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Amir Kaviani
Zayed University, amir.kaviani@zu.ac.ae

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Research Article

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On the Significance of Students' Appraisals of Their Language Learning Experiences at University: A Phenomenological Approach

Amir Kaviani

Department of Language Studies,
College of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Zayed University, United Arab Emirates

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Abstract

This study focusses on students' appraisals of their language learning experiences at university. Forty students in the third and final academic English course at a university in the UAE participated in the study. The participants completed a written survey which was developed based on Scherer's (1987, 2001, 2011, 2013) framework of appraisals, i.e. pleasantness, novelty, goal-conduciveness, coping potential and self-compatibility checks. The analysis of the qualitative data indicates that almost all of the participants evaluate their language learning experiences positively and consider the programme to be of great value in enabling them to achieve their academic and professional goals. On the other hand, some participants do not see much novelty in terms of the materials presented to them and believe this reduces the level of challenge and motivation for them. Almost all of the participants feel strongly about the use of their first language, i.e. Arabic and the fact that learning English should not affect their use of the first language negatively. One important pedagogical implication of the study is that students' positive appraisals of the course are largely attributed to the teacher's method of teaching. Another important pedagogical implication of the study is that correct placement of the students in an academic programme can create the proper level of challenge and hence motivation for the students.

Keywords: Learning Experiences, Appraisals, Appraisal Theory, Cognition and Emotion

1. Introduction

Research in higher education mostly focuses on the role of teaching in facilitating learning (e.g. Barr & Tagg 1995; Wang, Pascarella, Laird & Ribera, 2015), the strategies that can help students improve their achievements at university (e.g. Stemler, Elliott, Grigorenko & Sternberg, 2006; Ensign & Woods, 2014), the importance of assessment in higher education pedagogy (e.g. Sanders, 2001; Myers & Myers, 2014) and the use of technology in improving teaching (e.g. Barraket & Scott, 2001; Churchill & Wang, 2014). There are a relatively small number of studies that explore how students evaluate their learning experiences at university and how this can impact their learning. (e.g. Richardson & Turner, 2000; Cooner, 2010 ; Nitz, Davidson, McGuire, & Fox-Young, 2013 ; Falk, Falk, & Jakobsson, 2016 ; Houghton, 2016).

Students' learning experiences at university can influence their attitudes towards the subjects they are studying, their desire to engage in these subjects and their ability to develop their course-related knowledge and skills. In order to effectively study and learn more about the students' learning

experiences, it is of paramount importance to listen to the voices from the classroom as they reflect students' lived experiences in relation to their studies at university. Correspondingly, the present research is a qualitative study that investigates students' views on their language learning experiences at university through the use of written surveys with open-ended questions which allow students to provide unconstrained responses about how they view their learning at university. The study adopts a combinatorial model of investigation and is predicated on the premise that students' appraisals play a significant role in their learning, and highlights how these appraisals can influence students' action tendencies towards their courses and their language learning experiences. In other words, it is argued that students' success depends on their will to learn, which in all likelihood depends on both their cognitive and affective engagement with their university learning experiences. Thus, studying students' appraisals of their learning can have important implications for higher education pedagogy and research and can help enhance students' learning and achievement at university.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Appraisals and Appraisal Theory

Appraisals are, based on Frijda (1986), Levnethal and Scherer (1987), Scherer (2009a), Moors, Ellsworth, Scherer & Frijda (2013), Meuleman, Moors, Fontaine, Renaud, & Scherer (2019), evaluations of phenomena, objects, situations or events that lead to certain emotions and action tendencies. Similarly, appraisal theory suggests that individuals evaluate objects and phenomena including occurrences and experiences in relation to their novelty, pleasantness, goal conduciveness, self-compatibility and the individual's coping potential. These evaluations lead to the individual's approach or avoidance action tendencies or motivation (Frijda, 1996, Frijda & Mesquita, 1998, Roseman, 2001 & 2008; Scherer, 1988, 2001, 2009b; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985, Smith & Kirby, 2009). Similarly, Gable and Harmon-Jones (2008) maintain: "approach motivation refers to an urge or action tendency to go toward an object, whereas withdrawal [avoidance] motivation refers to an urge or action tendency to move away from an object" (p. 476). Within a university context, the study of students' appraisals of their learning can furnish academics and researchers with great insight into the nature of students' learning experiences and what could be done to possibly ameliorate these experiences (Tucker, 2013 ; Uttl & Smibert, 2017 ; Feistauer & Richter, 2018).

2.2 Students' Appraisals of their Learning Experiences at University

Without a doubt, studying at university can be a daunting and stressful experience. The variety of subjects and projects that students need to deal with on a day-to-day basis and during a semester can lead them to have positive, negative or mixed appraisals of their learning experiences at university. Generally, it can be argued that the learning experiences a student undergoes can be new or known to the student, pleasant or unpleasant, helpful in the achieving their goals or otherwise, compatible with the student's norms or standards or otherwise, and the student can find himself/herself able or unable to deal with the requirements of learning in a particular course. It can thus be argued that students' appraisals are in a state of flux and these evaluations can change ad personum and ad situationum. For example, what can be a completely new and pleasant learning experience for one student can lack novelty and perhaps prove to be an unpleasant experience for another. Hence, students' action tendencies regarding a given course can depend greatly on how they evaluate their learning in relation to their goals and personal agendas. One way to study and understand students' evaluations of their learning experiences is through carrying out a phenomenological study, which encompasses conceptualising the essential features of students' appraisals of their learning at university. (Sundararajan, Sundararajan & Manderson, 2016 ; Mu & Berenbaum, 2019 ; Simonton & Garn, 2019). According to Vandenberg (1997):

... phenomenology is either the 'logos' or the 'logos' of phenomena. It is either the science of phenomena or the elaboration, explication, description, elucidation, exposition, explanation, interpretation, clarification, illumination, delineation, depiction, definition, demarcation, and/or characterisation of phenomena through conceptualising their essential features. (p.4)

Similarly, Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen and Walker (2010) argue:

Phenomenological studies begin with the assumption that multiple realities are rooted in subjects' perspectives. Thus, an experience has different meanings for each person. Through unstructured interviews, the investigator explores the subject's thoughts and feelings to elicit the essence of an individual's experience. A phenomenological study might be conducted to answer the question, "What is the relationship between a beginning teacher and his or her mentor?" and "What does the experience mean to the beginning teacher?" (p. 31).

2.3 The Theoretical Framework of the Study

As stated earlier, this study is based on the premise that ameliorating students' learning experiences can only be achieved through discovering how students evaluate these experiences (Grund, Schmid & Fries, 2015; Palmer, 2017; Denovan, Dagnall, Macaskill & Papageorgiou, 2019). It is also envisaged that these evaluations can impact students' short-term and long-term academic and professional goals and objectives. This is because students' appraisals involve both their cognitive and emotional needs, such as "acceptance and safety", "choice", "high expectations and appropriate challenge", "opportunity to connect the new to the unknown", "meaningful engagement", "clarity", "time to reflect" and "evaluation that tests what was taught" (Estes, Mintz & Gunter, 2015). Undoubtedly, learning about students' perceptions of how these needs are met at university can provide a useful and revealing insight which can feasibly be used to adjust any aspects of the teaching programme that are in need of improvement. In order to learn about Zayed University students' evaluations of their language learning experiences, Scherer's theoretical model of appraisals has been used as the underpinning theoretical framework of the study Scherer (1988, 2011). The model is combinatorial and thus comprehensive, as it includes both cognitive as well as affective aspects of appraisals and can be used practically to investigate students' language learning experiences. Scherer (2011), after arguing that cognition and emotion are closely related suggests that individuals constantly "scan external and internal stimulus input" and carry out a set of stimulus evaluation checks (SECs) when encountering a stimulus and develop a state of emotion towards it (p.334). Scherer (1988, p.58) summarises these checks as follows: *Novelty, intrinsic pleasantness, goal/need signifiacne, coping potential, and norm/self compatibility* check. Within this framework, novelty check refers to appraising the newness of a phenomenon or experience, and intrinsic pleasantness signifies its pleasantness. Goal/need signifiacne check shows how the individual perceives the experience as relevant to her/his goals, and coping potential check denotes his/her ability to cope with the inherent requirements. Norm/self compatibility check signifies how the experience is congruent with the individual's norms and standards. As discussed earlier, Scherer's framework of appraisals has been used in this study as it comprises an all-encompassing model through which to explore university students' language learning experiences.

3. The Study

3.1 Participants

Students who enrol at the university where the study was conducted are predominantly female local Emirati students who prior to their tertiary studies, have studied in public and private schools in the UAE. English is the medium of instruction at the university and to ensure all students have the requisite, relevant linguistic competence and are thus well-prepared to enter their chosen undergraduate degree programmes, they are required to complete three English courses that focus on

developing their knowledge and skills of academic writing. For the purpose of this research, in order to collect data from those students who have had enough experiences with all the language courses offered at university, fifty-nine female undergraduate students who were in the third and final academic English course were invited to participate in the study. In total, forty students took part in the study.

3.2 Research Instrument

In order to explore students' views on their language learning experiences, written surveys with open-ended questions were used. The use of written survey questions helped ensure that the participants had enough time to answer the questions in their own time. This gave them the opportunity to think about each question and to provide more reflective responses. The survey questions concentrated on the students' learning experiences with a specific focus on the five areas explored in Scherer's model discussed above, i.e. novelty, pleasantness, goal-conduciveness, norm/self-compatibility and coping potential checks (See Appendix I for Survey Questions).

3.3 Data Collection and Data Analysis

As stated earlier, fifty-nine students studying in three sections of the course, 'General English III', taught by the researcher were invited to participate in the study by answering fifteen questions on different aspects of their language learning experiences at university. Forty students participated in the study. The data collected was analysed based on the method Bailey and Ochsner (1983) and Bailey (1991) developed to analyse qualitative data collected for classroom research. Accordingly, the qualitative data collected through diaries, open interviews and surveys, etc., is analysed, and main themes are decided through the following procedure:

- a. frequency of mention: the number of times a topic has been mentioned,
- b. distribution of mention: the number of different people who mention the same topic,
- c. saliency: the strength of the expression with which a topic is recorded. (Bailey, 1991, p.193).

Using this framework, the data collected for the study was closely examined over a period of twelve months. The qualitative data was analysed and the significant themes were coded accordingly, i.e. the most frequent and salient responses were chosen for the purpose of analysis and presentation in the study. To ensure consistency and reliability of data analysis, the data was recurrently re-visited and reviewed, and only the most significant data based on Bailey's proposed framework, discussed above, was selected to be presented in this research study.

4. Results

In the following sections, illustrative students' responses to various questions relating to the five areas of the stimulus evaluation checks (SECs) will be presented. In order to avoid revealing the identities of the participants, fictitious names have been used throughout the paper.

4.1 Newness of Language Learning Experiences at University

When asked if learning English at university is very different from their language learning experiences at primary and secondary school, twenty-five students evaluated their language learning at university as novel, whereas fifteen students argue that English courses at university do not offer them new and challenging experiences.

Some students believe that they have a new approach to constructing arguments and developing their writing. Shamma, for example, believes she has learned to develop her argumentation skills, and this has helped her exchange her views with her peers more efficiently:

My English classes at university offer a new experience by allowing me to share my experiences with new students and benefit from their ones. English classes taught me how to engage in meaningful debate, how to write a proper essay, and these are important skills required for other courses.

Another participant, Fatma, argues that learning English at university has not been very different from what she learned at school, and she does not think she has benefitted much from English courses at university:

Honestly, I don't think so. I find what we are taking in English courses now is the same things I used to take in high school. Therefore, I don't think it adds much to my knowledge.

However, Mariam believes language learning at university is totally different from language learning at school:

As a student who graduated from public school, I would say absolutely yes. Back in high school we did too little regarding writing essays or learning academic words or anything related to English course; we just had few presentations. We had only one subject in English....which is totally different comparing to the university, where we have most subjects in English and we have non-Arabic instructors, so we are forced to communicate with them in English and use the English speaking skills, and that was not the case in our public school as we had all Arab instructors.

Shouq observes that language learning at university predominantly involves the use of technology, whereas this was not the case at school:

In terms of what am I studying and the way to study, studying English at university did not offer me a new experience. My high school teachers familiarized me with what will be expected from me in university.... However, technology is more incorporated in English classes in university.

And yet Shahad believes language learning is more focussed on developing academic skills, whereas language learning at school involved developing effective knowledge of lexis and learning about literature and ancient history:

English courses in university are slightly different than English courses we had in school. In high school the main focus of our English class was to grasp and understand vocabulary as much as possible. Writing was not the main focus; however, we were only required to write short essays (350 words) and one research (1000 words). Instructors didn't focus much on building our writing skills as much as practicing on reading comprehension and vocabulary. Here at university, the main focus is on writing followed by reading comprehension. In English One, the instructor aimed to introduce us to essay styles, different sentence and essay structures, and simple reading comprehension. All English courses involved developing your own research paper. The main difference in English at high school and at university, it that in high school we were more into complex topics that involves history of ancient times, Shakespeare, etc.

These observations by the students indicate that most think their English courses at university are different from their prior experiences as these courses are primarily designed to develop their academic reading and writing as well as research and argumentation skills. The extent to which these experiences are novel for the students can be closely interrelated with other aspects of students' appraisals of their language learning experiences and action tendencies, which will be discussed in the following sections.

4.2 Pleasantness of University Language Learning Experiences

When the participants were asked if they enjoyed their English studies at university and whether or not they thought these courses were more interesting than other courses, thirty-seven students stated that they find language learning at university very enjoyable, while three students evaluated their

English lessons at university as boring and argued that most of the ideas in the English courses are repetitive.

Maryam observes that studying on a course can be a pleasant experience depending on the professor of the course and maintains that studying English at university has been a rewarding experience. However, she prefers to use her mother tongue when possible, for example when she is at home as this is central to her identity:

I do enjoy my English classes depending on the instructor and what s/he adds to the course..." I also enjoy studying English at university since it is a no-pressure course! It improves students' ability to write and speak fluently. I like being in an English-speaking environment only when I am in a place that requires me to speak English. However, I tend to speak Arabic with my family because it is my mother tongue and it defines who I am, and it is my identity.

In terms of the pleasantness of their language learning experiences, two other participants also emphasise the role of the professor in this respect. Mouza states:

Honestly speaking, for me all the courses are equally interesting... Even if the course itself is boring, professors have a way in making students interested and involved.

And Shamma similarly argues:

I thought the English courses were all easy and undemanding. English is one of the few courses I look forward to coming to university for and to attend. I believe my professors have a lot to do with motivating students to like the course.

Another participant, Ayesha, believe studying English at university is generally interesting but she prefers to mostly study "English literature" at university:

I enjoy studying English because it is an enjoyable subject; I love to read and write. ... English at university is not interesting because it does not include, literature which I enjoy.

And Mouza has a similar opinion:

I do not enjoy studying English at university because we are not really studying the English language or literature, just learning how to write paragraphs.

Generally, the majority of the students believe that English is an enjoyable subject and learning English at university can be pleasant mostly because of the professor. This is in line with the findings of other studies which also suggest the faculty can play a significant role in creating a positive experience for the students by engaging and motivating them to learn. (See for example Umbach & Wawrzynski 2005, Cejda & Hoover 2010, Lundberg 2014, Dassa & Vaughan 2017). However, the positive evaluation of a course and a professor can be better understood when linked to how the course relates to students' academic and professional goals, which will be discussed in the next section.

4.3 Goal-conduciveness of Language Learning Experiences

When asked about the significance of English courses offered at university in terms of helping students achieve their goals at university and after graduation, thirty-eight participants state that learning English at university is helpful in mastering and excelling in other courses, as well as in their future careers, whereas only two participants think otherwise.

Fatma believes learning English at university helps her do well in other subjects and helps develop her future employment prospects. In response to the question that asks whether or not English can play a positive role in her studies and in her future career she states:

Of course! It's because most of what we take in other subjects is in English, and jobs nowadays need more English speakers because of the global expansion of a company for example.

Maitha, another participant, also believes learning English at university helps her get better scores at university and can be an asset in the workplace as it facilitates communication with other colleagues, as nowadays this is a requirement of companies:

Learning English is important as it is the basis of understanding all other subjects (except Arabic and Islamic Civilisation Courses). If a student doesn't know English, ... s/he will not understand all the information in other courses, and she may not get an excellent score. Most jobs require applicants to be good in English as it allows the employees to interact with other employees in a company and to be able to accomplish the job in the best way. Also, learning English helps me find a job easily because companies search for those applicants who are perfect in English skills.

Maryam asserts that developing academic writing has helped her develop her research skills, and it will definitely be very useful in the future when she is working:

Yes, it does. It helped me learn the appropriate way of writing an academic article and in preparing academic researches that benefited me in my Global courses so far, and I'm sure it's going to help me in my future courses as well.

Hanan believes the use of English in the workplace depends on the job she applies for in the future, but it is important to be able to communicate in English effectively in the workplace:

I don't really know about this. I guess it would be important if the job required English, but if it is all in Arabic, and English is not needed there, it wouldn't help at the job. Though it would in other aspects. I believe speaking English would be required for my job. As an animator, I am going to work with English speaking people most of the time, I mean in the far future, so I must learn English to communicate with them.

Meera also highlights the significance of English at university and beyond and argues:

Yes, I do believe that learning English helps me do well in other subjects. The majority of the subjects that we study, with few exceptions, are all in English. Therefore, learning English is a must. ... Learning English can help me find a job more easily since all of the jobs these days require English language. English is a universal language; therefore, jobs today seek people who know how to speak this language fluently.... Speaking and writing in English is going to be a requirement for the job I would like to have when I graduate. My job is going to be in the field of business, and since the main language used in business is English, speaking and writing in this language is very important.

The results of the goal-conduciveness aspect of the study correlate well with the result of the research study conducted by Al-Buainain, Hassan, & Madani (2013). In their study, the researchers explored the need to speak English in the workplace in an Arabic-speaking country and discovered that the use of English is prevalent in all sectors. The findings also corroborate Yan & Cheng's (2015) research results regarding success in academic English as a predictor of academic success and reveal that mastery of academic English can contribute to success at university, but achieving success and meeting the requirements of a course can be challenging for some students, and this aspect of the students' appraisals will be discussed in the next section.

4.4 Students' Coping Potential in Dealing with English at University

Another aspect of the students' experiences explored in this study was their ability to cope with the requirements of learning Academic English at university, and whether they found it more difficult than

other university subjects or demanding and stressful in any way. Of the forty students who participated in the study, the majority stated that they did not have any, and some argued that learning English at university can be daunting mostly because of grammar.

In response to the question regarding the difficulty of English or whether or not studying English at university could be anxiety-provoking, Jawaher states:

Thankfully not! Maybe because I knew most of the skills taught in English courses, but mostly because I have been guided properly and gradually throughout the English courses at university. In general, the English language is not demanding, once you have learned the basic rules, you can go anywhere! Having a strong basic knowledge in any field, is the key to be successful (of course after building on and enhancing the basis) in that area.

Another participant, Maitha finds reviewing and summarising books challenging:

I wouldn't say that learning English is stressful at university because the material given is not so tough. It basically requires us to apply all what we learned in high school and previous English courses at university in one argumentative essay. One thing that was challenging is reading books in a short period. This is because I didn't have any background on how to review or summarize books. Reading books and writing reviews was a new thing to me that I have never done before.

But she believes reading extensively, i.e. reading books at university, can be difficult at times:

Our school didn't encourage us to read much, therefore, I never thought about reading any book. When I started reading books in this course, I thought that it was different than what I thought it would be. The only challenge I faced is reading all those pages in a short time.

And Saleha states that studying English at university is unchallenging because of her experiences at high school:

English is not more difficult than other subjects at university. As mentioned earlier, in high school, I was exposed to a more difficult level of English (English Literature). Also, studying English at university is more about writing, and I believe that writing in English is not too challenging for me.

Another participant, Hind, contends that English grammar is difficult and repetitive:

Yes, because of grammar! But, English has some exercises and they are the same in every course.

The findings indicate that students' anxiety and stress regarding their ability to succeed in meeting the requirements of the course is more manageable, especially when their coping potential is improved throughout the course. This is similar to the finding of Kurk (2018) who purports that students' level of Foreign Language Anxiety changes throughout the semester as well as Quinto & Macayan (2019) who argue that the students' ability to speak well in English can have an effect on their task performance. Obviously, prior experiences with the language, and proper training, can have a huge impact on enabling students to achieve the goals of a course and hence to lessen their anxieties. These anxieties can have a debilitating effect on the students' overall evaluation of their learning and achievement. Students' achievements, however, can hinge on the compatibility of their expectations and norms and the nature of the learning experiences. This aspect of students' appraisals will be discussed next.

4.5 Norm compatibility of Language Learning Experiences

The majority, i.e. thirty-seven participants, find learning and speaking in English to be in line with their cultural norms and values. However, when it comes to the constant use of the English language and the use of foreign words while speaking in Arabic, they mostly find it inappropriate and culturally

unbecoming.

Maryam believes learning English has had an effect on her speaking of Arabic, as she uses some English words in her writing mostly. She also thinks it is good to speak both languages well but speaking Arabic in a way that shows the influence of a foreign language is inappropriate:

Learning English did have an effect on my Arabic speaking and writing. I incorporate several English words that I think express my thoughts better in my conversations. Also, I apply the English writing style in writing in Arabic, which is bad because the rules are different. I don't think it's OK to speak Arabic with a foreign [English] accent. Why not speak both languages fluently and properly?

Another student thinks that not using Arabic at university has undermined both her speaking and writing in Arabic and that she uses more English words while speaking unwittingly:

Hamda:

I think since we don't use much Arabic at university, this has weakened my Arabic writing and speaking. I believe I have started to use more English words in my conversation unintentionally.

And Mouza thinks it is important to speak English very well, and this is what she wants to do perfectly:

Well I never thought of it in that way, but if you mean to be more fluent in English. Yes, I do, I believe that when you do something you either do it perfectly or at least to do it in the best way possible. And I would really like to sound more capable of speaking English without any grammatical mistakes.

Ayesha, however, believes that learning English has had no effect on her Arabic, but because of English, she has to find the equivalents in Arabic and in this way, she has learned new English as well as Arabic words.

I don't think learning English affected my Arabic language, actually, I think it made it a little bit better. I When I read an English book or manga I like to translate in my mind and say it out loud sometimes in Arabic, it sounds different, so I there were some words that I could not translate into Arabic, then I had to open a dictionary and translate it in Arabic, not the local Arabic but the real one.

It appears that students who are studying at a university where the medium of instruction is English enjoy the use of English in mostly academic contexts and find this compatible with their norms and educational expectations and standards. This special, i.e. academic context and its norms creates a sociocultural setting which necessitates the use of a specific register, i.e. Academic English. However, almost all of the participants find it to be of great importance to adhere to their linguistic norms by using their first language outside the academic and professional contexts where it is not required to use English. This can indicate that while the participants believe English can be a means to attain success at university and in the workplace, they greatly value their first language, as it is integral to their cultural and linguistic identity.

5. Discussion

This study aimed at exploring students' appraisals of their university language learning experiences and highlighted the importance of these appraisals in terms of the action tendencies they create for the students. The data collected in the study clearly indicates that students' appraisals in the five areas recommended by Scherer (1987, 2001, 2011 & 2013) including novelty, pleasantness, goal-conduciveness, coping potential and norm/self-compatibility checks have a dynamic nature, i.e. students' evaluations of their learning experiences can be ameliorated or aggravated throughout a given semester. The data also reveals that students' appraisals in the five areas investigated are closely inter-related. In other words, if a student evaluates his/her learning experiences as pleasant but not novel, they may evaluate

the overall experience as positive, and vice versa.

In general, the study has two significant pedagogical implications. The first major pedagogical implication underscores the role of the professor of a course at university. The data clearly and consistently points to the fact that the professor of a course can influence students' appraisals and action tendencies. Namely, students' overall evaluation of a course can change positively or negatively because of a professor's approach to teaching the course.

A second principal pedagogical implication of the study accentuates the role of correct student placement in a language course at university and proper curriculum planning for the students according to their knowledge of the language. Failure to do so, can have several main affective consequences. Firstly, the incorrect placement of the student can negatively affect students' appraisals of the course and can render the course and its contents too familiar and boring and can be demotivating for the students. Secondly, students with a relatively small amount of experience with the English language in general and Academic English in particular, might experience excessive anxiety and be unable to cope with the requirements of the course.

6. Conclusion

This study re-opens the agenda for research that looks more closely into, and focusses on, the factors that influence and shape students' learning experiences at university. Students' appraisals of their learning experiences at university are evidently multi-faceted and include different cognitive and emotional dimensions. Thus, studying students' appraisals of their learning experiences at university could be empowering for both students and educators: students will be able to voice their course-related feelings and opinions, and educators can be better cognisant of the voices from the classroom and students' lived learning experiences. The researcher believes that studies of this nature can furnish researchers and academics with data that can help them better understand and improve students' learning experiences and achievement as well as the quality of education they receive at university.

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Appendix I: Survey Questions

Appraisal Area	Questions
Novelty	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is learning English very different from learning Arabic? If so, how? 2. Is studying English at university very different from studying English at secondary/high School? If so, how? 3. Do your English classes at university offer a new experience in terms of what you are studying, the way you should study or any other aspects of your learning? Please explain.
Pleasantness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you enjoy studying English at university? Why? Why not? 2. Is English more interesting than the other subjects you study at university? Why? /Why not? 3. In general, do you like being in an English-speaking environment? Why? / Why not?
Goal/Need Significance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you think learning English helps you do well in your other subjects? Why? /Why not? 2. Do you think learning English can help you find a job more easily when you graduate? Why? Why not? 3. Is speaking and/or writing in English going to be a requirement for the job you would like to have when you graduate? If yes, please explain how.
Coping Potential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is English more difficult than other subjects at university? Why? / Why not? 2. Is learning English stressful for you? Why? /Why not? 3. Do you sometimes delay completing your English assignments because they are too demanding and time-consuming?
Norm/ Self-compatibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you want to sound like a native speaker of English? Why? /Why not? 2. Does learning English have any impact on your Arabic speaking or writing? Is it OK to use English words when you speak Arabic? 3. Do you think you have to change your behaviour too much when you speak in English? If yes, do you like this? Why? /Why not?