makes use of strategies to aid in achieving goals. [c] That is, the motivated individual exhibits many behaviors, feelings, cognitions, etc., that the individual who is unmotivated does not. (p. 128)

8.2.7 The effect of the new teaching practices and teaching materials on instrumentality

It is noticeable that the level of instrumentality was high in the three cycles. However, in spite of being high in the first cycle, instrumental motivation did not affect students' motivational intensity. In other words, although students believed in the importance of English in terms of employment and work, such an attitude did not affect their desire to work hard and pay attention in the class. This finding is consistent with Masgoret and Gardner's (2003:129) argument that "one might profess an instrumental orientation and either be motivated or not to learn the language."

Dornyei (2000) also argues that people do not always carry out their intentions. Choice of goal does not guarantee that goal-related intentions will be actually performed. This argument is also consistent with Rabab'ah's (2003) findings that although the Arab learners are instrumentally motivated, their communication skills still are lagging behind. One of the given

explanations is that they are studying only for instrumental purposes, for passing a course or a degree.

8.3 Conclusion

I began my research inquiry with finding out the motivational factors that were operating in my situation. I found out there was a negative attitude toward both the teacher's practices and the teaching materials. There was also no desire to integrate with the target community. Although students had a high instrumental orientation in learning English, their motivational intensity was low. The data collected during the first cycle suggested that there should be a change in my teaching practice. Looking for an alternative practice; I had to be aware that "theories need to be tested in terms of their applicability in the context and complexity of classroom practice" (Shaik-Abdullah, 2005:373).

Being of the opinion of Whitehead (1989:2000), there was always a reflection on the relevance of new teaching practices to my students' needs. In other words, my commitment to change required that I should check whether there was a contradiction between my values and my beliefs about learning and the way I practiced in the classroom. While evidence suggests that my students were highly motivated in the second cycle, one could not safely assume that the storytelling activities went without emergent problems. This is why the intervention in the second cycle required improvement and further researching.

Based on that reflection, I went through the segregation stage in the third cycle in which the motivational factors witnessed more improvement. Having said that, I was trying to point out how the objectives of the study were achieved and how the research questions were answered. I was trying to understand reality in order to transform it. I learnt from that I have to push the boundaries of resources, of tradition, and even of policy and regulations to achieve the best programs for children (Jalongo and Isenberg, 2000). I can safely claim that I am one of the teachers that successfully affected the motivation of my students. It becomes immediately evident that the features on which the research has focused are adequate to account for the phenomena investigated (Stringer, 2004).

CHAPTER NINE

THE QUALITY OF MY ACTION RESEARCH

9.1 Introduction

Research may be defined as a process of systematic investigation leading to increased understanding of a phenomenon or an issue of interest. The systematic process of investigating an existing issue and seeing it in a different way provides the means for ensuring strong and effective processes of inquiry. In this way, research is a form of transformational learning that increases the stock of knowledge that provides people with new concepts, ideas, explanations or interpretations which enable them to see the world in a different way and do things in a better way (Stringer, 2004).

9.2. Claim to knowledge and contribution to theory

Whitehead and McNiff (2006) argue that:

It is possible to say that when you claim that you have a theory, you are making a claim to knowledge. When you say, "this is the way things are", you are expressing a knowledge claim. You are saying, (I know that) this is the way things are. In this sense, all theories can be understood as knowledge claims. Knowledge claims by definition contain explanations, because when you say, "this is the way things are, you are also implying that you can explain why things are the way they are. If ever you get stuck on the word 'theory', try replacing it with 'claim to knowledge or 'explanation' (p. 29).

Reflecting on the above argument, Whitehead and McNiff (2006) hold the contention that in order to claim knowledge, practitioners need to gather data and generate an accumulation of evidence base to explain that they know what they are doing and why they are doing it. By doing so, practitioners can claim that their knowledge is a living theory. This implicates that practice is the basis for the generation of this living theory.

Whitehead and McNiff (2006) further elaborate on this point and argue that “theories are located within and generated from within the practice and influence the development of new practices, which in turn act as the grounds for the development of new theory and new practices”(p.119). As far as the theories of learning are concerned, it is noticeable that when a new approach breaks away from the predominant norms of the time, it abandons some of the old model, holds to some constructive aspects of it and comes with innovative thoughts. Later, newer methods emerge, they repeat the same cycle (Brown, 2001). Understanding the cyclical nature of the rise and fall of theories may make readers of my research wonder: What models did I hold? What models did I abandon? What innovative practices did my living theory bring to the community of education?

I found out that my living practices corresponded with a cluster of theories and they were sometimes inconsistent with others. These agreements and disagreements were based on whether these theories were applicable or not in my context. If my purposes were merely absorbed into academic and political culture which was not relevant to the students I was meant to serve, my research would have no practical implications and I would live with contradictions in theory and research (Francis and Skelton, 2001).

Pedagogically speaking, I held to the belief that language input and class activities can be driven exclusively by the telling of interesting, and understandable stories. I also believed that when students are exposed to a variety of vocabulary and structure which are recycled naturally as different versions of the story are told, they will have multiple opportunities to encounter the target language , will become able to produce language spontaneously, and consequently will be motivated enough to learn the language .My belief in the potential of the Narrative Approach as a means of instruction adds more confirmation to all the voices that do support the inclusion of stories in school syllabuses.(Mallan, 1991; Dyson, 1993; Greene, 1996; Langer, 1997; McQuillan and Tse, 1998; Rooks, 1998; Caulfield, 2000; Ghosn, 2002; Bayly, 2004; Tsou, 2005; Bernice, 2006, Hochstetler, 2006).

My concerns were to make my learners feel more comfortable in the learning environment, and expose them to a great deal of interesting, challenging and comprehensible input. These concerns were theoretically and pedagogically consistent with the Narrative Approach that gives much emphasis to the cognitive, affective and the linguistic factors in learning (MacQuillan and Tse, 1998). This emphasis was a worthy component I considered in my teaching practices. In the storytelling activities, students were exposed to a collection of stories that provided a comprehensible input which was successfully presented through body language, illustrations, PowerPoint presentations, and making use of students' prior knowledge. This variety of means encouraged students to negotiate with the meaning of the presented linguistic input with no need to translate every word into Arabic. Using repetitive forms of language items in multiple contexts gave confidence to my students and lowered their affective filter (Krashen, 1985).

Students managed to independently and more confidently tell their own stories. These findings add more emphasis to the effectiveness of the Narrative Approach in teaching English. However, my contextual implications add a new important dimension to the Narrative Approach. It is true that the Narrative Approach does emphasize the importance of stories as a medium of instruction, yet it does not address how single-sex education can maximize the performance of storytellers. Addressing the role of gender in storytelling was hardly tackled in the storytelling studies before (Mages, 2008).

This segregation practice is consistent with the recent educational studies that revealed the effectiveness of single-sex education in developing students' cognitive and affective concerns (Evans, 2008). By segregating the boys from the girls, I was in disagreement with the claims which suggest that teachers should consider pairing boys and girls in group work to get exposed to each others' skills. My disagreement was based on the argument that students' cultural and religious background dictate conservative practices among boys and girls (McInerney, Dowson and Yeung, 2005).

Research suggests that the values conveyed in some of the school programs may substantially conflict with the values emphasized by culturally and religiously diverse family and social groups. This, in turn, may have significant implications for student motivation, absenteeism and achievement (Kings, 1994). With regard to teaching practices, Islam requires that boys and girls should be separated for particular activities at the age of puberty, and under no circumstances should any part of the female body, with the exception of the face and hands, be exposed (McInerney, Dowson and Yeung, 2005). Muslims are ordered to lower their gaze and guard their modesty. This order is clear in the following Quranic verse:

Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty that will make for greater purity for them...Say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty...O you believers! Turn you all together towards Allah that you may attain success"
(24:30, 31)

By lowering their gaze, boys and girls would not feel comfortable if they looked at each other while they were using their body language during the storytelling practices. This finding can alert researchers and practitioners to within –cultural variables that may influence educational practices in the classroom (McInerney, Dowson and Yeung, 2005).

Furthermore, the benefits of segregation are not only academic. Just as importantly, single –sex education made my students feel free to explore their own strengths and interests (Evans, 2008). Given that, addressing the cultural aspect in my storytelling practices adds a new dimension that was not investigated by the Narrative Approach before. Further, the study revealed a very important value that girls and boys can be in their comfortable zone when they are segregated. This finding is line with the recent findings in the United States (Evans, 2008). The study also suggested that both boys and girls displayed high language attitudes. This finding may evoke some debate on the more common contention that foreign language learning is increasingly seen by boys as a “girly” subject (Csizer and Dornyei, 2005).

Experiencing theories and approaches in my own context gives them new contextual forms that contribute to the original ones. Thus, the findings of my research are a form of a real life theory. The originality of my theory comes from the method, from my different focus which is implicit in the research questions, from the context where the action happens, or from the action plan itself as well as from reporting the original responses of the group being studied (Macintyre, 2000).

Furthermore, claiming a new theory does not necessarily mean “fundamental changes in world view or cultural orientation, but includes the small “ah-ha’ moments that enable people to see themselves, others, events, and phenomena with greater clarity or in a completely different way” (Stringer, 2004: 3). Additionally, contribution to theory is more than a cognitive event; contribution to theory encompasses emotionality, self-feelings which record the agonies, pains, tragedies, triumphs, and peaks of human experience (Stringer, 2004).

By ensuring that my students were actively engaged in reflecting on my teaching practices, our relation grew and the space for communication became more democratic because they felt that their voices are heard and their issues are acted upon. Instead of dealing with students as passive recipients who have no right to decide the course of their education, my students actively involved in the decision- making process along the research. Their opinions about the previous syllabus and their attitude toward the new teaching practices were the bedrock upon which our progress relied. This change in the status of the researcher as a consultant and students as active participants developed the students ‘autonomy which is a very important contribution to human experience (Heron, 1996).

Reflecting on the quality of my living theory, I believed that the findings revealed by my action research study can be high quality knowledge if it can also develop the professional knowledge of teachers as a whole, and develop and improve education as a discipline (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 2000). Being in a world where practitioners increasingly engage in research themselves as a key strategy in knowledge transfer (Marshall, 2004), I believed that changing practices is not just a matter of changing the ideas of individual practitioners alone but changing the ideas and actions of the others who share in the constitution of social and educational practices by their thought and action (Kemmis, 2006).

Capobianco and Feldman (2006) argue that attention to how an action research is conducted is not enough. Action research has its purposes to improve one's practice that can be shared with others. An impact on practice is the first marker of quality in action research, but the value of this impact is grounded in the knowledge and understanding the research generates. By sharing with others, knowledge could not be only constructed but also transferred and the receivers of this knowledge can relate it to their context. Additionally, Altrichter, Posch and Somekh (2000) contend that action research can provide high quality knowledge provided that it could develop and improve practice through research in the interests of all those concerned; develop the knowledge and practical understanding of those involved in the research process, develop the professional knowledge of teachers as a whole, and develop and improve education as a discipline.

Furthermore, McTaggart (1994) points out that "...action research is not merely about learning, [but] ... is about knowledge production and about the improvement of practice [amongst similarly] committed groups" (p. 317). Reason (2003) further points out that quality comes from asking, with others, what is important in this situation? How well are we doing? How can we show others how well we have done? This argument implicates that the findings to emerge from action research are not only of value to the practitioner and his/her direct participants, but may be valuable to other audiences with similar needs and concerns.

I found out that the conclusions I reached are ones to which second language teachers could usefully relate to and which they can use to help make decisions in their teaching situations. Believing in the importance of shared knowledge, I wondered to what extent the details of my research are sufficient and appropriate for a teacher working in a similar situation to relate his/her decision making to that described in my case (Bassey, 1981). I also wondered to what extent the insights gained from my study could be used for teacher development, for feedback, for formative evaluation and for policy making. In this respect, my action research can open "a communicative space in which emerging agreements and disagreements, understandings and decisions can be problematical and explored openly (Kemmis, 2006:472).

Having a communicative space means that there is a space for opening a communicative dialogue in which I can discuss with other interested audience the implications of my living theory. I believed that such a discussion would open my mind to new dimensions of knowledge. I was also aware that the success of a communicational dialogue much depends upon to what degree engagement in the dialogue is voluntarily carried out, to what degree the flow of conversation is not interrupted, and to what degree there is mutual respect and concern (Burbules, 1993).

Through the exercise of this communicative dialogue, participants are expected to develop communicative power and establish a sense of solidarity which can underpin their decisions, giving them legitimacy-not only for them, but also for others with whom they share their findings. In this respect, the data gathered from looking at teaching practices in classrooms can maximize our comprehension of the reasons which cause our decisions and actions. I believed that my action research study could provide student teachers with tools to explore their teaching context and have a broader understanding of who they are as teachers. Believing that my action research could open communicative space (Kemmis, 2006), I planned to share the findings of my study with pre-and in service teachers in Malaysia.

9.3 The objectives of the communicative dialogue

- 1- To increase the truthfulness of my findings by making the pre- and in-service teachers voice out their own reflection on my teaching practices and students' motivation.
- 2- To provide these teachers with practical knowledge on how teaching approaches affect students' learning .
- 3- To inspire the in and pre-service teachers to construct knowledge and relate it to their context .

9.4 Framework of communication

Krone et al. (1987) point out that there are seven perspectives that form the components of a communicational situation. These seven components include message, channel, sender, transmission, encoding and decoding, feedback and communication effects. In this respect, Burbules (1993) illustrates that a sender encodes a message with certain intentions and transmits it by some channels to a receiver who then decodes the message and provides feedback to the original sender. Both the source and the receivers are communicators in this process. The process is also interactive and transactional, it flows back and forth, often going both ways simultaneously as both talk or as one talks and the other listens and gives feedback through nonverbal cues. The following figure illustrates the flow of communication:

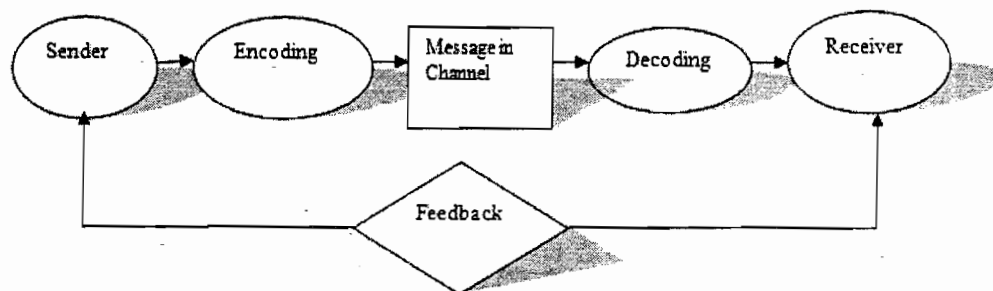


FIG 9.1 A general model of the communication process (Krone et al., 1987)

9.5 Operational implications

Being interested in sharing my findings with others, I took the initiative to start the communicative dialogue. The receivers who involved in this dialogue included 31 in -service and 31 pre -service Malaysian teachers, with an age range of 21-40 years old. These participants joined Universiti Utara Malaysia in order to obtain a teaching degree. They were heterogeneous in terms of their personalities, social background and teaching experience. Since it was a two-way communication, I was not only sending but also constructing my knowledge by receiving meaningful feedback from the participants.

The message I planned to encode was that my action research study , in which I implemented storytelling techniques, could motivate my primary - six students and build their self-confidence in using English language in and outside the class. In order to convey this message to the participants, I was guided by Whitehead and McNiff's (2006) argument that practitioners can use innovative ways of presenting their theories(claims of Knowledge) using multi sensory forms of communication, such as pictures, graphics, video and other electronic technology. These newer forms of technology are often able to communicate living experience more effectively than only linguistic forms.

Based on that, I used different channels of communication. First I held one reflective session with the pre-service teachers only. Then I held another reflective session with the in-service teachers only. The sessions were held in one of the teaching rooms in Universiti Utara Malaysia in the end of the first semester of the academic year (2007-2008).

In every session, I used three video clips of the storytelling successions. The three video clips represented different stages in the study. The first clip showed how I presented stories in a mixed class. The second video clip showed how the boys in a segregated class were telling their stories. The third clip showed how the girls only telling their stories in a class. Every clip took 20 minutes. These video clips meant to give the pre and in-service teachers enough communicative space to reflect on what they watched without any attempts to impose my values and my attitudes on them.

According to Whitehead and McNiff (2006), the use of video and other multimedia as evidence in support of claims to knowledge is very powerful because they capture the nature of reality in a way that verbal reports can not. After finishing watching the video clips, I asked the participants to write their feedback. The writing task took 30 minutes. This writing channel provided the teachers with a chance to critically reflect on the visual message they received.

While they were reflecting on what they watched, the in and pre service teachers were asked to consider three questions:

1. To what degree were the teaching practices interesting?
2. To what degree were the students motivated?
3. To what degree would the in and pre-service teachers relate this experience to their Malaysian context?

After finishing with the writing task, I collected the participants' comments and I conducted a face-to face communication. By having different types of channels, the implications of my Action research study were clearly identified and meanings as well as knowledge were constructed. On constructing meaningful knowledge, the in- and pre -service teachers were decoding my findings in the light of their experiences, their educational background, and their cultural context. Through encoding and decoding process, the participants constructed meanings, made sense of the message and gave me their feedback. By focusing the participants' attention on what I am looking for in relation to how I understand the objectives of my research, the issue of the validity of my claim of knowledge is strongly established (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006).

9.5.1 Reflection on the findings of our dialogue

The reflection sessions revealed that there is an agreement among the participants that the teaching practices during the storytelling sessions were much motivating and encouraging. Sample responses are as follows:

In my opinion, the video clip on story telling was very interesting to be watched. As we adults enjoy it, I would bet that children would also love it. It proves how animated and lively a teacher should be in a classroom. Personally I feel that children would usually remember things which attract them. The storytelling clip was amazing as the children could retell the story in their own words. In short I really enjoyed the clip (Pre-service teacher).

As far as my students' performance is concerned, the participants agreed that there was much fun and enthusiasm in the storytelling classes. The following responses support this meaning:

Personally I feel that the way you deliver a story was interesting and through my observation I realize that such way triggers more active learners in the classroom, I could see their interest when they respond enthusiastically to your questions. Comparing to my own personal experience, presenting a story without text at the beginning provides opportunity for students to communicate (pre-service teacher).

Students seem to imitate the story very well and they also can make different characters in the story. From this activity students can show their own talent and become more confident to use English in the classroom (in-service teacher).

One thing that fascinated me about the story telling session was that the students, especially the boys were brave enough to come forward to retell the story! They were full of expressions with actions and gestures...This shows how motivated they were by the story and the storyteller (Pre-service teacher).

As far as relating this experience to their context, the participants expressed their concern about the proficiency level and the poor condition of many students in rural areas. The following response reflects this meaning:

I benefited from the session and in my opinion such method can be used in the classroom. However I feel that teachers need to take into account students 'level of proficiency before carrying out this method. In some classes the students will be very poor and so we could not use English language throughout the class. However, teachers may use this way so that students will be exposed more on English language as well as enhance their level of proficiency as they actively engage in oral performance (pre-service teacher).

Some participants were much concerned about the size of the class. They anticipated that the big number of students in the class would demand from them more energy to keep the students' attention. The following response reflects this meaning:

As a teacher to be, I would be very glad if I can apply this teaching practice in my future class. In Malaysian school system, we normally have 35 to 40 students in a class. Therefore; I have to be very energetic to come out in different activities in order to attract their attention through the learning process. (Pre-service teacher).

In terms of our Malaysian context, I think it would be an effective method of learning as all learners learn through visualization. Unfortunately, one factor which may lead to the failure of this method' success is the large size of the class. The class may turn from participation to noisy (In-service teacher).

Some participants were worried about the seating of the students. They anticipated that with a big number of students in the class, only those who are sitting in the front will be able to concentrate. Sample response is as follows:

I don't think it is suitable for more than 15 persons a class. Maybe the students who sit in front will involve in the activity actively but what will happen to the rest? They will lose their attention span quickly and start to wonder about something that is not related to the lesson. I used to be the front student. I love the lesson because my teachers asked me questions, praised me and gave me presents. But my friends at the back start to play and make noise. That's what will happen to the class with 48 students (In- service teacher).

Other participants were much concerned about their lack of experience in telling stories. They were not confident if they could achieve the same results or not. The following response reflects this meaning:

From what I have learnt by watching the video clips, I realized that there is so much to learn about my teaching practices. The way you did may be due to your numerous years of experience in dealing with children. Shall we...In five years time would be as the same as you? (In- service teacher).

The two-way communication with the participants constructed a meaning that both the in-service and the pre-service teachers, through the reflection session, were put in a situation where they had to choose between two ways: One demands changing the reality and the other is surrendering to reality. The former attitude needs determination to improve the reality while the latter gives a false peace of mind to unprofessional performers. When a culture of

servitude and silence is imposed to stop the potential emergence of a culture of enquiry and dissent, these teachers, in order to be able to change, need content mastery as well as greater power over their professional lives. They need to see issues in the routine and be intrinsically motivated; they need confidence in what they think (Jalong and Isenberg, 2000). Additionally, in a time in which intellectual freedom is encouraged; these teachers need to exercise their critical engagement in processes of discernment. Ruggiero (1998) points out that "willingness to re-open settled issues whenever significant contrary evidence arises, far from being a vice, is a central characteristic of all good thinkers" (p.118). By doing so, the outcome will be actionable knowledge that contributes to establish mutual communication for enhancing practitioner communities.

Both the pre-service and in-service teachers showed an attentive attitude and a readiness to listen. They expressed their desire to apply the teaching practices they viewed and discussed, taking into consideration the size of the classroom and the learners 'proficiency. The participants' concerns about the size of the classroom and the proficiency level of the Malaysian students, especially in the rural areas, may implicate that these teachers need to have more reflective practice that is based on professional reading, pedagogical expertise, and knowledge of child development . Having done so, these teachers would be able to draw upon their reservoir of direct experience and will be able to adapt flexibly to wide array of circumstances (Jalongo and Isenberg, 2000).

Reflecting on the participants' concerns, I agree with sage (1987) that "Literature may indeed, at first, confuse and overwhelm teachers who are inexperienced with it. Unless the teacher is confident and secure, even the best rational for using literature with nonnative readers is meaningless" (p.8). However, involving the in-service and pre-service teachers in the dialogue gives reliability to the meanings constructed because their judgments are based on first hand teaching experiences. According to Jalongo and Isenberg (2000), a student might say of a current experience, "this is fun" but later on say that it was a waste of time considering what he or she is now facing.

Arguing in a similar vein, Whitehead and McNiff (2006: 58) point out that "when an educator aims to influence, they do so in the clear understanding that what they are trying to communicate will inevitably be filtered through the creative imagination of the other". When the in and pre-service voiced out their concerns about the application of storytelling, they filtered my message and imagined how the situation would be in their classroom. Expressing their concerns reflect that they were free agents who can make their decisions about how they should live. However, in spite of the participants' concerns about the application of storytelling, I realized that talking about my action research showed that the participants not only revised their knowledge, but also made connections between theory and practice; they monitored whether what happened demonstrated a coherent relation between teaching principles and reality. Some of the technical aspects of teaching became a lot clearer for them including on how to keep students motivated to learn. The following responses reflect this meaning:

Every time the teacher shows the picture, he asks, "What is that picture?" I found this practice very good in order to test their prior knowledge. Hand gestures really help maintaining the focus of the students. The teacher tries to relate each picture in the form of a story so that it makes sense of what the pupils are learning. The students seem to be interested at learning. The teacher also uses a lot of repetition to improve the understanding of the students but I am afraid if there is too much repetition the students might lose interest. This happens because students may feel that they are under pressure to listen, remember and utter it again. so far this does not seem in the class (In- service teacher).

The teacher does not use the traditional method of drilling, but helps students learn better through action and demonstration. The teacher also allows active participation by asking questions to trigger their prior knowledge as well as to think further. Besides that the teacher's intonation and voice is loud enough and changes according to the situation. This ensures that students' attention span is maintained and they are motivated (Pre-service teacher).

By using teaching aids and technology, it is easier for the teacher to be engaged with the students. The slides are clear and big and the students can pay more attention to the slides. Besides, there is a two-way communication between the teacher and students. In other words, the students are free to give feedback to the teacher (pre-service teacher).

The teacher always praise the students when they answer the questions correctly. This is one of the ways to enhance students' confidence and self esteem, as well as generating their extrinsic motivation. The teacher also recognized the students' names and made eye contact with them. This is important to make the students feel appreciated by the teacher. The teacher applied TPR approach for words like "cold", crying", eating, etc.(In-service teacher).

Reflecting on the participants' comments, it is clear that they observed many pedagogical and technical implications while they were watching the storytelling sessions. They reflected on the importance of body language and

gestures in teaching. They realized the role of reinforcement in building students confidence. They also mentioned the role of technology in teaching English. This reflection is evidence that my action research inspired these teachers and they observed the goodness of such an application. In this respect, Grugeon and Gardner (2000) point out that:

Most of us do not have the time or the opportunity to listen to professional storytellers in action but we can still become confident and competent storytellers by following the example of a number of practitioners who have written about their experiences or have seriously researched issues related to narrative and storytelling (p.17).

The reflective session with the pre-service and in-service teachers was an attempt to create mutual communication by searching for truth, pushing for intellectual innovation, sharing my truth and innovations with particular audiences and creating environments that enhance learning and reflection. In this respect, Whitehead (1994) points out that

If you just train people to teach and they apply what the skills that they learn from you, it is mechanistic. You are after all dealing with human beings. So maybe I see my role should not be merely to train people mechanistically ...but also to educate them...to train them to be more independent in their thinking...to provide them with the facility to think for themselves and questioning of me, not of authority, but of me, to dare to come and discuss in the open, not to be defensive, if they are challenged in turn....the teachers would be poorer if they just went away with a set of skills. They would be much enriched if the way they have been prepared for teaching trains them to develop educationally and individually and as human beings (p.16).

Encouraging the pre- and in-service teachers to be independent thinkers can be considered an important factor in judging the quality of my research.

According to Whitehead and McNiff (2006), practitioners can judge the quality of the influence of their experience and claim of knowledge in terms of the extent that they encourage others to think independently, and to make informed choices about whether or not to be influenced. This capacity of mediating influence is a key factor in the education of social formation. However, the benefits of practitioner research can extend beyond the teacher educator by demonstrating to teachers and prospective teachers that learning to teach is inherently connected to learning to inquire (Borko, Liston and Whitcomb, 2007).

9.6 Conclusion

I used my action research as a tool for opening communicative spaces in which I made my enquiry open to question and exploration. Constructing meaningful communication amongst pre-and in-service teachers increased the truthfulness of my findings. The way the dialogue was carried out reflected the importance of having mutual communication that requires a pluralistic outlook, civility and courtesy. This courtesy and civility were satisfactorily met; engagement in the dialogue was voluntarily carried out, flow of conversation was not interrupted, and both the participants and I showed mutual respect and concern (Kemmis, 2006).

By having the pre and in service teachers reflect on my action research, I was trying to emphasize the importance of having a balance between routine and change, the individual and the organization, schooling and learning, and research and teaching. I was trying to demonstrate that teachers can be fully

involved in conceptualizing then implementing changes rather than being observers who do not wish to disturb the scene (Macintyre, 2000).

Perhaps, as Fukami argues "the key is not the roles themselves-teacher, researcher, administrator, colleague, partner, mom- but the centre: me...My life is balanced because I 'm centered" (as cited in Andre and Frost, 1997:13). The sense of being centered helped me to develop confidence, without arrogance, about the validity of my own perspectives. Being centered did not mean that I ignored my commitment to external validation. The feedback I received from my students, their parents, the pre- and in service teachers and the agreements as well as the disagreements we reached can give legitimacy to the findings of my research (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006).

The sense of being centered did not make me abandon important values such as freedom, democracy and justice in the process of inquiring into ways to improve the practice of my primary –six students and the reflection of my in – service and pre-service teachers who were given the right to speak in their own voices, take responsibility for themselves and make their own choices to the goodness of their world (Kemmis, 2006). Reflecting on the whole study, I learnt how to improve my learning and come to influence the learning of others, with the potential of informing the education of the wider social formation of educators in my working environment. I told how I developed my performance and how this was conducted in a democratic way throughout my study. I also realized that the value that underpins the form of action research is the value of excellence in performance which can be obtained by asking questions such as, "how do I help my students improve the quality of their

learning? or "How do I improve my practice?" (Whitehead, 1994). I can claim that I contributed to the educational research through my attempts to find ways of ensuring that my practice falls within the domain of education and it was good in the sense that it helped my students learn. Most research effort in the past two decades has been expanded on exploring the role of motivation in L2. To achieve this, researchers have usually administered self-report questionnaire to language learners and then processed the data by means of complex statistical procedures such as correlation and factor analyses, analysis of variance, and structural equation modeling. Although studies conducted in this vein have helped us obtain some kind of generalization, dearth of research has intensively adopted qualitative tools to operationally measure the concept of integrative motives. The quantitative studies did not involve situation-specific motives that are rooted in the L2 learners' immediate learning environment.

My contribution can be claimed through ensuring that my judgments were justified. I did not claim something to be good without explaining how and why it was seen as good. The explanations communicated in my research were based on triangulating the data from different qualitative tools and that needs to be understood as good quality, in its own terms (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002).

By accepting a responsibility, as an educational researcher, to submit my accounts of learning for the pre-and in service teachers in order to test and to strengthen their validity can be also considered a contribution to educational knowledge. I can safely claim that I have encouraged the pre- and in service

teachers to develop insights about the need to theorize their practices, and, as part of the process, to articulate clearly the standards of judgment they use to make sense of their work in terms of how they judge their own practices. This kind of reflection is expected to enhance further learning that happens through free-flow interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships which respect the other's capacity for choice in choosing whether or not to be influenced, and to use the learning in ways that are right for them (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006).

Reflecting on my whole study, I sometimes find myself wondering why I did not devote this long time and this effort to build myself financially. Yet when I remember the happy moments I spent with my students in telling our stories, the transformational stages I went through and the reflection sessions I conducted with the pre and in service teachers, I find that such self-indulgent thoughts rapidly dissipate, to be replaced by the overwhelming sense of improving others' learning. Every time I reflect on my work, I increase my learning and think of new areas in storytelling that still catch my concern. These areas may try to answer questions such as: Can storytelling be used in addressing the multiple intelligences of students? Can storytelling develop integrative motivation for learning Arabic in the English speaking countries? To what degree can the themes, discussed in storytelling, narrow the ethnic divide among students? These concerns are inspired by being involved in my action research work. I am voicing out these concerns to openly demonstrate the impact of my research on my future learning. I acknowledge that I have travelled considerable distances, and still have far to go. I am thoroughly inspired by the thought that I am on the never-ending learning journey.

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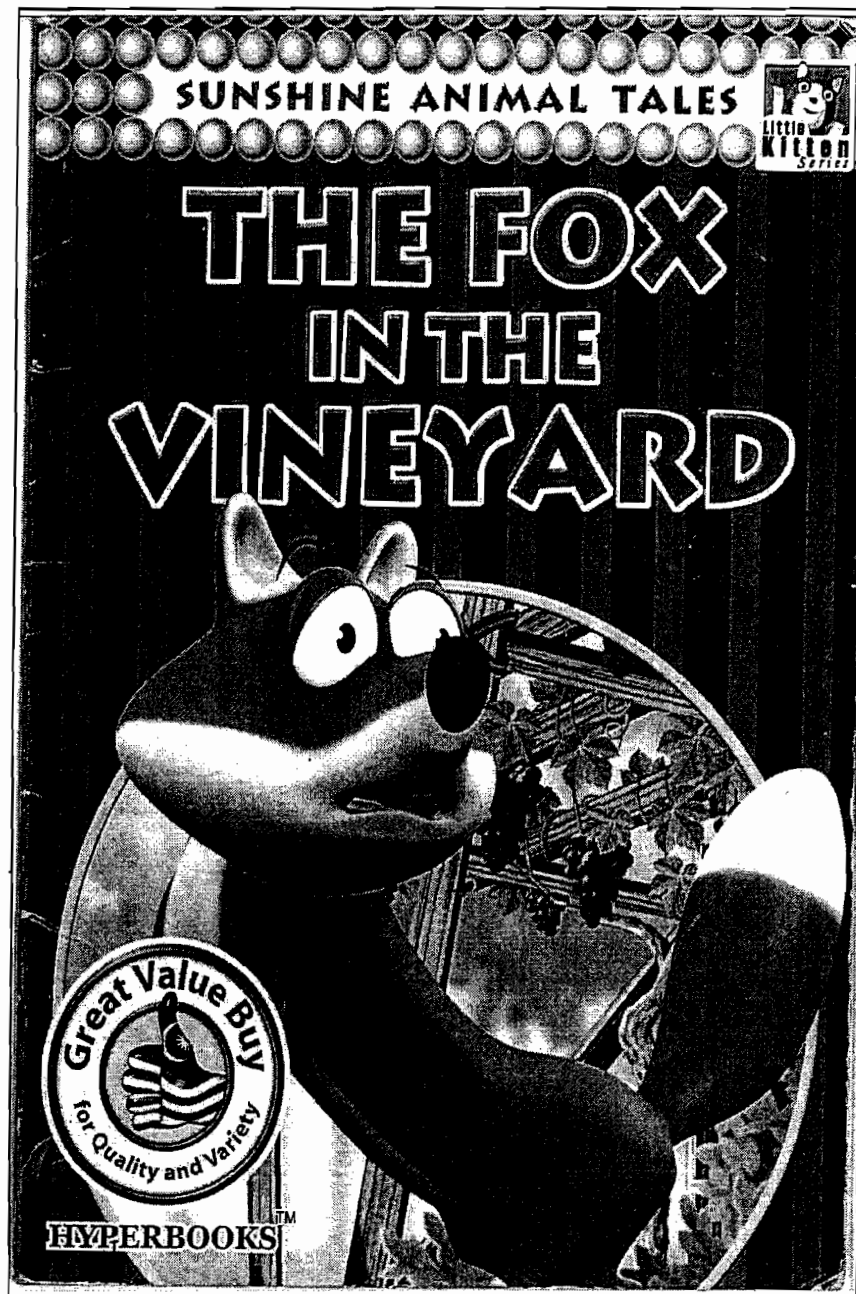
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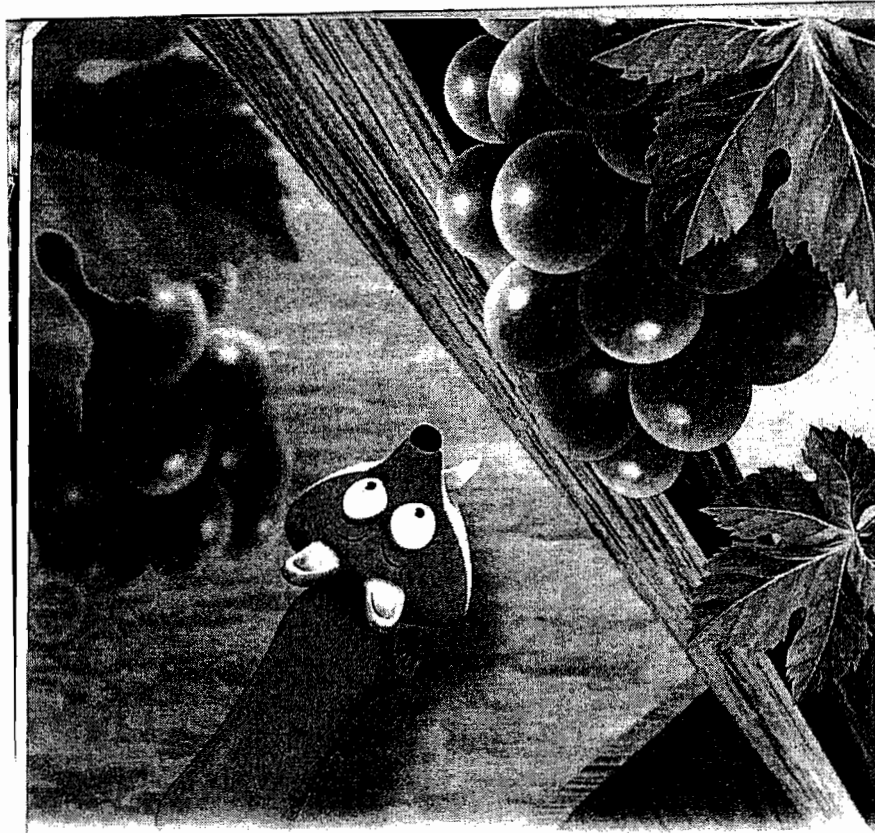
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Appendix 1- A sample of the stories used in the storytelling sessions.



Appendix 2- A sample of the level of language used in the storytelling sessions.

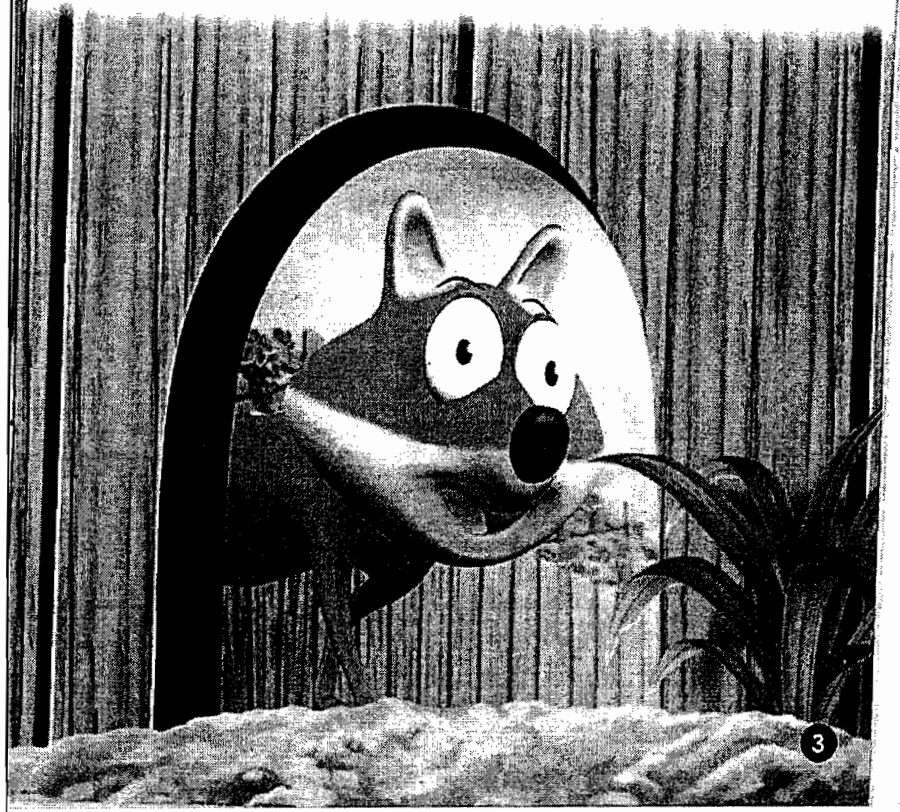


A hungry fox is walking around looking for food. He comes to a **vineyard**. There he sees some ripe grapes hanging high up.

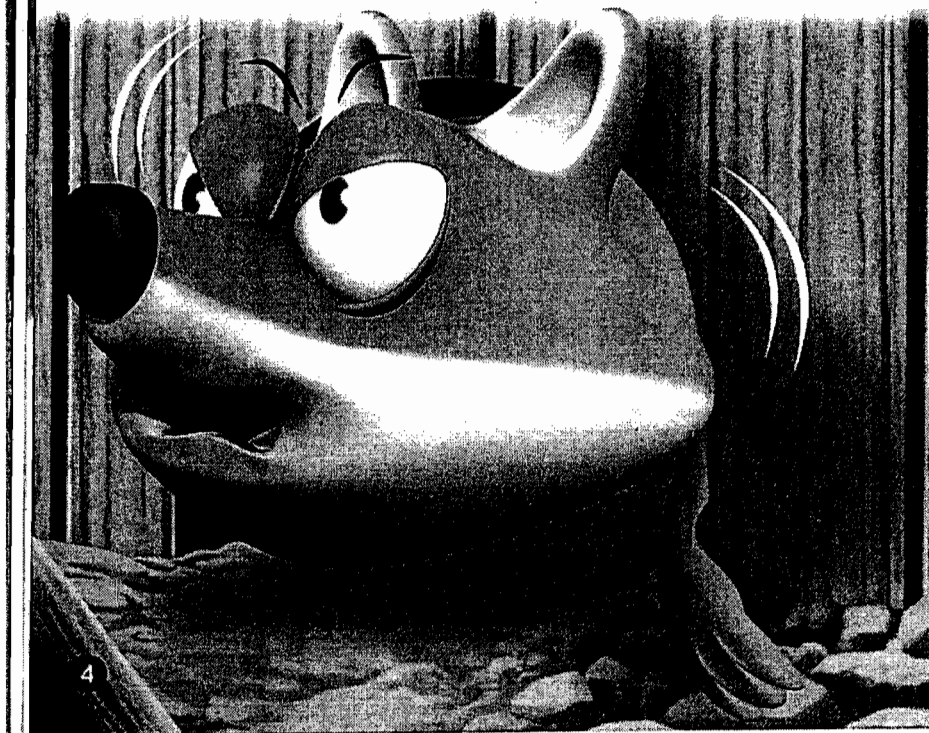
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Appendix 3- A sample of the element of suspense manipulated in stories.

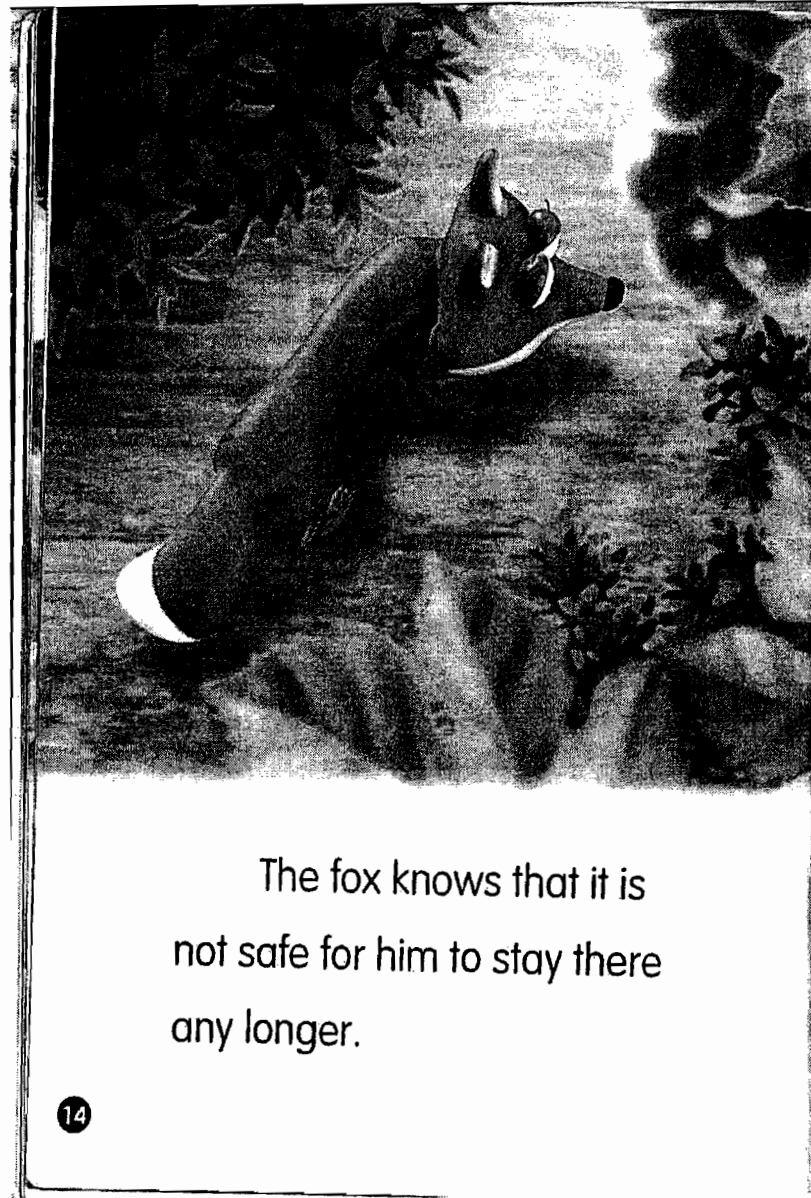
There is a high fence around
the vineyard. The fox walks around
the fence until he finds a hole in
the fence.



The fox tries to get into the vineyard through this hole. But the hole is too small. He can only put his head through it.

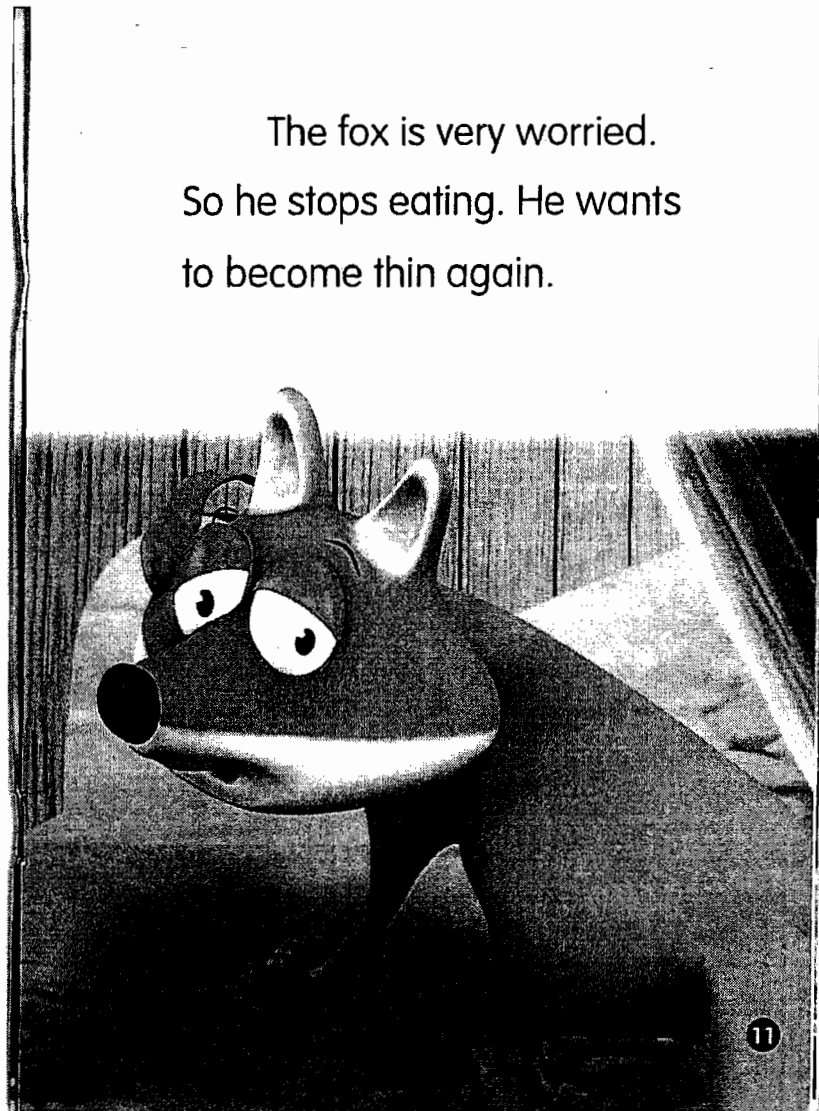


Appendix 5 - A sample of using personal reflection for solving problems raised
in
the story.



Appendix 6 - A sample of the morals conveyed by the story.

The fox is very worried.
So he stops eating. He wants
to become thin again.



Appendix 7- A sample of the works of the advanced students during the storytelling sessions.



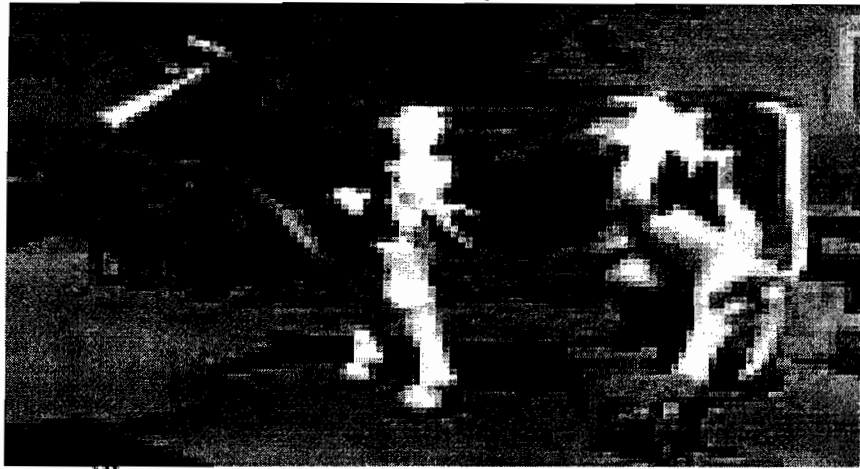
Once upon a time there lived a young frog
who often sat upon a very soft lily pad.

His name was Sniffy. Probably because he
liked flowers.

One day, Sniffy was scrubbing his toes in the
pond. He felt something moving in the
water!

It was his friend, Fluffy, a small fish
from just up the pond. She giggled.

Appendix 9- A sample of works of the low achievers during the storytelling sessions.



The little frog said: I saw the biggest animal in the world.