

Teaching English for Academic Preparation through the
“*Communitarian Self*” Concept as an Aspect of the Theory of
Objectification/Subjectification: Learners’ Development of
Linguistic, Interpersonal and Conceptual Skills.

by

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Abstract

One of the most important areas of English as a foreign language teaching is English for Specific Purposes (ESP). ESP is a special branch of English Language Teaching which focuses on the learners' specific needs and the learning environment. The learners' needs and requirements are in constant change and their expectations increase especially when they are learning for professional purposes. What is more, our main interest is focused on English for Academic Preparation (EAP) learners, whose needs are quite different as they intend to enrol in different academic programs at the university level. Moreover, each discipline has its own and specific terminology and jargon. Indeed, instructors teaching EAP program should cover a wide range of topics and content through the subject-matter. The task, then, becomes difficult and challenging. Studies have indicated that learners are not playing an active role within the ESP learning process, in general, and in EAP program in particular. Interaction between the learners themselves and the instructors are absent. The aim of the present doctoral research project is to develop a model where the concept of "Communitarian Self" will be utilized as a pedagogical tool in teaching EAP to improve the dynamics of the social practices taking place in the classroom learning context. This study will show that the tool provides learners an interesting and helpful learning community environment in which socio-cultural interaction; and exchange and critical thinking take place. Based on communication, autonomy, cooperation and collaboration among the other social individuals and the learners themselves, this tool encourages the whole community's interaction and negotiation of meaning in a social and cultural environment. This tool will be examined to what extent it can help EAP learners become active participants in their activities and contribute to the improvement of their communicative skills, cognitive skills and comprehension and understanding in a socio-cultural environment. Findings show that the tool impacts learning to a great extent. Recommendations for the teaching/learning context and future are made.

Key works:

Theory of objectification, subjectification, communal self, TEFL/TESOL, EAP, socio-cultural dimension

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List of abbreviations

AE:	Adult Education
ASF:	Administrative Sciences Field
BE:	Business English
BET:	Business and Education Together
CLT:	Communicative Language Teaching
CML:	Chinese Male Learner
EAP:	English for Academic Purposes
EAP:	English for Academic Preparation
EBE:	English for Business and Economics
EFL:	English as a Foreign Language
EIB:	English for International Business
ELT:	English Language Teaching
EOP:	English for Occupational Purposes
ESL:	English as a Second Language
ESP:	English for Specific Purposes
ESS:	English for Social Sciences
EST:	English for Science and Technology
FL:	Foreign Language
GE:	General English
GTM:	Grammar Translation Method
L1:	Mother Tongue
L2:	Second Language
LAU:	Lebanese American University
LF:	Lingua Franca
Ls:	Learners
MKO:	More Knowledgeable Other
NNS:	Non-Native Speakers
OHP:	Over Head Projector
QFD:	Quality Function Deployment
REB:	Research Ethics Board

SFL:	Saudi Female Learner
SLA:	Second Language Acquisition
SML:	Saudi Male Learner
TCPS:	Tri-Council Policy Statement
TEFL:	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TPR:	Total Physical Response

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1. General Introduction

English has taken an important place worldwide in different fields. English has become the medium of communication and exchange for various purposes. One of the most important areas of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is English for Specific Purposes (ESP). What is more, the ESP community is expected to have a clear understanding of the program and the perspectives of ESP. Therefore, more awareness should be given to the way the field of ESP is interpreted and seen by its community. Teaching ESP involves teaching English with particular attention to some disciplines such as business, tourism, medicine, law, engineering, banking, marketing and management. ESP instructors tend to have some general Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) experience first. In fact, ESP was described as the teaching of English for any purpose that could be specified. However, more other precise definitions describe ESP as the teaching of English used in academic studies or the teaching of English for vocational or professional purposes.

ESP is a special kind of English Language Teaching (ELT), which is linked to the learners' context. It is "learner-centred", based on the learners' needs and requirements. ESP groups two categories. The first one is English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and the second one is English for Occupational (or vocational) Purposes (EOP). According to Miliani (1986), EAP is "curriculum-oriented" aimed at the development of the required skills needed by the purpose of study and EOP is related to learners' needs for their "job-related" activities. EOP is practical and functional which means that the courses are designed for adults who must follow on the job or pre-employment training. Both EAP and EOP share the area of English for Science and Technology.

In addition, one of the ESP branches dealt with in the current study was related to the teaching of English for academic requirements. In other words, work was done with international learners taking the program of English for Academic Preparation (EAP) at Laurentian University. This

program was characterized by its heterogeneous aspects of its members. In other words, EAP learners came from different institutions and had specific backgrounds, for example, there were learners from high schools, colleges or universities. These differences created a challenge for the learners and their instructors in terms of the terminology used in the courses and the objectives to achieve. This means that the specific language used in the classroom environment created a challenging EAP teaching process in course delivery. Since EAP learners' needs were not similar, EAP instructors should be aware of the goals and objectives so that the EAP learning process faces fewer difficulties.

Teaching EAP to international learners is a challenging task. In terms of socio-cultural knowledge, it is hard for EAP instructors and learners to understand each other since they have different backgrounds. Consequently, EAP instructors and learners face a lack of knowledge in the cultural aspect which may create misunderstanding and misinterpretation of shared thoughts. EAP instructors should be creative in their teaching; flexible with their EAP learners and aware of their socio-cultural background and the different needs to be met. Moreover, EAP Instructors have to consider the learning styles of their learners when delivering course content in order to better communicate and be successful in their academic program. EAP instructors have to be innovative and creative in the sense of adopting a pedagogical approach in which the learners will play an active role in the learning process. EAP learners will interact among themselves and with the instructors. Indeed, teaching EAP within a collaborative learning process fosters all actors' interaction and makes them share and learn from each other.

EAP learners are learning the language through content. They are supposed to have minimum knowledge of the language and require more terminology in the target language. What is more, EAP learners want to improve their communicative competence for their enrollment in a specific program at the university level. Therefore, using the communicative approach in EAP classroom will provide learners with real communicative environment. EAP learners will be involved in real-life situations through collaborative work. Learning by doing is a motivating tool for

learners to reach their various aims. The communicative approach provides learners with free learning environment. Moreover, EAP learners do not depend completely on the instructor. They become personally and directly involved in the learning process. In other words, through communicative activities, learners are expected to be creative in their learning process and interact independently of the instructor interference. Moreover, the communicative approach gives less importance to the language form. Learners are encouraged to learn free from accuracy obsession, which may lead to failure. This approach helps learners to gain more ability to integrate language skills in different social situations.

Communication and language play an important role in the development of knowledge acquisition and production. More importantly, interaction among different actors of the learning community contributes as well to the improvement and spread of knowledge. Activities that foster interaction in the classroom will create an atmosphere of collaboration between EAP learners and EAP instructors. EAP learners do not benefit from all the opportunities to communicate in the target language, and the classroom is the only setting where English is used, especially to learners having the same socio-cultural background. For instance, most EAP learners communicate with their peers in their mother tongue, which is in itself a strategy used by learners. The classroom becomes then the “*formal*” learning environment of the EAP community. Learners share knowledge, explore attitudes and opinions in a social context. They collaborate with peers and share with them knowledge. At the same time, they all develop their own learning strategies and become autonomous.

Being autonomous in the process of learning does not exclude the EAP learner from the rest of their community. The learner as a social individual belongs to the classroom environment, has his/her place among peers. He/she learns with them, from them and shares with them. Another important point is that through learning strategies and autonomy, the learner learns by him/herself. Moreover, exchanging knowledge with the peers gives a sense of responsibility in which the individual becomes more aware of the knowledge he/she shares. Those foundations

constitute Radford's (2006-a) concept of "*Communitarian Self*". This teaching tool explores the act of learning and sharing knowledge with the whole community and with the self. What is more, the exchange among all the participants within a social and cultural learning community contributes to broadening their knowledge. The social individual develops in his environment and culture. Therefore, EAP instructors should be sensitive not only to the learners' deficiencies in the target language and the course content, but also the interpretation of issues. Obviously, the learning and teaching process differ from one learner to another and as a social individual his/her critical thinking and feedback are derived from his/her social and cultural environment. The socio-cultural aspect of the EAP learner and the whole learning community is an important factor that has to be considered in learning/teaching processes.

All teaching approaches produce learning, but they do not produce it to the same extent and in the same way. Through this research, I wanted to study the limits and possibilities of two teaching approaches, mainly the traditional approach and the socio-historico-cultural approach and try to understand the process of learning happening in each approach.

In this research I resort to an educational theory -the theory of *objectification*- where the emphasis is put, not only on language as the subject-matter, but also on the nature of the practices in which language is used and on the learners' socio-historico-cultural background. This theory offers both an *interpretative frame* which helps us to understand the teaching and the learning processes taking place among learners, and set of tools which helps to *design* teaching and learning activities for them. Through those designed activities, learning is promoted as a phenomenon that highlights its social and cultural dimensions. The main objective is to understand how learning occurs in EAP classrooms among international learners with different socio-historico-cultural background.

I have considered the process of observation in two Phases. In Phase I, EAP learners were taught through the traditional approach and in Phase II, teaching was done through *objectification/subjectification* theory where the activities were refined and designed differently by taking into account the socio-cultural background of learners. In fact I tried to answer the

following research question: How does learning occur in teaching EAP to international learners through the traditional teaching approach and the socio-cultural approach?

This document is divided into six chapters. They are as follows:

Chapter one presents the socio-cultural impact on English for Specific Purposes. This chapter gives an overview of ESP and its application in different fields and disciplines. Also this chapter will deal with examples of ESP in the Administrative Sciences Field and the challenges learners and educators face in the teaching/learning processes. Chapter two presents different teaching approaches used in the classroom environment. More emphasis is put on the communicative approach to language teaching in which educators foster learners' autonomy, and collaboration. Some teaching and learning objectives set by educators are listed. Chapter three covers the theoretical framework of the theory of *objectification*. This theory will be defined and supported by general and specific examples. Also, this chapter covers the concept of *subjectification*. One section in this chapter is devoted to the concept of "*Communitarian Self*" as a pedagogical tool for teaching EAP to international learners. Chapter four is related to the research methodology in which the research design and the steps followed for data collection: collecting sample, process of observation and description of activities used in the both phases of the research. Chapter five describes the process of analyzing data through an ethnographic research. This chapter deals with the analysis of Phase I and Phase II, the results and the limits of the theory of *objectification* in its application within EAP learners. Chapter six presents the general conclusion of this research. A research summary will be presented with some concluding remarks and limitations of the research and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 1

Socio-cultural Impact on English for Specific Purposes

1.0 Abstract

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is one of the well known teaching and learning branches of English as a second or foreign language. It is mainly related to delivering specific content through the target language in order to achieve pre-defined objectives. However, teaching specific content to a community that lacks a minimum background in the target language makes it a challenging task for instructors and learners. This chapter will give an overview of ESP and its application within the learning and teaching community. I will discuss the characteristics of ESP in some specific fields, and illustrate the different challenges that instructors and learners face in ESP, in general, and in the field of Administrative Sciences, in particular. The aim of this chapter is to highlight the absence of the cultural and social aspect of learners and their engagement responsibility in learning and sharing knowledge amongst the learning community.

1.1 Introduction

The English language has become the most common language worldwide and is used as a second language in many countries for education, business, or everyday life. The emergence of multinational businesses in the global market has increased the importance of using the English language as the common means of communication and exchange. Therefore, transactions between individuals and institutions cannot take place if there is no investment in the specific language itself. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a specialized teaching field related to the specific English terminology for different fields and disciplines.

ESP Learners are much more goal driven than general English learners and have high expectations on their classwork. Specific goals for the language may include advancement in their studies, getting a job or a promotion, the ability to negotiate, sit for an examination, translate documents, or master the art of writing in specific research field (Resche, 2000). However, both ESP learners and educators complain about ESP course effectiveness and relevance to their goals (Bacha and Bahous, 2008).

The field of ESP faces numerous known barriers (Robinson, 1980; Kennedy, 1983; Al-Hakim, 1984; Johns and Dudley-Evans, 1991; Belcher, 2006). The educators often come from a general English degree background and do not have specific practical field experience with the ESP application (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; Wu and Badger, 2009). In most cases, the teachers are non-native English speakers (Bonyadi, 2005). There is a lack of appropriate and updated textbook availability too (Čepron, 2006), and when they are available the books were written by non-native English speakers (Denton *et al.* 2005). Due to the multidisplinary aspect of ESP, there is no single specific accepted pedagogical method (Strevens, 1988-b, Robinson, 1991). ESP learners tend to be adult learners that bring already limited skills into the content specific English language applications.

There is an additional barrier that is known by researchers but has received limited treatment in the literature. ESP curriculum designers ignore the learner's needs from a philosophical, historical and sociological perspective (Westin *et al.*, 1994). The sociological impact of learning on ESP educators and learners, and its impact on content specific orientation of ESP subject matter, is the primary focus of this chapter.

In the next section of this chapter I will give an overview of ESP and the different branches related to it. Then I will give some examples from the literature about the application of ESP around the world. In section four, I will focus more on the characteristics of the Administrative Sciences Field as one example of ESP. Section five will be devoted to the ESP content in ASF.

1.2 English for Specific Purposes: An Overview

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has become an important area of English Language Teaching. Earlier, ESP was associated with the notion of special register with the subfield of English for Science and Technology. However, after the expansion and growth of scientific, technical and economic fields, English became the medium for communication. People became more interested and intrinsically motivated in learning the language to satisfy their needs such as: having access to scientific and technical literature or being successful in negotiating contracts with foreign companies. Therefore, ESP is described as the teaching of language designed for groups of individuals with identifiable purposes and specific needs.

ESP is divided into two main branches, which are English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). EAP is the kind of English language where learners need some specific skills to study in a particular discipline, for example, a learner who studies a particular speciality or intend to specialise in a particular subject (Kennedy and Bolitho, 1984). Courses in ESP focus, mainly, on attending lectures and listening to the instructor, taking

personal notes, writing reports, and reading textbooks. EOP is the kind of English needed for work or profession purposes. Learners need to learn English to have access to the language itself, to communicate in the target language about the knowledge they already know. Amongst EOP learners, there are doctors, dentists or technicians whose need for language is to communicate with their patients and clients, respectively. The need is also related to the various technical readings in their working field, like reading medical leaflets or instructions.

According to Kennedy and Bolitho (1984), the content of EOP program differs from one learner to another. The difference is linked to the learner's skills and work position at the time he/she is taking the course. A less experienced learner needs a different teaching content than a more qualified one, who needs to operate in English, only. However, there is no clear distinction between EAP and EOP (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). The authors claim that there are some people who may work and study and there are others who may study first then start work. Indeed, in both areas the purpose is employment and the need for the target language is job-related.

The two branches EAP and EOP share the same area of English for Science and Technology (EST). EST is another branch of ESP which deals with scientific content. According to Kennedy and Bolitho (1984), the notion of EST is too general because it groups different specialists and disciplines such as: agriculture, civil engineering and biochemistry. Therefore, there is a difference in the learning needs, language skills and communicative abilities. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) state that three major branches of ESP are EST, English for Social Sciences (ESS) and English for Business and Economics (EBE). Additionally, each of these branches is further divided into EAP and EOP.

Robinson (1991) states that ESP is goal oriented where the main interest of ESP learners is not to study the English as a language of communication in its linguistic or cultural form, but rather the

need is related to their field of study or work purposes. ESP is based on needs analysis, which is an important procedure to specify the exact needs and requirements of ESP learners through the English language. Consequently, to reach specific learners' needs, ESP instructors should select suitable materials based on reliable and valid sources. Sifakis (2003) highlighted that ESP and Adult Education (AE) share the same theoretical constructs. ESP as an approach for teaching the English language makes it relevant to all groups of ages (except young learners) and target situations (Sifakis, 2003). According to Sifakis (2003), in the AE, adults are workers first and then they are learners. In fact, those learners are experienced workers who have learnt through accomplishing their tasks, and they became learners later. Their language acquisition is related to their job experience and not to books. Therefore, when speaking about ESP, adult learners may be learners first who are willing to work in a specific field (Sifakis, 2003).

According to Sourbier (2005) in the beginning of 21st century, languages all over the world integrate terminology from specific fields and English has become the principle tool of communication in most international professional situations. Business English (BE) or English for business purposes refers, in general, to the language of economics in which activities are varied, but delimited such as: finance, management, marketing, accounting and human resources (Sourbier, 2005). These different fields and branches use specific language, which is not reduced only to the terminology used by the members of the field (Lerat, 1995).

Carver (1983) states that all uses of English as a Foreign Language should address specific purposes as follows: a) the use of simulated purposes within the classroom setting, b) the use of real purposes external to the classroom setting, and c) the use of relevant literature. To add more, Carver (1983) mentions three features of an ESP course namely: a) the use of authentic materials which are intrinsic because of their purposeful aims where instructors can handle the materials in different ways to suit learners' needs. This exposure to authentic materials will help them more in their teaching process and make learners familiar with authentic contexts; b) the implementation of a purpose related orientation through simulation of conferences, and

preparation of papers which leads learners to note taking, writing, reading and summarizing. Combining theory and practice help learners to improve their skills, learn and progress, and c) self-directed learning in the sense of turning learners into users. Indeed, learners will confront to the real world outside the classroom learning environment and without the help and assistance of the instructor, who tries to shape this world into the courses' content. In fact, this will prepare learners to better face future institutions' requirements or professional situations. Being exposed to authentic situations helps learners develop their learning strategies and socio-cultural knowledge.

Dudley-Evans (1997) describes ESP as an attitude of mind, a similar idea to what Hutchinson and Waters (1987) state that ESP is more an approach to teach English by taking into account the expectations of the learners. Hence, ESP is considered to be an approach to language teaching. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) mention three phenomena for the emergence of ESP, namely: a) the enormous expansion in scientific, technical and economic activities on an international scale; b) the shift of attention in linguistic ways in which language is actually used for communication in real situations; and c) the new development in educational psychology, which emphasizes the central importance of learners and their attitudes to learning.

In fact, ESP has become a common expression in English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly in the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) and in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This concept has grown out of the awareness that in foreign language and second language teaching a specific knowledge of the language, both in the quantity of language items and in types of language skills and activities, is the only reasonable objective due to the limited opportunity and time to learn and use the language. For this area of teaching, instructors would need to have or be prepared to acquire some knowledge of the subject-matter and a familiarity with correct and appropriate terminology. Although there may be some emphasis on objectives, instructors still have language work in ESP. These objectives can be summarized as follows: a) understanding the structure and the vocabulary of English, as it is

used in natural and social sciences, business and administration, computer technology and communications; b) using English in gathering information, taking notes, evaluating and classifying data, designing plans and diagrams, presenting projects, preparing advertising statements; and c) developing reading, writing, listening and speaking skills that can be applied to related academic and professional activities in English. Some difficulties related to collaboration among instructors and learners and textbooks are presented in the following sub-sections:

1.2.1 ESP Instructors/Learners' collaboration

ESP faces difficulties and challenges in communication whether in speaking or writing, not only among learners, but also among instructors. The differences lie in the place the individual is holding and the objectives he/she wants to reach. For example, Bacha and Bahous (2008) investigated learners' proficiency in specific writing needs at the Lebanese American University. This study showed that cooperation between English and business faculty is important in setting up the targeted objectives. This interaction helps learners improve their business writing skills; for example, writing assignments, letters, reports, research papers, summary lectures and note taking (Bacha and Bahous, 2008). According to the authors, collaboration is needed in order to identify the learners' needs and meet instructors' objectives. However, the members of the Lebanese American University have claimed that learners and instructors complain about the English learning and teaching processes. They were not satisfied with the content of the business courses, and they claimed that the English courses were irrelevant. The instructors complained about the learners' poor level of target language proficiency. For Bacha and Bahous (2008), setting up English for Specific Business Purposes curriculum has to be considered at the university. I believe that the collaboration between instructors and learners is an important aspect in the learning process. However, since the learners' needs may vary from institution to another, updated needs analysis should be considered. This issue will be discussed in the next sub-section.

1.2.2 ESP Textbooks and Curriculum

Most ESP instructors complain about the gap between the content, the language and the objectives of ESP learners. Williams (2007) compared two commonly Business English textbooks used in Hungary and Central Europe (*Business Class* by David Cotton and Sue Robbins, 1993; and *English for Business Studies* by Ian Mackenzie, 1997). The author based his comparison on his personal experience in using the two textbooks and the theoretical consideration of ESP. Both textbooks covered different topics of business field focusing on the four following skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. What is more, the listening activities were varied in terms of content, language variation and accents. According to Williams (2007), it is important for learners to be familiar with native-speakers' accent, but it is also important to be familiar with non-native talks. Listening to recordings of various English accents is beneficial for learners. Frequently, ESP learners communicate with different nationalities and it is very rare that they are native-English speakers. Therefore, apart from the difficulties of mastering the content and the concepts of a specific field in the target language, learners and instructors are faced with another challenge related to the accents Non-Native English speakers may have.

Teaching business English is not teaching just forms of language and skills, but rather teaching communication (Zhang, 2007). This author proposes a tripartite curriculum design for teaching Business English in China. The aim of his model is to cultivate business expertise and not just teaching language skills. Zhang's (2007) model is divided into: a) business knowledge, b) business discourse, and c) business practice. The author based his model on Bathia's (2002) curriculum framework. Zhang (2007) believes that integrating the three components of his model will develop language awareness for learners in terms of lexical, syntactic and discourse features of business language. Moreover, the model will develop the way these features are related to interpersonal relations and are textualized for communicative purposes (Zhang, 2007). Specifically, the integration of this model will help learners become familiar with the different practices related to business and help them acquire important business knowledge, which will contribute to their improvement in the professional field. Scollon and Scollon (2001) mentioned

that via language education, learners become socialized into the business environment they would be faced with. However, Zhang's (2007) model emphasizes more on the technicalities of specific language in the business field.

Notwithstanding, as a social individual, the socio-cultural background of learners and instructors is an important issue that has to be considered. The educational background and social aspect of learners can be helpful tool for their learning process if the instructor is aware of them. Teaching ESP in any institution is always a headache for instructors, not only at the level of the language proficiency, but also mastery in the target language. What is more, communication through the target language is the main burden of learners of ESP. The socio-cultural aspect of learners and institutions is nearly absent in the ESP literature and not many researchers refer to it. The focus is put mainly on the content taught through the target language and making communication easier. Moreover, the cultural aspect of learners and their social environment is not given enough consideration within the learning community. In fact the socio-cultural background of learners holds their personal heritage that guides and helps them in their language learning and widening of their knowledge. It should be noted that being aware of others' background will facilitate communication and comprehension.

The next section will highlight some of the research work undertaken by researchers and instructors in some ESP areas. The examples do not constitute an exhaustive list.

1.3 Some Applications of English for Specific Purposes

The expansion of the English language in different fields gave birth to an increasing demand of language learning so as to facilitate the negotiation of meaning and accurate comprehension. English has become a means of knowledge exchange which opens doors to new horizons and new perspectives worldwide. Although English language is not the official language in many

countries, it is taught in schools and universities as a second or a foreign language. There is a new common tendency in which more Business negotiations are done between non-native speakers of English (Gimenez, 2001). The globalization of the market and the emergence of multinationals offer business opportunities and international contacts, so English language becomes the business Lingua Franca of non-native speakers of English negotiations (Gimenez, 2001). Since these changes take place in English speaking countries, therefore English has become the dominant language of business, banking, finance, meeting and communication.

ESP is booming due to social demand for specific English and the growth of different fields such as: linguistics and educational psychology (Aiguo, 2007). According to Aiguo (2007), teaching ESP in context where English is a foreign language such as in China must take into consideration: a) students' English proficiency, b) students' learning background and, c) proper use of the teaching methods. Learning the language helps them not only to improve in the foreign language, but also to exchange different linguistic and socio-cultural backgrounds. However, non-native English language learners do not have many opportunities with the target language, especially in their home country. In such environment, communicating in English with native speakers or even with other learners of the English language is not frequent. Therefore, the only English-speaking environment learners may have is the classroom. Consequently, learners' needs are not only related to mastering concepts and terminology in the field of their future work or study, but also to opportunities of practicing the language. Their needs vary from one individual to another, and it is hard to attend to them all. This situation is the main issue that foreign countries face where English is not the dominant language in use.

English for specific purposes, which is the main concern in this work, can be used in many fields of interest. Of course, the variety of disciplines, the educational and socio-cultural background of the learners and their objectives will determine the English content of each field. Moreover, the constant change and developments in the different fields are challenges that need solutions that

are not often successful. A list of the various ESP research work and findings in the literature will be given. These examples will shed light on the learners' and the instructors' challenges.

1.3.1 ESP for International Business Meetings

In her study, Rogerson-Revell (2007) investigated English for International Business (EIB), which represents a linguistic and a cultural challenge for speakers whose mother tongue is not English. The author reports on a preliminary study investigating the use of English as a lingua franca in international business meetings. Rogerson-Revell (2007) explored the use of EIB by a particular European business organization. This investigation was done by the means of a questionnaire. The aim of this study was to help non-English speakers to participate in international meetings in order to improve their communicative skills and facilitate international professional communication. This European professional organization is composed of thirty-three actuarial associations from thirty represented European countries. The members of this organization have meetings to discuss various issues. They are constantly challenged with the English language as a means to communicate whether through electronic mails, phone conversations or face-to-face interactions. These means of communication through the English language constitute an important part of their professional business life.

Rogerson-Revell (2007) based her data gathering and questionnaire on the internal report provided by the members of the European business organization. In fact, the main questions focused on the way to foster more active participation of Non-Native Speakers (NNS) in meetings. According to the members of the organization, NNS play a less active part in meetings for the following reasons: a) cultural, b) organizational, and c) language barriers. Out of 47 participants 43 returned the questionnaire. Thirty-four participants were NNS and nine were native speakers. The participants came from different European countries and they shared the same medium of communication with different levels of competency. In order to overcome their difficulties in understanding and communicating with the other members, participants suggest speaking slowly and more clearly. Some others suggest avoiding jargons, idiomatic expressions

and metaphors. Since, the latter may not exist in the culture of all participants, communication failure may result.

Although the findings of Rogerson-Revell (2007) could not be generalized, they helped shed light on the language issues present in international meetings and the communicative difficulties faced by the participants. Based on Rogerson-Revell's (2007) results, using the same language of communication is not necessarily uttering the same way. In fact, language is not only a combination of words into sentences and phrases. Language is also a sound system with various accents and pronunciations, socio-cultural conventions and linguistic competency. For these reasons, which are seen as difficulties, communication among users of English as a second/foreign language in specific environment is a big challenge. European universities, as any other universities worldwide, find difficulties to assess specific needs of the learners in particular and the institution in general. According to Taillefer (2007), the institution's responsibility is to define the most appropriate curricula and certify learners' language proficiency. However, in a non-speaking English environment it is difficult to meet these requirements (Taillefer, 2007).

1.3.2 ESP for Marketing

Research in ESP promotional genres was undertaken in European non-English speaking countries such as: Belgium, The Netherlands, France, Germany and Spain. This research conducted by Nickerson *et al.* (2005) was based on a survey of English use in the field of advertising. The authors were interested in the consumers' attitudes and comprehension of English throughout print advertising, mainly magazines. Forty-two to fifty respondents from three different European countries constituted the experimental data collection. This study showed students' **increasing** awareness regarding the presence of the existing English language around them. Moreover, the language becomes more accessible through promotional business genres that contribute to its acquisition. On the one hand, Nickerson *et al.* (2005) are aware that there are some people who improved in their English language. On the other hand, some part of

the respondents does not understand the meaning and may show a negative attitude towards the language, simply because they dislike it.

Similarly, in a Marketing class (University of Oran, Algeria), students were asked to give examples of products advertised on television. Most examples were from French channels (the local channel broadcast commercials in the Arabic language). Among the examples there were: “Dove”, “Tide”, “Kinder Surprise”, “Darty” and “l’Oréal”. My interest, as a language instructor, was to question them about their English understanding as far as the three first examples were concerned. To my surprise, students thought the words were trademarks and did not have a literal meaning in the target language. In addition, they ignored that “Kinder” was a German word to refer to “children”. Consequently, learners did not understand the general meaning of the words listed previously and expressed their difficulty to make a link between the general meaning of the word and the product advertised. More explicitly, “Dove” which is a symbolic bird represented for the learner a range of cosmetic products they used to see advertised on television or sold in stores. They even did not notice that there was a drawing of a bird on the product package. Similarly for the word “Tide”, some learners acknowledged knowing the adjective “tidy” meaning clean, but could not make a link with the root word “tide” which is also used as a verb. Their only reference is the washing machine liquid they had always seen advertised on television. For those learners, “Dove” was to cosmetics as “Apple” to computers, a famous trademark, but not words referring to a bird or a fruit, respectively. Culturally speaking, learners had a different interpretation of the concepts. They had different signifiers based on their ignorance of the concepts. In fact, the image that was according to their personal and cultural understanding of the concept influenced by their social environment.

1.3.3 ESP for Multimedia

The introduction of technology in pedagogy opened new horizons to innovative opportunities for the learning community in general and the ESP learners in particular. Consequently, computer-based multimedia instruction in Business English has implications for self-study and integration

of learners in the learning environment (Brett, 2000). According to the author, integrating multimedia into language curriculum shows general positive attitudes of learners, positive learning potential and its use as a self-study pedagogical tool. It is important to mention that the success of such learning strategy depends on the quality of the Business English software used in its appropriateness (Brett, 2000). Moreover, the availability and reliability of the material play, also, an important part in balancing between the machine and the curriculum. Using multimedia as a pedagogical tool for teaching ESP learners provides them with authentic materials such as: listening to authentic conversations, be familiar with more accents, read business texts, watch the process of a job interview, interact through activities and so on. These opportunities allow learners to develop their autonomy and promote the necessary self-instruction for their progress, which can be shared with their peers.

1.3.4 ESP for Tourism

ESP learners willing to work in the field of tourism expect to improve their speaking and listening skills, more than reading and writing, since they might be working with foreign visitors and native speakers. ESP learners in tourism need to improve their listening skills to understand their interlocutors and be able to answer them. In addition, they need to practise the language in context to facilitate negotiation of meaning and avoid communication failure and misinterpretation, for example, receptionists need to listen to customers and help them throughout a telephone or a face-to-face conversation. Therefore, learners' needs and field of study or work should not be disregarded in material selection and course design in ESP teaching and learning processes.

1.3.5 ESP for Dentistry

In addition, Al-Hakim (1984) discusses the different problems faced by ESP learners in Medicine and Dentistry that are related to learners' needs. The author lists two main factors. The first factor is whether the needs should be stated by the ESP learners or it is the ESP instructor's

role to identify them and build the course content. According to Al-Hakim (1984), two immediate ESP learners' needs emerged as follows: a) a need for English to read articles and references in their field, and b) a need for English to communicate with specialists. The first factor is related to the learners' ability to understand a content related to their fields of study or research whereas, the second factor is related to the learners' expectations of the course, and the result they gain from it. In other words, ESP learners' behaviour toward the course remains passive and the instructor is the centre of the learning process. Consequently, interaction between ESP learners is non-existent and communicative competence is quite poor. The learning is unidirectional and ESP instructors manage all the process.

The examples listed in this section show how hard it is to handle among specific language in one field, its content and the learning environment learners and instructors are faced with. The challenge is on the side of the instructors who complain mostly about the poor level of learners in terms of language acquisition, their difficulty to express themselves in English and their varied needs. On the other side learners, whose mother tongue is not the medium of instruction; complain about the irrelevance of the course content and their disappointment in reaching their objectives. The examples listed in this section are not exhaustive. After all, learners' cultural heritage, value system and personal learning background is not taken into consideration.

In the next section, I will give another example related to teaching ESP within the field of Administrative Sciences, which is quite different from the other fields. This field has been developed under certain conditions leading to some specific characteristics. I will briefly present the Administrative Sciences field and highlight some of its characteristics as a scientific field where teaching ESP is a challenging task.

1.4 Characteristics of Administrative Sciences Field

Following the industrial revolution, distinct departments such as production and operation management, marketing, finance, human resources management and accounting, were established within the enterprises. Moreover, new phenomena such as the industry emergence, the product diversifications and the market expansions, have appeared requiring more management segmentation in corporations. The impact is that within the same company the objectives and the mission of different departments may not be the same and they can be sometimes in conflict. For example, the objective of the production manager is to maximize the output and minimize the production cost. However, the finance department's objective is to minimize the needs for cash flow and to maximize the profits whereas the manager of human resources department looks after the welfare of the employees.

In spite of the fact that the ASF disciplines are interrelated, the terminology used in each discipline is distinct. This diversity in the use of jargon makes teaching ESP in this field a complex and challenging task. The learners' needs in each discipline are different. Even the economic meaning and interpretation of some terms can be different from one discipline to another. For example, the terms goal and objective in the disciplines of management science and human resources have different meanings or connotations. In decision-making theory, the goal is an aspiration level that the Decision-Maker can fix for a specific objective. However, these two terms are equivalent in human resources management discipline. In fact, an objective is a mathematical representation of what the Decision-Maker wants to achieve. Usually the objectives are to be maximized or minimized depending on the decision-making situation. Nevertheless, the goal represents an aspiration level of an objective that the Decision-Maker desires to achieve. A manager can have as an objective to reduce the rate of absenteeism. If a manager puts a value for this objective as 5%, this aspiration level will be considered as a goal (or a target).

Consequently, teaching ESP to the administrative sciences learners requires needs analysis of this community. The concept and the terminology are in a state of permanent change and progress. Therefore, the terminology used in the different disciplines of the ASF changes accordingly; such as: e-commerce, e-business, e-banking, globalization of economy, supply chain management, economy of knowledge and networking. Moreover, ESP curriculum designers should not only take into account the learners' needs, but also the evolution of these terms as well. In addition, the socio-cultural background of the learners should not be neglected especially when it comes to some specific economic practices,

The Administrative Sciences Field (ASF) uses a sociological approach to research and is used as a framework of inquiry for multidisciplinary disciplines such as mathematics, physics, industrial engineering, economics, sociology, psychology and anthropology .The multidisciplinary nature of the ASF members contributes to the lack of unity in this field which can be observed through the variety of research programs and methods according to discipline. According to Westin *et al.* (1994), the background of the members influences the choice of the methods and the tools used for analysis.

Whitley (1984) points to the influence of the scientific developments of the other fields on the ASF, particularly the impact of philosophy, history and sociology. For example, some countries do not believe in bank interest based on religious beliefs. Getting an interest from the bank is considered as a “sin”, and they would prefer to keep their money at home rather than putting it in the bank. On the contrary, it is not the case in Western countries where customers place their money, negotiate the interest rates and compares it to other institutions. Differences in sociological background may impact the ability of an ESP Finance learner with limited background with these systems to not only learn the terminology but also a different philosophy towards money, banking, and lending.

Many topics dealing with western institutions may create more challenges to learners, who are not familiar with the language content, the terminology and the meaning of concepts. Learners that do not belong to the same economic system or culture and do not share the same values. For example, one of the courses to ESP learners in ASF I taught in Algeria (between 1998 and 2001) was about “vending machines”. The concept was not clear to the ESP learners simply because they were not aware of the existence of such machines. At the time the course was delivered “vending machines” were not available in Algeria. Learners might have seen them on television or advertised on foreign channels, but did not know the concept. Consequently, the unfamiliarity with the object and the concept made the process of teaching and learning more difficult. In this case the difficulty did not lie only on their poor English language skills and mastery of business terminology, but on the concept itself as learners could not make a link between the signifier and the signified. Culturally speaking, learners did not have a clear idea of the use and purpose of such machines and it was hard for them to conceptualise the idea. According to Williams (2007), textbooks should be: a) interesting, b) consistent but varied, c) communicative in its approach, and d) include regional relevant topics and cover topics of a global appeal from a regional perspective. In addition, the author insists that these criteria do not form a limitative list of how textbooks should be. From this perspective, the author left the door open to add one important aspect that should have an important place in the textbook design, i.e.: considering the socio-cultural aspect in the process of teaching and learning.

This extends to sociological impacts on instruction. Wu and Badger (2009) showed that ESP teachers in maritime field lack knowledge in their specific subject-matter and face difficulties to share knowledge they do not know themselves. What is more, those educators try to manage several strategies to explain the course content. However, because of their cultural behavior they did not show their lack of knowledge on some topics in order not to lose face before the learners. In other words, in the Chinese context, as in some other countries, the educator is the provider of knowledge and moral instruction. Therefore, the ESP educator is “*supposed*” to know everything and has to keep that feeling in front of the learners in order to maintain their respect in the classroom (Wu and Badger, 2009). For Chinese learners learning is a means of personal perfection, family honor and social development (Gao, 1998). This way of behavior in Chinese

education is derived from Confucian tradition. For those learners, the educator is their model of good conduct and learning (Gao, 1998). When they are in the classroom environment, the Chinese learners will not ask questions to the educator even if they might not understand what the educator says (Scarcella, 1992). The learners' behavior is a matter of showing respect for the teacher (Scarcella, 1992), and asking questions is not well perceived. In fact, in the experiment I have conducted there was an activity in which two learners were asked to work together. Notwithstanding, one of the learners did not show enough interest in the activity, only after the educator intervened and asked about the activity that the learner became active. The intervention of the educator made the learner more attentive to the activity and engaged with the peer. This example on engagement will be described in details in chapter five.

I believe that those cultural beliefs and behaviors do exist in other parts of the world and that ignorance amongst the providers of knowledge is perceived negatively. The social individual cannot know everything and cannot be seen as the only reservoir of knowledge. Educators as well as learners should be collaborators within the learning environment, and learning process will be the fruit of their interaction. There is no shame to say: "*I do not know*" and ask for more explanation. The exchange between educators-learners, and learners themselves will help build solid basis in the field of study and enlightenment for all. In North American classrooms, for example, the Confucian tradition does not have place in the learning environment. Western education encourages learners to take part in their learning process. Moreover, they give them more opportunities to express themselves, argue, and exchange ideas with others. The frequent use of questions and the interaction among the educators, the learner and the peers promote critical thinking, broadens knowledge as well as assessment of the whole participants. The learning environment groups all the individuals seeking to learn from each other, sharing knowledge and experience and building oneself.

In this section, I have highlighted different characteristics of ASF and the challenges instructors and learners face in the teaching and learning processes. These challenges can be summarized in

the acquisition of language and its technicalities, the diversity of learners' needs and requirements. Moreover, the absence of the socio-cultural background has an impact in the teaching and learning processes. In some cultures, some topics are considered taboo. People do not discuss them, and it would be considered rude to teach them. In other cultures, education is based on some religious beliefs, and practices and talking about them might be inappropriate.

Consequently, the implication and awareness of the socio-cultural background in the teaching and learning process is of great importance. It can facilitate learning and acquisition to take place between the subject and the object, increase mutual awareness and take into consideration all aspects of interaction among members of the learning community.

In the next section, I will discuss the necessity of establishing a unified content for the ESP courses prepared for the ASF. I will highlight, also, the difficulties to develop these courses based on the ESP learners' needs.

1.5 English for Specific Purposes course content in Administrative Sciences Field

ESP instructors should be creative in their teaching, flexible with their learners and aware of the different needs to be met. They have to consider the learners' needs and the learning aims in the delivery of the course content in order to better communicate and be successful (Zughoul and Hussein, 1985). The content of the ESP course has to be adapted to the expectations of the administrative sciences learners. The learners' needs are very important to ESP teaching and if the needs are clear, the learning aims can be reached easily. According to Robinson (1991), flexibility is a very important requisite for ESP instructor. What is more, the ESP instructor should be ready to try new teaching approaches and methodologies. As Strevens (1988-a), suggests in becoming more effective, an ESP instructor requires more experience, extra training,

additional efforts and a fresh commitment as compared to a General English (GE) instructor. Having more experience in language teaching will certainly help instructors to be efficient in preparing their courses and answering the learners questions. Moreover, attending workshops and exchanging ideas with other instructors will also update each other with the different new approaches and methods used in the teaching process. I believe that these components are not enough to reach higher efficiency. Instructors should be aware that an open window towards the socio-cultural background of the learners has to be considered. In fact, each teaching context is a case in itself and needs more work and devotion for an effective result without excluding the cultural dimension of learners, their involvement in personal learning and awareness of their peers' learning process. The latter can be accomplished through the various collaboration that can take place in the classroom as well as the initiative learners may take to share their knowledge.

According to Markee (1984), the content of the ESP courses should be appropriate to the learners' needs. Learners' needs provide instructors with the important foundation on which to construct the new knowledge and shape the course; otherwise the content might be unsuitable or irrelevant. Sometimes, instructors do not have enough pedagogical material and resources to shape their courses, especially, when they are at the beginning of their career and do not have enough experience in the field. Consequently, they become, in a certain way, a different type of learner whose objectives are seeking new knowledge in order to teach it. Instructors face this difficulty often when it is the case of a specific subject. They bear a hard task of teaching the language through the specific content and find themselves in an unfamiliar situation. The situation could be less problematic if the instructors would be participants in the development of the teaching material (Kennedy, 1983).

There is no exaggeration to state that the foundation on which ESP decisions are made is needs assessment (Belcher, 2006). Those needs frequently create blurred dividing lines between researchers, instructors and curriculum designers. According to Long (1976), the main important

tasks of curriculum planners, syllabus designers, material designers, and instructors are as follows: a) identification of the communicative purposes that learners have or are going to have for English; and b) the creation of various opportunities for learners to interact not only in the classroom but also in the real world. In other words, if the theoretical bases of the learning process are integrated properly, the teaching will be enriched for the learners' benefit.

ESP courses in the ASF should be adapted in such a way to take into consideration the specificity of the disciplines that compose the field. The duty of the ESP instructors is to be aware of the different teaching methods and course content used in the teaching process. This should be directed through needs analysis that will help instructors spell out the goals and objectives, the topics covered in the classroom and the teaching methods used in teaching, learning and evaluating. Needs analysis help instructors know who the learner is, why he/she is willing to learn the language, and what he/she needs the language for (Stevens, 1988-a). The content of the courses should consider a set of objectives appropriate to the ASF learners' needs. In fact, if the learners' needs are well defined, the content of the ESP courses will also well defined (Senhadje, 1992). The content of the ESP in ASF will also take into account the fact that the learners are coming from different disciplines within the same field, their background and their acquired concepts are not necessarily the same. Moreover, when dealing with international learners the socio-cultural dimension cannot be neglected. This factor has also an important role to play in the preparation of the course content in order to facilitate communication and understanding among the whole learning community.

It is agreed in the literature that ESP learners are adults or near-adults (Robinson, 1980). They have some General English background, and through ESP courses, learners expand or adapt their skills to the field of study or work (Robinson, 1980). At this point, ESP instructors choose specific learning strategies adapted to the level and age of the learner. Additionally, the practical experience of instructors and learners themselves can be fruitful in an effective and flexible ESP course design.

Strevens (1988-b) states that the ESP learners come to the course with a minimum of three types of expectations that are: a) cultural education, b) personal and individual, and c) academic/occupational. The cultural education expectations are related to the learner's background. The ESP learner assumes that there is no difference in the process of learning/teaching within his/her social environment and ESP learning. In fact, ESP learner is not aware of all the differences between his past learning experience and the new one. In other words, ESP learners should be conscious that there are many new emerging factors in learning ESP that might not necessarily be similar of the ones they have always been administrated in the classroom. Strevens (1988-b) points to the fact that educating the ESP learner in accepting the new teaching/learning experience is to be considered. I do agree with this point of view, especially when dealing with ESP learners learning from different socio-cultural background. Learners in a multicultural environment should be aware of the difference that may take place within the learning environment.

The second expectation is related to the ESP learner's view of oneself as a learner. Some learners are optimistic about the course content and have positive expectations of success and other learners are rather pessimistic and less positive about their results. Those expectations vary according to the learner's objectives in taking the ESP course. For example, I had a group of learners who were bank clerks and accountants. They took an ESP course for professional purposes; however, they did not show high motivation. This negative attitude, according to them, was not caused by the ESP course itself or the ESP instructor. The arguments they gave were as follows: a) they were not young enough to acquire a new language through content they mastered well, b) it was difficult for some learners who studied other foreign languages such as Spanish, German or Italian and have never been taught English, c) their institution obliged them to take the course and d) the courses were taught after their working hours; therefore they felt tired to give additional intellectual efforts. Although these professionals have not been learners for a while, they showed less enthusiasm in learning the language. Most of the time these learners express a feeling of laziness and are less motivated.

Finally, there are the academic or professional expectations. Mainly, these expectations constitute the basis of needs analysis. The ESP learner may not have an exact idea of his needs even if they seem accurate (Strevens, 1988-b), but what is important to highlight here is the ESP learners' targeted achievements in learning ESP and the amount of time devoted to their learning. Young ESP learners may be more flexible, more motivated and optimistic for their success and much enthusiastic in taking the course than middle-aged learners, who have finished with school benches for a while and who are competent in their occupation, job and working environment (Strevens, 1988-b). In this case, the ESP instructor has to find out the most appropriate way to reach the most common ESP teaching and learning objectives without losing the learners' motivation.

The content of the courses and the textbooks have to be updated regularly. In addition, the instructors' knowledge, about the new developments and theories within the different disciplines, has to be updated. Of course, the changes will not be the same in all disciplines, because to teach the right terminology related to each discipline, the ESP instructors should be aware of the new concept and the appropriate English terminology. This objective can be achieved through needs analysis. The salient feature of needs identification phase is to identify the different communicative needs of learners. According to Markee (1984), this phase is carried out through: a) information gathering by questionnaires, and b) structured interviews. The needs identification study will involve the instructors from the different disciplines of ASF and the learners. The main point discussed by most authors in ESP teaching is related to needs analysis and the content taught to ESP learners. Apart from those needs, the learner is nearly absent in his/her way of contributing to one's learning process. The interpersonal aspect and interaction between the different parties of the learning community is not considered in the learning process. More importantly, the cultural aspect of learners is absent in identifying the needs for ESP teaching and learning.

International learners enrolled in the bachelor program at the school of commerce and administration are required to take Language courses in the EAP program. They need to go through different levels before being accepted in any academic program. However, later on they are faced with new terminology, new concepts and new learning environment where the case method is widely utilised and group work is part of the teaching/learning processes.

These difficulties will be discussed in general in the next section where ESP instructors are in constant challenge to finding appropriate textbooks, delivering ESP courses and implementing the most appropriate teaching methodology for an effective teaching/learning classroom environment.

1.6 Instructors and textbooks for teaching English for Specific Purposes within Administrative Sciences Field

Usually, the ESP teaching staff is composed of EFL\ESL instructors of English. Typically, the instructors hold a degree in English studies and they are not specialized in the specific subject-matter such as the administrative sciences. Often the instructors teach and administrate ESP without a formal training in ESP (Robinson, 1980). Instructors are not familiar with the ESP context they are asked to teach. This is what Wu and Badger (2009) call “*ESP teachers’ subject knowledge dilemma*”. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987) the ESP instructors should not become an instructor of the specific subject-matter, but rather an interested learner of the subject-matter. Language instructors do not master the subject-matter but they try to supply and provide their learners with different materials that help them read and understand the subject-matter and enhance their vocabulary. Watson Todd (2003), states less research has been conducted regarding the ESP instructors’ decisions taken in the teaching and the learning processes. In fact, instructors in ESP field are, sometimes, asked to administer content that they do not know much about (Hutchinson and Waters, 1984), a few others are specialists in certain technical fields, yet their linguistic competence is poor (Bonyadi, 2005).

According to Robinson (1991) there has been a development in teaching methodologies, particularly, within the communicative approach whether in teaching English for general purposes or for specific ones. Moreover, ESP methodologies do not differ from language learning/teaching processes (Strevens, 1988-b). In fact, there is no new or specific methodology to be learnt in order to teach an ESP course. Skills and techniques acquired in GE teaching can be as useful as in ESP teaching environment (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). Therefore, ESP instructors can adopt any methodology that they see appropriate to their teaching.

Hayati (2008) categorizes the instructors into three different groups as follows: a) instructors using only the assigned textbooks in their work, b) instructors using additional pedagogical materials related to the field and, c) a few instructors working not only with the assigned textbooks, but also with supplementary materials, books and/or articles related to ESP methodology, but there is still a missing factor which is the use of “*field-specific discourse in real situations*”. Instructors may have access to different pedagogical tools to meet the targeted objectives, yet practice in real situations remains an important issue.

In general, teaching special English classes requires a tailored approach and appropriate strategies that is not often similar to the process used in teaching General English. Teaching materials are universally limited especially when it comes to teaching a specific subject because learners do not achieve a full exposure to all the topics (Denton *et al.*, 2005). The lack of coordination among instructors is one of the reasons. Therefore, to assure the quality of curriculum design, the authors proposed a material design based on industrial setting called the Quality Function Deployment (QFD). This concept is to translate the customer's requirements (which are also known as customer's attributes), into design requirements, (known as engineering characteristics) that reflects better the customer's preferences. The concept of QFD has been introduced by Hauser and Clausing (1988) within the field of production and operations management. It assures that all customers' needs will be taken into consideration in product design at all levels. Denton *et al.* (2005) suggested the application of this method in business

curriculum to meet business schools employers' needs. However, ESP practitioners can learn a lot from their English Language Teaching experience (Robinson, 1991). ELT materials and methodologies can serve to develop activities having authentic purposes and meeting the target needs of ESP learners (Robinson, 1991).

Another difficulty faced by language instructors is the lack of textbooks and materials designed to teach in the target language. According to Čepřon (2006), Business English instructors' intuition has an impact on material assessment. In other words, instructors are faced with a variety of textbooks and are forced to choose one that satisfies the requirements of specific language needs. However, since there is no completely reliable objective method to evaluate textbooks, instructors may fail in their choice and their decisions would be regrettable.

It is a fact that ESP learners do not form homogenous groups. They have different background and motivations. The learners' difficulties are varied among grammar, general vocabulary and scientific or specific terminology. Their interest in the language itself is not often so high and they are more subject-matter oriented. Many of the learners are motivated to learn English instrumentally (Broughton and Christopher, 1980). In general, university learners, including those from the field of Administrative Sciences, consider the ESP courses not important part of their program and they can obtain their undergrad degree without a good knowledge of English (Robinson, 1991). In fact, the learners put more efforts in other subjects than the language courses.

Teaching ESP in the field of Administrative Sciences needs appropriate teaching material. According to Swales (1980), choosing a good ESP textbook has always been a failed process. This failure is due to the lack of pertinence of the textbook to the subject to be taught in different areas of the Administrative Sciences. However, it is not that easy for a practitioner to find the appropriate textbook that satisfies all expectations (Swales, 1980), especially when the socio-

cultural aspect is considered which is not the case in most textbooks. Textbooks deal with texts that are often dry, topics not relevant and activities not inspiring (Williams, 2007). Moreover, business concepts and suitability of materials are not universal (St-John, 1996). According to the author, instructors face two major problems that are: a) using the parameters of current textbooks because of background heterogeneity, and b) learners rely more on the language instructor to supply them with language and content. From that point of view, learners are passive and interactions among them are absent.

Johns and Dudley-Evans (1991) identified five ESP key roles regarding practitioners, which are: a) teacher, b) course designer and material provider, c) collaborator, d) researcher, and e) evaluator. The field of the administrative sciences like other fields is in a constant change and the new concepts are developed and new terminology is used, but the ESP textbooks are not necessary updated so fast to accommodate the needs of learners. The textbooks are not reviewed and updated so that their contents fit the new developments in the field of administrative sciences. Therefore, practitioners should be eclectic in using the materials and tailoring their approach to specific learning objectives, needs analysis of the targeted learners and for their socio-cultural environment of language use (Johns and Price-Machado, 2001). Yakhontova (2001) suggests that ESP textbooks should be modified, specifically, when the material is designed for learners who are non-native speakers and who are learning in a non-English speaking environment.

Similarly, Crawford Camiciottoli (2005) referred to course adjustment in teaching international audience especially when a native speaker delivers the course. Being aware of the international audience's needs helps the lecturer plan and implement a series of adjustments. What is more, many different variables should be taken into consideration in preparing the course such as: speech rate, redundancies, references to local culture and institutional requirements (Crawford Camiciottoli, 2005). Moreover, assessing the type of content, the way it is used and valued and the relationship between the vocabulary words and specific terminology is necessary in

delivering an ESP course (Johns and Price-Machado, 2001). Other important factors concern the role the instructor performs in delivering the course, the knowledge of the terminology of the subject-matter, needs analysis and ESP course design, the authenticity of the text task, and the improvement of the teaching materials in order to cover language and professional skills (Fuertes-Olivera and Gómez-Martínez, 2004). Nevertheless, the authors raise the issue that those key elements are not the only factors to ESP learning and teaching processes. Instructors have to re-examine other learning elements that contribute to the process of learning, or affect it.

Generally, in the ASF, the ESP instructors are given just certain commercial books to consult or use even try to adapt. Sometimes these books do not deal with all the specialities, but just some common ones, such as English for management, English for marketing and English for accounting. Thus, some instructors face difficulties, not only in what to teach, but also to understand the subject they have to teach since most of them come from a non-ESP background and they have never experienced ESP teaching. However, Strevens (1988-b) states that a good language instructor is potentially a good instructor of ESP. According to Strevens (1988-b), the interaction between ESP instructors and experienced instructors is necessary to train and advise them. Clearly, the author states that more training, longer experience and more experimentation will inspire the instructors of GE in order to accomplish and fulfil their profession in being effective instructors of ESP.

1.7 Conclusion

Teaching ESP has always been a challenge for instructors. They face a number of difficulties such as: a) variation in the learners' skills, abilities and interest; b) the lack of knowledge of the subject-matter; c) the lack of experience in the teaching field; d) the absence of collaboration with the subject specialists; e) unavailability of materials, and f) absence of the socio-cultural dimension. Amongst the material, there are the textbooks that in most cases are not prepared by the institution especially in the Administrative Sciences Field. It is the instructor's duty to seek an appropriate textbook which meets the learners' needs. Yet, the result is seldom useful. The only available textbooks are either not up-dated or are just a collection of texts taken from other books or magazines. The ESP material can be more effective to the specific ESP learners' needs when it is selected and adapted according to the ESP context (Edwards, 2000). Most of the ESP lessons in the field of Administrative Sciences deal with general topics and definitions since the specific textbooks for the different respective disciplines are not available. Instructors base their lessons mainly on terminology and grammar rather than interaction and communication with the learners. Consequently, it is important to have collaboration among language instructors, subject specialists and textbooks designers. This partnership will not only decrease the difficulties faced in the teaching and learning processes, but also enhance the ESP level for the learners and the institution in general.

Teaching and learning processes need pedagogical approaches, methods and techniques. The classroom environment gives the instructor the freedom to adopt the most appropriate teaching approach and strategies to deliver the course, exchange knowledge with learners and make them share and participate in their learning. More importantly, the cultural aspect and the learner's socio-cultural and educational background have to be taken into consideration. This aspect was neglected in the research. In fact it is only recently that the socio-cultural environment in language use was considered. From the literature, most publications refer to the collaboration between instructors and curriculum designers, about meeting learners' needs, adopting some textbooks and adapting the content. Yet, few mentioned the learners' behaviour in their socio-cultural learning environment. It seems that learners do not play an active role in the classroom.

They are not given many opportunities to share their knowledge with the peers and have that responsibility of explaining to the others and share with them. The socio-cultural background of the learners is absent in the literature, and its inclusion might constitute one of the answers to the learners' failure in ASF and ESP learning in general.

In the next chapter, I will present the communicative teaching approach as one of the approaches contributing to the learners' learning improvements in general, and the ESP learner in particular. I will discuss the socio-cultural environment of learners and its impact on their learning process.

CHAPTER 2

Teaching Approaches in the Classroom Environment: The Communicative Approach

2.0 Abstract

Many methods and approaches have been used in teaching and learning English as a foreign or a second language. The choice of one specific method or approach lies on the educators' choice, which is not an easy task, especially when dealing with the teaching of specific language. In this chapter I present the different approaches and methods used in the classroom environment and reasons of shifting from one to another. The focus is put on the pertinence of the communicative approach in teaching the target language and the interactive activities and autonomy of learners in their leaning process. The absence of the socio-cultural aspect is highlighted within this approach as it represents one of the key elements of this research. I will highlight the importance of the learner's interaction with the peers and the awareness of the socio-cultural aspect, responsibility and answerability in the teaching/learning processes.

2.1 Introduction

Communication may take different forms, depending on the learning environment that learners are faced with. They are expected to be in contact with their peers and educator in their learning process. They use different learning strategies so as to transmit their message, ask questions or even provide answers. For example, in some activities learners and educator may communicate using oral, visual or written forms. The learning process requires learners to be active participants in the classroom environment. Being active creates a vivid atmosphere of learning and exchanging of knowledge.

The communicative approach provides a certain environment in which learners as social individuals interact with each other, share their thoughts and exchange their knowledge. Yet, it is not always easy to keep them involved in the tasks and be active participants, because their needs and interests may vary from one learner to another. This chapter describes the communicative approach as one of the teaching/learning approaches used in the classroom environment in which learners play an important part in their learning process. Also, I will present other teaching and learning approaches used in the classroom environment among educators and learners. A short comparison is made to discuss the shortcomings of those approaches.

Also section 3 will be devoted to learning strategies such as: autonomy and collaboration as they both contribute to the learners' improvement of language acquisition and learning. Through this chapter I will try to list the targeted objectives that this research aims at.

2.2 The Communicative Approach

The communicative approach is one of the various approaches to language teaching used in the classroom environment. The communicative approach is said to be the result of educators and linguists who were not satisfied with the other existing methods of teaching English as a Foreign Language. In other words, the feedback of methods like the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), the natural method, the audio-lingual method and the Total Physical Response (TPR) method were not considered of great success. For example, the audio-lingual method, which is based on repetition and drills and the GTM, mainly based on form and structure, did not focus much on communication. The classroom was educator-centred and learners were not able to communicate through appropriate social language, gestures, or expressions. Admittedly, they were at a loss to communicate in the culture of the target language. Moreover, through the audio-lingual method and the GTM the learning environment was not realistic enough. This context was not efficient for the learners' learning process and improvement of their strategies.

The GTM has been a predominant method in Europe in the 19th century. It is based, mainly, on learning grammar rules, memorizing and translating vocabulary words. Moreover, the medium of instruction used within this method is generally the mother tongue that learners use to explain new vocabulary words and make comparison between the two languages. In fact, learners are taught through the presentation of bilingual lists of words, and grammar rules are learned deductively. Most of the time educators using this approach present the rules and give illustrations, systematically. Nevertheless, GTM hardly gives opportunities to learners to communicate in the target language and to interact and share knowledge. Learning the target language through this method is based on form rather than use. Learners become more performant and accurate in translating the words from English to their mother tongue (and vice versa). Also, they become more focused on reading and writing skills, and less attention is given to listening and speaking. In such learning environment, interaction is absent in the classroom. Learners are not involved much in sharing knowledge and because of using the mother tongue, they become lazy in their learning process. This method does not cover the four skills of

language teaching and learning. Consequently, another method emerged called: the direct method.

The direct method, also known as the natural method is based on the natural way of learning a language, for example when learning the mother tongue. It focuses more on correct pronunciation of words. The main objective of this method is to convey meaning directly into the target language through demonstration and visual aids. Learning through the direct method refrains learners from using their mother tongue, and encourages them to make more efforts to learn the target language and develop personal learning strategies. Unlike the GTM, the direct method emphasizes more on listening and speaking skills rather than reading and writing skills. For the direct method, reading and writing should come later in the learning process. It focuses on language acquisition like when the individual learns his/her first language. For example, when a child learns his first language he does not rely on any other language. Learning takes place naturally through parts of speech and “*good*” pronunciation of words. At a certain point, this means that the child can express him/herself, but is unable to be accurate or even know the rule already. Moreover, reading and writing skills are kept away at this stage. The child starts by uttering sounds, than pronouncing words, but is not able to form cluster of sentences. This method can be helpful for young learners, but it does not meet large targets with adult learners who want to learn a second or third language.

As the GTM, the direct method has its drawbacks. The direct method requires proficient educators who are either native speakers or fluent speakers of the target language. This method depends mainly on the skills of the educator and not the pedagogical materials used in the classroom. Furthermore, teaching a foreign language, especially in an environment where the target language is absent, foreign language educators are not all proficient enough in the target language. Also, one important issue related to the teaching process is that the socio-cultural aspect should be taken into consideration in course preparation and delivery. This aspect will be discussed more in chapter four.

Another method of language teaching and learning is called the audio-lingual method, known also as the Aural-Oral method. It is based on learning through stimulus-response and reinforcement. Learners are drilled in the use of grammatical sentence patterns. The educators project the linguistic pattern of the target language into the learners' minds. Consequently, their responses become automatic and "*habitual*". This method focuses on listening and speaking competence before reading and writing and emphasizes on everyday spoken English. Additionally, the structures of the target language are learned through extensive repetitions and drills. The audio-lingual method supports kinesthetic learning styles, and focuses more on form than deep structures. Grammar is taught inductively with a limited vocabulary and learners manipulate language and disregard content. This means that learners just memorize and repeat which result in weak language performance because they are unable to communicate properly even though they master the basic grammar rules. They are "*structurally competent*" (Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Johnson, 1991). This third method, as the two mentioned previously, clearly show that the main focus is on two skills only, either reading and writing or listening and speaking. They are more concerned with speaking the language correctly rather than understanding the content.

Next, there is the Total Physical Response (TPR). This method is claimed to be highly effective with beginner learners. It is based on recreation of natural learning environment that learners are faced with daily. It provides learners with enjoyable and less stressful learning environment. The emphasis is put on listening and physical response over oral production, yet not targeting the four skills altogether. There is an absence of communication; and knowledge is not shared or exchanged. The use of these methods can be more effective at a lower learning level with beginners and young learners. Of course, the objectives vary. Yet, these teaching approaches cannot be considered for higher level learners, more specifically adult learners with specific needs. Adult learners have some basic knowledge in the target language and need more than just learning the rules and be accurate in reading and writing. As highlighted by Allen and Widowson (1991) that the urgent need of a new teaching approach is to shift from language structure to communication so as learners become able to deal with scientific facts and concepts. In fact, this

approach gives systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of knowledge (Littlewood, 1981).

Consequently, the limits of the approaches discussed in the previous paragraphs lead us to the use of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). This method is based on interaction through the target language. The theory and practice of this approach has been developed by many researchers such as: Brumfit and Johnson (1979); Nunan (1989) and Savignon (1991). According to Nunan (1991) there are five basic characteristics of CLT which can be summarized in the following points: a) a focus on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language, b) authentic texts are introduced into the learning situation, c) provide learners with opportunities related to the language and their learning process, d) improving the learners' experience which contributes to the classroom learning and, e) trying to make a link between what is learned in the classroom and the real world. In fact CLT's objectives are similar to some of the objectives I would like to reach in teaching EAP learners. Interaction creates negotiation of meaning between interlocutors which results in meaningful communication. This exchange will contribute to the learning process of each part. What is more, when the communicative context takes into consideration the learners' needs and objectives, learners become more involved in participating and improving in the target language. This method enhances their creativity and makes them share knowledge which does contribute to achieve their goals. One important point to consider is the socio-cultural background of the learners, especially in multicultural classrooms where learners come from various cultural backgrounds and have different cultural beliefs and behaviors.

Each of the described methods pays in terms of language learning and acquisition. Each one has a symbolic part in the process of teaching and learning of the target language. The process of their emergence was either related to the influence of some methods or the birth of some new ones. Therefore, it is the educator's duty, in my opinion, to create an intrinsic motivating environment for learners. As stated by Englander (2002) learners develop more responsibility in

their learning process and be aware that their peers are another source of exchanging and sharing knowledge. The educator has the responsibility and the role to be eclectic and adapt his teaching methods and strategies according to the learners' requirements and course objectives.

A big expansion and development of communicative teaching approaches mushroomed and the classroom has become the place of knowledge exchange between learners. Moreover, the communicative approach to language teaching uses real-life situations that necessitate communication which is intrinsically interesting and useful to learners (Englander, 2002). A realistic situational context and a real practical usage provide learners with the language needed in everyday situation. This is a good training for EAP learners who through situational learning context will experience situations in which they are likely to encounter in real-life, such as: negotiating a contract, promoting and selling a product or offering a service in the bank. In fact, this approach emphasizes the communicative activities that involve the real use of language and content in daily-life situations. Learners become more motivated to learn when they are put in meaningful contexts and deal with interesting subjects, especially, when the course content is related to their study field or to their professional or academic requirements.

According to Larsen-Freeman (1986), "*We learn to communicate by communicating*". The act of speaking is in itself communicating, therefore using the communicative approach in the classroom makes learners become active participants. This approach comes up with activities that would promote self-training, and interaction between the members of the group in authentic situations (Sam, 1990). The learner is personally and directly involved in the learning process, he/she is active, responsible and autonomous in producing the target language in similar situations that can be faced with outside the classroom. According to Radford (2006-b) the educator's role in the classroom is not limited only to the learner's autonomy. The author states that the educator's role is to teach the learner to be with others, live in community and be open to other thoughts. Within the learning community, the learner's interaction with the peers is of great importance for knowledge share. It is true that the communicative approach creates opportunities

for learners to learn and exchange their knowledge. However, it gives less consideration and importance to the learner as a “subject” and his/her interaction with the others. This idea of “*being*” among the others, learning with them and from them is not much explored within the communicative approach.

In general, learners are expected to reach a certain degree of negotiating meaning in their learning environment. This degree can be reached through the application of different communicative activities such as: problem solving (simulation and role-plays), topic discussion and information gap. Moreover, the use of communicative activities within the communicative approach puts more emphasis on the language use for negotiating meaning rather than learning the language structures and forms. This does not mean that the grammar and lexis are neglected. Learners talk and learning to communicate are not synonymous (Scott, 1983). The goal is to know when, where and to whom are these sentences used in a speech community (Richards, 1985). In other words, through communicative activities in the classroom environment the main concern of ESP/EAP learners is using the target language, not language usage. Clearly, this approach is content based and emphasises on the learners’ needs as the objectives ESP teaching and learning is aiming at.

Generally, educators in language classes act as advisers or facilitators. In an EAP class, EAP learners should not rely all the time on the educator, only. EAP learners should be given the freedom to think or to say what they want to. Language forms in the communicative approach are always addressed within a communicative context. All the structure of language that is part of the learners’ schemata grows naturally out of the range of functional and situational contexts that are part of the lessons themselves. The classroom becomes more learner-centeredness, hence the teaching responds to the EAP learners’ needs and interests. Lastly, the communicative approach will strive to enable these learners in exploiting a range of strategies for interpreting the language as it is actually used by native speakers. What is more, learners should explore and experiment in their learning environment and bringing life inside it (Imran, 2006).

According to Englander (2002), interaction among learners helps them develop two needed sets of skills. The first one is to manage the interaction and know how and when to take part in the interaction, how to invite the other “*allocutor*” to speak and how to keep going a conversation. The second skill is to make sure that the “*allocutor*” you are addressing has understood the message correctly and the “*locutor*” has understood him/her also i.e. negotiate meaning. Hence, interaction in the classroom involves not only expressing one’s ideas and opinions, but also understanding and comprehending those of others (Englander, 2002). However, the cultural background of learners has its importance in understanding others, especially in multicultural classes. Interaction in the classroom makes the learner involved in doing tasks with the peers, cooperating with them and becoming part of the whole learning community in which the learner becomes responsible of his/her learning process and the one of the peers (Radford, 2006-a).

Communicative approach considers language as a means of communication in different social settings. It is based on interaction and collaborative learning in which learners gather, share and exchange the knowledge and use authentic models. However, it gives less insight on the “subject” and the interactions among the learners. Through purposeful interaction, learners are provided with opportunities to share and explore attitudes, feelings and opinions in a social context. This environment makes the learners participate in the learning process and contribute to their peers’ progress, understanding and improvement in the learning community. These foundations fit with the concept of “*Communitarian Self*” developed by Radford (2006-a) under the theory of *objectification*. The classroom environment as a place of sharing and exchanging knowledge provides the learners with more opportunities to be with others, to learn from them, with them and by themselves (Radford, 2006-a). The concept of the “*Communitarian Self*” is based on the act of learning and sharing knowledge through communication in a socio-cultural environment. In fact, the “*Communitarian Self*” concept is based not only on the learners’ autonomy in the learning process, but also on the interactions between the peers, the educator and the community at large. Learners follow a learning process in which they encounter other voices and perspectives, and exchanging with others will contribute to self-learning and the learning of others.

In the next section I will discuss more about this concept and the learners' autonomy and socio-cultural aspects in sharing and exchanging knowledge. I will shed the light not only on the learner's autonomy in learning, but also the importance of collaborating with the peers and sharing knowledge.

2.3 Autonomy and Collaboration in Teaching/Learning Process

Choosing an appropriate teaching method in the classroom environment varies according to multiple factors such as: the objectives set up by the educator, the subject-matter requirements, the activities covered in the course, the learners' age, needs, skills and socio-cultural background, even the educator's competence in the course delivery and the competence in the selected teaching method. What is more, the efficiency of one method over the other cannot be generalised. The process of teaching and learning is constantly changing and improving in different fields and what can be beneficial and rewarding with one group of learners is not necessarily similar with another group. As an educator, delivering the same course content to my ESP learners has never been done the same way. Of course, the content of the course does not change, but the teaching strategies are in constant change according to the audience taught. For example, teaching the same course of grammar, or working on a text about marketing will obviously change from one group to another. What differs is mainly the learners' perception of the material to be delivered. Also, when interaction takes place between the participants there will be some exchange of thoughts and arguments under which the educator can build his/her strategies. Sometimes the educator gets inspired by some learners' questions and ideas to readjust his/her strategies in delivering the course and presenting the content to them.

Educators provide and offer learners with considerable amount of knowledge throughout their teaching process. This knowledge is presented in various learning activities which give learners opportunities to apply, compare, improve and practice what they have been taught. This knowledge "*furnishes*" the learners mind and subjects it to the different "*intellectual*

gymnastics” that contribute to the development and strengthening of knowledge (Piaget, 1973). These “*intellectual gymnastics*” will define how much knowledge retention is and will make difference in learners’ strategies of learning. Piaget (1973) explains that up to the secondary school there is a little knowledge that remains from their whole learning process. In other words, secondary school learners will forget a big part of courses content they have taken as far as historical dates, Latin words, chemistry symbols, scientific terminology are concerned. I assume that one of the reasons of such poor knowledge retention may be the result of poor learning strategies and absence of collaboration. As an illustration, Piaget (1973) refers to learners who acquire their own learning methodology through free investigation and spontaneous efforts. In fact, the development of intellectual and social autonomy is the main objective of education (Piaget, 1973; Yackel and Cobb, 1996). Autonomy fosters learners’ curiosity to go beyond what they are taught and learn more. They improve by understanding and not memorizing. A strategy of making reason works over memory, which helps the learners build up their personal ideas (Piaget, 1973).

An autonomous learner who is aware of his/her learning process chooses an appropriate strategy to a given learning situation. Learners can adopt their skills so that to suit a particular situation. What is more, autonomous learners are able to work on their weaknesses either using strategies or targeted questions. Autonomy makes learners aware, free and responsible, to a certain extent, of their learning improvement. They bridge the gap between the new acquired knowledge and the one they have already learnt. Educators should not spoon-feed too much their learners, they should provide them with motivating learning environment that meet their objectives. As set by Nunan (1989), the objectives of the learner-centred approach are as follows: a) provide learners with efficient learning strategies, b) assist learners to identify their personal preferred ways of learning, c) develop the different needed skills so as to negotiate the curriculum, d) encourage learners to set their objectives, e) encourage learners to adapt realistic goals and time frame, and f) develop their skills in self-evaluation. Such learning environment encourages learners’ autonomy to improve their learning and develop their strategies and at the same time, share their knowledge with the peers.

Autonomy is one of the strategies to encourage in the classroom environment, but not the only one. Learners as social individuals exist within a social environment, they have a place within the learning community where they share their knowledge, express their thoughts and opinions, and learn from each other. In fact, through various interactions and collaboration among the peers there is a learning atmosphere that takes place. Yackel and Cobb's (1996) conception of autonomy relies on the students' participation in the different practices of the classroom community. The authors refer to the learners who rely on their intellectual abilities to make decisions and judgements when taking part in the practices. On the contrary, heteronomous learners are those who rely and depend on the educator's support and seek his/her guidance in order to perform and act in their learning process. It should be noted that the educator's role in the classroom environment is desirable to orient learners and help them in their knowledge acquisition and production. The educator's role helps learners construct their thinking, build up opinions and interact with their peers. The educator should also pave the way to more interaction between learners in their learning process.

In addition, the educator should raise learners' awareness to the importance of responsibility they might have towards their peers (Radford, 2012). The author defines the responsibility as a "*mode of answering*" to the peers and "*being engaged*" with them, with the others. Being responsible towards the others is in itself a process through which the learner "becomes with others", goes beyond the self and builds up one's knowledge from the interactions taking place in the classroom. Therefore, the educator's role in the classroom is very important for learners' improvements, he/she should create more interactive learning activities and make learners interact, exchange and share with others, so as learning from each other takes place. In addition, the educator's intervention should take place when there is a need for help and not being present all the time so as learners keep being active in their learning process. However, it is not always clear when the educator should act for not transpassing the learners' freedom (Radford, 2012). In fact, if the learner is guided all the time by the educator who will show how to solve the problem, so learning will not take place. The educator should provide learners with the necessary tools and encourage their autonomy to occur (Radford, 2012). In such process, the autonomous learners share knowledge, yet they are not separated from their socio-cultural background.

In the next section I will present some of the objectives this research work aims at that are related to the teaching and learning processes of international EAP learners at Laurentian University taking into consideration aspects of the theory of *objectification*. This theory will be described in details in chapter five.

2.4 Teaching and Learning Objectives in the Classroom

Educators present different learning activities to the learners to reach certain objectives. They expect their learners to understand the content, be able to provide them and the peers with clear and comprehensible answers and show a sense of responsibility towards the whole learning community. For example, when dealing with a reading comprehension text, learners are asked to read the content and try to have a general idea of the topic so as to understand the meaning of the text. More explicitly, one of the tasks that learners may perform is to answer some comprehension questions related to the content of the text. In such case, they should provide ideas that are clear and concise to reflect their comprehension. What is more, learners are faced with different learning contexts in which they develop their understanding of the content through the subject-matter. In this research, EAP learners were exposed to some activities in which they had to be more involved in, participate with the peers, share their ideas and reach a certain level of learning. Some of our objectives that EAP learners had to achieve in their learning process are as listed below:

2.4.1 Understand complex situations:

When using idiomatic expressions, for example, learners should understand the meaning of the expression and avoid the literal meaning of the combined words. This kind of task can create a misunderstanding if the learner is not familiar with the expression. Similarly this is what happens with everyday expressions in any language since the meaning is mainly related to the socio-cultural context in which it has been created. For example, when dealing with English proverbs, learners will have to not only explain them and understand them, but also find their equivalent

proverbs in their mother tongue. In fact, this will create a challenge to learners to go beyond the sentence level; an exercise that stimulates learners' curiosity and motivation in their learning process. They will share and exchange their cultural beliefs and behaviors through content they are familiar with. Throughout the learning process, the educator will expose learners to a variety of topics and contexts. They will have to make presentations and use their personal experiences in their learning process. Consequently, this exchange will help them retrieve the rules they have learnt and integrate them in their ideas and discussions.

2.4.2 Ability to make links between what is known and what is learnt:

Generally, learners acquire knowledge through their learning process whether in a formal or an informal context. Moreover, learners have the ability to use the acquired knowledge and built up links with new learning situations. In other words, memory plays an important role in the learning process of learners, and each one will have a particular personal way to memorize. For example, some English grammar rules might have similar rules with another acquired language. In such case, the learner is able to make a comparison between the two languages, for instance the mother tongue and the second/foreign language, and come up with similarities and/or differences. From this point, it will be easier for the learner to remember it. Learners can learn a new rule based on the previous acquired knowledge. Moreover, when learning a new grammatical rule, learners are expected to transfer the idea learned to the specific context they are dealing with. Learners become more flexible in transferring knowledge that has been acquired previously to the one they are exposed to in a formal learning environment. Some observations have been made with EAP international learners, especially from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, regarding a few English and French borrowed words such as: “*décor*”, “*spare*” (when referring to time) and “*garçon*”. EAP learners use these words in their daily speech. Yet, some of them did not know that the word “*garçon*” is a French word. In fact, learners have always misinterpreted the meaning of these words. More details related to these examples will be given and discussed in chapter three.

2.4.3 Interaction/exchange:

It involves not only the educator and the learners but also the learners themselves under a specific content. These interactions take place through the different activities and tasks learners have to perform in the classroom. Moreover, the variety of the content should focus on different objectives set by the educator and cover the four skills. The content of what is learnt and the way individuals learn is linked to the social relationships which are built-up in the classrooms (Gutierrez *et al.*, 1995-a). The authors compare the classroom as a representation of the society which holds a dynamic system of relationships and structures. The interaction and the relationship between the educator, the learner and the learners is a small representation of the external world. In fact, the environment of the classroom mirrors the structure and power of relationships in society (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1993; Freire and Macedo, 1987; Giroux, 1988). In other words, the classroom environment becomes a smaller representation of the society where learners not only express themselves in the target language, but also exchange their thoughts, learning experiences and cultural beliefs. Those interactions help them discover new knowledge and different cultures through different angles. It is an opportunity to open new learning horizons and to be aware of other learners' culture. In fact, learners' involvement in the tasks and with the peers is very important in the classroom environment because all the learners will be in mutual knowledge exchange. However, it is also important to know that each one has a part of responsibility not only related to self-learning, but also to providing knowledge to the others. It is a "continuous attentive" that turns towards the other (Radford, 2011), a similar idea to what Bakhtin calls the question of answerability. Learners should, not only demonstrate their willingness to interact with their peers and collaborate in doing tasks altogether, but also show their part of responsibility in sharing the knowledge with others.

2.4.4 Thinking and language mastery:

Critical thinking and creativity are part and parcel of thinking. When doing their tasks, learners will collaborate with their peers in order to understand, explain, share and resolve the task. Learners will use their critical thinking to perform the task and provide a plan that helps them to do their work. Meanwhile, they will express themselves in the target language and use their

personal experience in delivering their thoughts to come across an answer to the question or a solution to the task. Most of the time, learners challenge is to reformulate their peers' ideas into their personal words. To explain more, the interaction between the learners will give them the opportunity to listen to the peers, agree or disagree with them and give one's opinion so as to convince them about the idea in a coherent way. Learners will be exposed to the target language through their learning process. They will practice the target language with their educator and peers and exchange with them. Moreover, language as one of the means of communication in the classroom environment will help learners express themselves, expose and share their ideas. For example, when doing their presentations learners will be asked to deal with a topic that they already know. This means that the learner is familiar with the content; however, the challenge is to make it understandable and clear to the peers and the educator with an awareness of the differences in the cultural aspects of the whole learning community.

2.4.5 Perform tasks and reformulate results (On personal wording):

There are many learning activities that EAP learners will be doing in the classroom with their peers or even at home. The objective of the activity may vary according to the course content. However, learners will be asked to perform some tasks such as: find the rules of grammar tenses from a series of examples or extract vocabulary words from texts and write meaningful sentences and paragraphs. This will help learners to practice the rules, infer from examples and build up their new knowledge. In other words, the work should be planned and organized so as to process the information and come up with a result which may change from one activity to another. They will be faced with different learning situations in which they have to reformulate what they have understood in their own words and interpret their understanding through concepts they know. Learners are expected to show their autonomy in choosing what to say and how to say it rather than bringing back what has been said by others. In some of the activities, the educator can give the learners a list of sentences in which each one contains a mistake. The mistake may vary from tense form, to tense use, to spelling mistakes or even word order. In such cases, learners will try to collaborate with the peers through work planning to resolve the task they have been assigned. In such activities, the learners will help each other based on the knowledge each one possesses. To add more, each "subject" will contribute to the learning of others.

2.4.6 Express one's opinions (Object and convince the peers):

Some learning activities need not only the learners' collaboration in the classroom, but also their sense of accepting the information or rejecting it. Learners will be exchanging thoughts and knowledge with the educator and the peers. However, disagreements might be observed in specific topics as each one might have his/her own opinion. This will help consolidate the learning process and the enhancement of participation. Disagreement may be the result of a difference in the learners' personal knowledge, behavior, beliefs or socio-cultural background. It concerns mainly the learners' ability to express their disagreement about an idea and have an argument so as to convince the interlocutor about it. Moreover, interlocutors communicate for different audiences i.e., educators, and peers, and for different purposes. Through various activities, learners will be exposed to contexts that help them take the initiative to participate in the classroom and improve their skills to reach their common purpose. What is more, taking such initiative will give opportunities to more collaboration and cooperation between the learners and enhance group work. Peers will share their knowledge and contribute to their learning process as a whole group.

2.4.7 Take the initiative to participate in the classroom:

Learners' behavior in the classroom may vary according to different factors, and not all learners participate in the classroom, which is due to many internal and external factors. Therefore, through group work and collaborative activities learners become more responsible and collaborative in the tasks. Giving such opportunities to the learners will help them communicate more and give them more chances to express their thoughts and ideas. For instance, let learners take the opportunity to start a task, decide to answer to the interlocutor, be active in discussions and provide help to the peers. Learners will be faced with more opportunities to learn from each other and to do the tasks in groups. Also, group work helps the whole participants to get involved in the tasks, improve in terms of language, knowledge and socio-cultural relationship. This exchange will allow the learners who know more to communicate their knowledge to those who know less. Through their activities, learners are divided into small groups, and involved in the

tasks, they may decide to divide the work into parts and give each learner one task to do. Somehow, each learner will have the responsibility of doing a task that helps another one to be achieved. This will give opportunity to work individually and collectively on a particular task to reach the same objective. Later the work will be gathered by the members of the group and shared with the rest of the class. Such opportunities open new ways of learning, thinking and enhancing learners' motivation in their learning process.

Those listed practices are the main components of the theory of objectification that is used in this research in the teaching and learning of international EAP learners. Speaking about this concept is referring to the construction of knowledge, of language which cannot be the product or the fruit of one's knowledge. Knowledge production is the work performed by others, by the interaction of the community of knowledge. To add more, Radford (2009) states that when the 'self' or the 'I' is in contact with the 'other', there is a necessary compromise that should take place from the one or the other. This compromise is to maintain the social relation. For example, when learners are doing a task each one has an idea to express, a point of view to give, or an argument to present. The exchange of idea and thoughts can be the same as it can be opposite since each individual has his/her own and personal way of thinking based on personal socio-cultural background. Therefore, the starting point of both parties will end up with an agreement that could be neither the initial idea of one nor the other (Radford, 2008; 2009). It is through being with the other, through interaction, and exchange that the construction of knowledge takes place. When learners have to do a task, they will have to work altogether. The way they will perform the task depends on their interaction with the peers and the ideas they exchange with each other. Moreover, when each one agrees and expresses his/her thoughts, therefore, there is a mutual interaction that takes place and new knowledge is constructed. There will be no possible distinctive way to identify what has come from the 'self' and what has come from the 'others' (Radford, 2009). Therefore, learners are encouraged to share their ideas, discuss with their peers, try to understand the other, and argue whenever they do not have the same ideas so as to construct new knowledge and avoid personal construction. The construction of new knowledge does not rely only on the linguistic aspect and exchange of words and ideas. The construction of knowledge is the result of a combination of language and gestures which take place in interactive

activities that make the learners' exteriorize their thought, a process of presenting their ideas to the external world and to the peers (Radford, 2006-b; 2008; 2012). Hence, this thought becomes a common thought (Radford, 2002; 2006-b; 2008; 2012); built-up through the various interactions between the peers in this common space called the classroom.

2.5 Conclusion

Learners' personal or professional needs are constantly changing and their requirements increase according to the aims and objectives they want to reach. Moreover, learners' background in any field such as: ASF, is varied and that is because they come from different disciplines of this field. International learners, more specifically EAP learners, are mostly, adults and their intrinsic motivation to learn content through language is justified by their personal purposes. Therefore, they are, if not all, autonomous in their desire to improve their level of English related to the field of study or work. In other words, to reach a certain level of competence, learners try to learn by themselves. This can be done through different strategies like reading specific texts, using different kinds of media, having access to new technology or simply discussing topics and issues with field related specialists.

The learner's autonomy in learning and acquiring knowledge may be successful, in a short time, but we cannot say that there is a place to communication since we do not really see interaction, exchange and share with the other members of the community. It is then; through the communicative approach as one of the many approaches used in the classroom environment that educators will base their teaching course. Through the activities, learners will not only exchange thoughts through the target language but also share their experiences. However, it should be highlighted that the communicative approach gives less importance to the "subject" and his/her interaction with others. The communicative approach helps learners explore their strategies and learn from each other. Yet, this approach does not raise the awareness of learners' responsibility and answerability. Through the different interactions taking place within the whole learning community, each participant plays an important role in the learning process of oneself, or the other.

From this perspective, I would like to explore more the socio-cultural aspect of learners in their learning process. Learners become autonomous once and collaborators other times. However, they should be aware that they have part of responsibility in exchanging their knowledge with the peers. The idea of cooperation with the members of the learning community has rewarding merits in terms of learning and communication. Yet, many other aspects should be considered. Therefore, the “*theory of objectification*” is a key element in this research. This theory considers learning as a social activity basically rooted into past historical tradition. Moreover, learning is an act of “*being*” (Radford, 2003; 2006-a; 2009) in which each learner has a place and a role to play within the learning community. Learners as social individuals, hold their cultural heritage and knowledge that they share with the peers and learn with them and from them. It is through this exchange of knowledge, share of ideas and awareness of the other that learning takes place within the whole community.

In the next chapter I will introduce the research problematic. I will present some of the difficulties faced in the teaching of EAP for international learners at Laurentian University and my contribution through Radford’s (2006-a) concept of “*Communitarian Self*”, which is one aspect of the theory of *objectification*. I will present a model that describes the communication process among the different participants, i.e. educator, learner and the peers. Chapter four will highlights more the “theory of *objectification*” and the importance of the socio-cultural aspect in the teaching and learning process within the learning community. It will also describe the data collection, its analysis and results.

CHAPTER 3

The Theoretical Framework: The Theory of *Objectification*

3.0 Abstract

International learners coming to Canadian schools find it difficult to cope with a North-American teaching/learning process and the socio-cultural environment, which is still unknown to them. The theoretical framework to which I resort this chapter offers a possibility to investigate the different interactions that take place between the members of the learning community and the role each one plays to share knowledge and exchange thoughts and ideas. Also, this framework takes into consideration the historico-socio-cultural background of the learners and provides researchers and teachers with elements to design teaching/learning activities with interactional opportunities and settings to enhance the students' learning.

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the theory of objectification. In particular, I dwell upon its concept of learning, which is considered as a social process in which learners become, progressively, conscious and aware about the encoded forms of thinking and doing. Within this theory the problems surrounding ESL appear through an emphasis on language as a subject-matter, the manner in which language is used, the cultural background of all participants, and the participants' awareness of responsibility, care and answerability towards the peers.

3.1 Introduction

Generally, learning a second or a foreign language has always been a challenge to learners and educators, more particularly to international learners. This challenge can be seen more when the target language is completely different from the mother tongue and when the socio-cultural environment is less known by different interlocutors. It is hard for learners to acquire a new language that conveys specific human attitudes in the practices that is used and that carries a different cultural heritage still unknown to them. In this dissertation, I am claiming that learning a language means more than mastering the grammatical structures and the acquisition of new vocabulary words. Whether learners and educators are aware of it or not, being conscious that culture is part and parcel of any language learning and teaching is important. In other words, learning/teaching a new language does not imply learning only the technicalities and the use of language, which constitutes in itself a big challenge, but also becoming acquainted with social practices it mediates, and knowing the culture in which language is embedded.

In this research I resort to an educational theory -the theory of *objectification*- where the emphasis is put, not only on language as the subject-matter, but also on the nature of the practices in which language is used and on the learners' socio-historico-cultural background. The aim of this chapter is to offer an overview of this theory, more specifically of three of its key concepts. The key concepts of the theory of *objectification* are: knowledge, knowing and learning (Radford, 2013). This theory offers both an *interpretative frame* which helps us to understand the teaching and the learning processes taking place among learners, and set of tools which helps to *design* teaching and learning activities for the learners. Through those designed activities, learning is promoted as a phenomenon that highlights its social and cultural dimensions.

The theory of *objectification* offers the basis for a new teaching approach in the field of English for Academic Preparation (EAP). Through this theory, more emphasis is put on understanding the learners' interactions in their learning processes, taking into consideration their social and

cultural dimensions. These interactions will be presented and discussed through selected activities I will describe in Chapter four. The way in which interaction is considered in this theory opens up new horizons to all participants. The classroom is considered as a space of interaction and subjective growth that helps the learners exchange knowledge, share their thoughts and take position among others. Moreover, the learning process is shared between all the members of the community, that includes: learners, educators and peers. Learning is considered in itself a social activity rooted into past historical traditions where learners try to give meaning to all what they are faced with. Within this context, learners as social individuals are expected to become aware of the others and responsible of the collective classroom merging knowledge that participants come to share with the peers. These aspects of learning are the main foundations of the theory of *objectification* that is used in this research.

This research is based on an ethnographic qualitative approach in which the main objective is focused on understanding the learning processes that are produced in the two teaching methods investigated, namely:

- a) the traditional teaching approach used in the EAP program and,
- b) the design of teaching/learning activities based on the ideas of the theory of *objectification*.

The main objective of this research is to understand the kinds of learnings that result in each one of the settings, the kinds of intellectual and subjective growth that the settings afford, promote and constraint. More details about the research design and methodology will be discussed in Chapter 4.

This chapter is divided into 5 sections that can be summarized as follows:

After this introductory section (Section 1), in section 2, I present the theory of *objectification* and its fundamental key concepts in teaching in general and consolidate my arguments with some examples from EAP classes. This section is divided into three sub-sections each one will deal with the principles of the theory of *objectification*.

Section 3 describes the concept of the “*Communitarian Self*” as a pedagogical idea of the theory to promote cultural subjectivities in the classroom. This concept appears as an appropriate avenue to investigate the question of language acquisition from this viewpoint. In section 4, I will summarize the various levels of interactions taking place within the learning community. Then I will be concluding the chapter in section 5.

3.2 The theory of *Objectification*

The theory of *objectification* conveys the idea that learning a language is not simply mastering its grammatical structure, enriching its vocabulary or speaking it fluently in order to communicate with others. Learning a language is after all an act of being-with-the others, going to them and participating in knowledge through symbols, communication, gestures, bodily language and different tools that help reach certain aims. Indeed, in the theory of *objectification*, learning is a social process in which the individual becomes progressively aware of the conceptual, cultural objects and systems of ideas (Radford, 2002; 2012).

The social process to which *objectification* refers is not individual (Radford, 2002; 2012). To explain more, it is not simply an interaction between learners who exchange thoughts and knowledge, it is rather the process of being invested in one's personal learning and the learning of others. In other words, in the course of learning, the social individual becomes more engaged and aware that his/her personal learning depends not only on him/her, but also on the interaction with others. It should be noted that in such process of learning, learners have to be aware and conscious that the collaboration and complete socialization within their environment are part of the learning process.

For example, when giving a task to learners, the role each individual will have is not only to perform the task, find the solution or give an accurate answer. In fact, the role is mainly learning to be with others, exchange with them and be open to listen to their opinions and understand their reasoning. In such context, the individual becomes totally engaged towards the peers (Radford, 2006-b; 2012). According to the author, when a learner is successful in answering a question, solving a problem, finding a solution or performing well in a task, yet he/she is not able to explain it, understand it or even be open to others' results and solutions, therefore he/she is half way of achieving a meaningful learning. This means that according to the theory of *objectification*, the success of learners is not only to produce a correct grammatical sentence or

give a correct answer, but also be able to understand its meaning and explain it to those who face difficulties to understand and to remain open to others' forms of understanding.

Moreover, through this theory learners become more responsible vis-à-vis the peers in performing tasks. In fact, this requires collaboration among the members of the learning community. The next sub-section highlights the link between *objectification* and collaboration.

3.2.1 Objectification and Collaboration

In other learning theories learning is considered as an individual rather than a collaborative task. Theories vary from teacher-center to learner-center. In both theories, the communication is mono-directional. For example, in teacher-center approach, communication is not really encouraged among learners. However, in approaches inspired by developmental psychology, communication may appear as a form of exchange between the learners.

In the theory of *objectification*, communication comes to the full because of the social nature of learning, but communication is not considered as a simple exchange of ideas. In the theory of *objectification*, learners work together rather than being competitive. Indeed, learning is related to a collaborative work in which individuals become aware of the difficulties their peers may encounter in their learning process, and the willingness to be engaged, attentive, and ready to help, answer, and explain. More explicitly, in group work activities, learners are expected to be fair in giving time for each one to understand the learners' cognitive process of each individual as it differs. The learners are expected to be ready to explain to those they have difficulties to grasp the meaning and understand the task to do. In such interaction, social relations take place and cultural backgrounds will come into surface as learners make sense of the situation at hand.

It should be noted that in some cases and even if learners are engaged in the task, they feel unable to express their ideas through a foreign language. Therefore, other strategies are used to express, shape and clarify the ideas. In this stage of the learning process, learners have recourse to the bodily, instrumental and symbolic dimension in their *objectification* processes (Radford, 2002; 2012).

In the next sub-section, I will explain how gestures can be a communication tool in the learning process and its link to *objectification* theory.

3.2.2 Objectification and Gestures

In some other teaching/learning and cognitive approaches, gestures are seen as by-product of communication. They are not given essential importance in the learning process. Gestures being considered as bizarre behavior are present when learners communicate their ideas, explain and illustrate their thoughts with examples.

According to the theory of knowledge and objectification, gestures and language are constitutive parts of the learners' thoughts. According to Radford (2002; 2012) the use of simultaneous semiotic systems helps learners to express, understand and explain their ideas. Hence, particular interest should be given to the use of gestures that learners use in their learning process and context (Radford, 2002; 2012).

Radford (2008; 2012) illustrated this idea through an activity where one learner was using gestures and that the peers were trying to interpret those gestures into words. It should be noted that some learners face some difficulties to express themselves, and they may use gestures or other strategies to shape and communicate their ideas.

However, the socio-cultural background of learners can be an obstacle in using or understating gestures and other signs. In some cultures, gestures are more used than others and their meaning differ from one cultural background to another, for example in most cultures nodding the head from right to left means that the person is saying “no”, but shaking the head from up to down meaning “yes”. However, in other cultures, like the Bulgarian, it is the opposite. In such situations a misunderstanding takes place. Other tools used by learners can be through drawings, metaphors, analogies and so on, this is what Radford (2002; 2012) calls the “*semiotic means of objectification*”. The author states that these tools are used intentionally by the learners in order to achieve their goals. In fact, when learners are engaged in learning activity, they make use of all their skills to attain the goal of the activity, and this is an example of *objectification* in which the mediated and “*re-flexive*” efforts of learners are joined together for reaching the same goal (Radford, 2002; 2012).

In fact, the gestures are socially and culturally constructed and their use within a learning community may facilitate the knowledge objectification. In the next sub-section I will discuss how learning is a socio-cultural construction based on a process of reflection and action.

3.2.3 Objectification and Learning

Knowledge is not something that learners construct, nor something that they receive from the teacher. As stated by Radford (2013), who follows Hegel’s dialectical materialism, knowledge cannot be considered as a thing or a static object; knowledge is rather a cultural potentiality, something virtual, that students actualize. In fact, learners evolve in the process of learning towards the targets fixed by the curriculum and the educator. Indeed, knowledge is a movement of forms mediated by the socio-historico-cultural dimension of individuals. Language is knowledge. For a beginner who starts learning English, for instance, English is pure possibility. Those possibilities allow learners to communicate and think through English. By engaging with English through socio-cultural activities, the learner actualizes some aspects of the language (e.g. uses of tense-verbs, etc.) and knowing may become possible. Therefore, knowledge is not

something that individuals construct or receive, but rather a process in which the learners come to participate. As highlighted by Radford (2013, p.10), knowledge is movement; it is “*an ensemble of culturally and historically constituted embodied processes of reflection and action*”. The author illustrates his idea through an example of chimpanzees cracking nuts for eating, as in **Figure 3.1**.



Figure 3.1: Chimpanzee’s nuts cracking (Source, Radford, 2013, p. 11)

The process of cracking the nuts goes through the following five steps: a) picking up the nut, b) putting the nut into a particular surface, c) holding a stone used as a hammer, d) hitting the nut with the hammer stone, and d) eating the kernel from the cracked nut (Radford, 2013). It might seem easier when imagining or watching a chimpanzee doing those actions. However, this process of taking a nut, choosing the right stone, hitting the nut in a certain place and getting the kernel is a long process which may take 3 to 7 years for the chimp infant to learn it. Indeed, to be successful in such action young chimps observe attentively how their mother does it, and then they try to do it by themselves. In their process of trying to hit the nut, young chimps do not really understand from the beginning the objective of the process and they might not do it in the same steps listed above. In fact, the process of performing the five steps is not necessary linear. This example illustrates the idea of knowledge which is here to know how to crack a nut.

In the same context, I would like to refer to another example concerning Killer whales, which are known of being excellent hunters. They are the largest predator of the dolphin family and their prey range is very wide, including fish, seals, and whales. Moreover, Killer whales are known as social animals. They live in stable family-related groups and mother-whales are known of their high care regarding their offspring. Female Killer whales are very protective of their young and they can be recognized well as their young is always close to them. Every year, the killer whales return to the same place where the seals begin to swim in shallow water. They know their place and use their strategies to hunt and teach them to the young ones. During the first year, the calves observe and learn from the mother the techniques and strategies for hunting.

Female whales know how to hunt the seals and they take their time to choose the appropriate moment to catch them, their strategy goes through the following steps: a) they know that seals swim in shallow water, so they make an ambush and keep waiting for the seal to come to the shallow water, b) the female whale assesses the height of the waves, the depth of the water and the effect of the tides. The seals cannot perform such assessment. All those assessments will help the female whale to maximize her hunting, while a bad decision might get her stuck in the basin. So the female whale waits until the unaware seal decides to move from its platform and c) she starts to swing her body to produce waves in the hope of dislodging the seal off his place, and out of the shallow water. The female killer whale is the only mammal that had learned to hunt seals in that way. The techniques and hunting strategies are taught to the calves that are always close to the mother and observe the way of hunting. It is the struggle between predator and prey that also generates extraordinary strategies and which seems so evident, but it does take longer time for the calves to learn it and start using it. Especially, when they have to assess the water's waves, the depth and the tides. This technique constitutes crystalized knowledge in a sequence of actions.

This knowledge, of nut cracking or hunting seals, is not merely natural phenomenon, but a set of cultural codified ensemble of actions, of ways of doing, of performing tasks that is learned at a

certain time. To explain and develop more this idea of learning, I will illustrate the process of learning a foreign or second language in the next sub-sections.

3.2.3.1 The General, the Particular and the Singular

Following Hegel's dialectic, Radford (2013) presents a figure where the mediation, through learning activities, between knowledge and knowing/learning is important and fundamental. In fact, knowing/learning occurs by a reflective awareness of the actualization of knowledge. The relationship between the general (knowledge), the particular (activity) and the singular or the individual (knowing) can be summarized in **Figure 3.2** as follows:

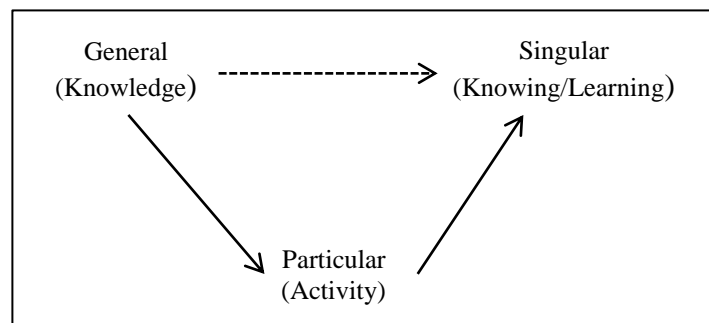


Figure 3.2: Relationship between the general, the singular and the particular

To explain more this relationship between the general, the particular and the singular, I will start by giving a definition of those elements and illustrate their relationship with the example of the chimp's nut cracking mentioned earlier and an example in teaching languages, in general. Later in this section I will give a more specific example that I observed thought a grammar lesson in which learners were asked to make negative sentences and ask questions.

To go forward in explaining the figure, let us give a brief definition of the indicated three elements as follows:

- **Knowledge** is something general, “*culturally codified forms of doing, thinking and reflecting*” (Radford, 2013). For instance, in the nut-cracking example, the chimps’ actions are historically codified forms of behaving and performing the actions in a certain way. The mother chimp knows how to deal with those steps for a successful result. She knows that a smaller stone will not hit well the nut, and holding the nut in a certain position will not help either.

In the case of teaching languages, an example of knowledge, is the general pattern of how to make a simple sentence, for example, Subject + Verb or Subject + Verb + Object, and the different changes that some verbs may take in different contexts, for instance verbs in the present simple do not change form except for the third person singular which takes “*s*”, or verbs used in the past simple take “*ed*” if they are regular verbs and change the form if they are irregular verbs.

- **Knowing/Learning**, is the singular that is an actualization of knowledge through an activity of mediation (particular). Knowing/learning for the chimps is the reflexive awareness of the different steps that the mother was following to eat the kernel. Of course, in the case of chimps it is hard to memorize the 5 steps and be successful, but they are observing and becoming aware about those nut-cracking steps.

In teaching/learning languages, knowing/learning is, for instance, the manner in which a general linguistic structure becomes actualized and understood by the learners for a general linguistic structure. For example, improving vocabulary, using the simple past tense, or the continuous, using the active or passive form of sentences or a type of conditional; first, second or third.

- **The particular** is the activity of mediation between the general and the singular. For example, the particular is the time when the mother chimp is doing the actions of nut cracking and that the little chimps are observing her. In this activity, there is a set of actions that the mother follows, and a process of observation that the chimps are doing to learn from her how to crack the nut and get the kernel to eat. Through those processes, there is an indirect communication between the mother and the chimps. Also, imitating the mother in cracking the nut will not be a successful task for the little ones from the first trial. Their learning process will take times and go through different steps, for example, know how to hold the nut, what kind of stone to choose and how to hit the nut.

For learning/teaching languages, the particular is the activity that learners have to perform in order to learn a linguistic concept of a language. According to the level of the learners, the educator will choose the appropriate activity and give the learners the tasks to do. Learners are expected to have a minimum knowledge of the language which constitutes the general. This latter is mediated through an activity which takes place among the learning community. In fact the language used is English. It is the medium of instruction and the means of communication. In a nutshell, I refer here to the English language as a second or foreign language used among EAP learners. The ‘only’ language used in the classroom. However, the difference lies in the activities where learners will have to perform with the peers.

Through selected activities in the classroom, learners develop different learning strategies and make links between their previous knowledge and the knowledge of the peers. When learning a language, learners learn how to build up simple or complex sentences, ask questions, use negative responses, conjugate verbs in the appropriate tense, be aware of the sentence structure and parts of speech and all the necessary changes that are needed. What is more, learners come to their English classes with their own codified forms of thinking and learning. Their socio-cultural background is refined according to the activity they are faced with.

The next sub-section will illustrate how *objectification* occurs in learning through two examples used in the classroom environment with EAP learners.

3.2.3.2 Objectification of New Grammatical Structures

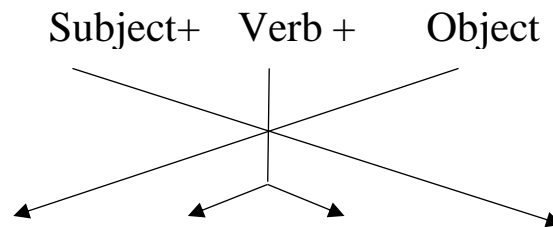
As mentioned previously, it is through a designed activity that knowledge will be mediated and learning may occur. This step is characterized by using the general rule into a specific context. Learners will apply the grammatical rule or a combination of rules to answer the question. For instance, making an affirmative sentence necessitates the combination of a subject, and a verb or a subject, a verb and an object. Learners require some knowledge about the sentence structure, and the right form of the verb, which constitute their general knowledge that they have already learnt in the past. Yet, in producing the correct affirmative sentence, which is the singular, learners are expected to know the order of words which should apply in the sentence. This process is called the instantiation or the actualization of knowledge. In other words, it is a rule or an idea that learners actualize through a particular activity. A process in which the general appears into the singular thought the particular (Radford, 2013). Learners' awareness evolves from something abstract to something more concrete by performing an activity.

With a different variety of activities, different learning processes result. Language, as general, remains the same, yet its appearance through the mediation activity is different and so the learners' awareness and consciousness of the target linguistic knowledge. More importantly, learning becomes consubstantial and depends on the quality of the selected activity that the educator defines for a specific learning objective. More details about the design of activities and their refinement will be discussed in Chapter four.

a) Active and Passive Sentences:

For the time being, let us note that one activity used with EAP learners concerned the passive form. Previously, the educator gave a course about the difference between the passive and the active sentences, the context each one is used in and the necessary changes that occur in each one. The learners were hence aware of the rules and based on that general knowledge, they were aware that the “Subject” of the active becomes the “Object” of the passive and the “Object” of the active becomes the “Subject” of the passive.

Active sentence:



Passive sentence:

Subject+ (To be + Past Participle) + Object

In this example, the learners’ participation in the activity is characterized by the learners’ awareness of the rules they had learnt in the lecture the day before about the structure of the active form. Then the changes that the verb requires, to make a passive sentence. This means the use of the auxiliary “to be” in the same tense of the verb in the active sentence and the past participle of the verb. In other words, learners will go into a process of *Objectification* through the activity to come up with individual examples while they interact with the peers and the educator.

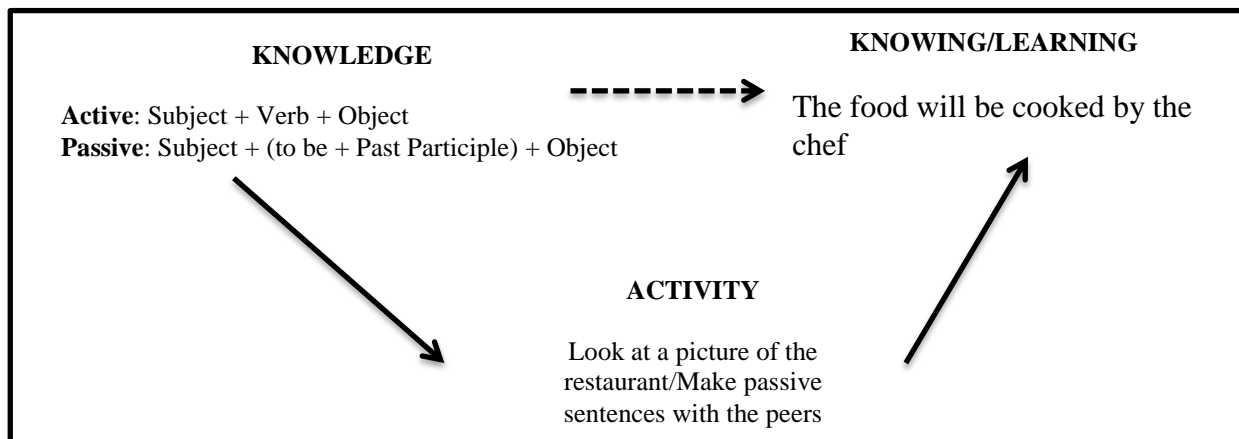


Figure 3.3: Objectification through a passive/active voice example

- The particular is the activity in which learners had to make examples and questions. Learners were invited to see a picture of a restaurant, to look at the actions happening and to make sentences in the passive. The aim was to give a description of the actions using the passive voice.

Among the examples there were the two following ones:

- a) “*The food will be cooked by the chef*” and,
- b) “*The picture will be hang ... on the wall... by?*”.

The first sentence is correct as the rules were respected and the verb form is correct. Learners knew how to formulate a sentence in the passive voice and were successful; however, the second example is not clear. Learners wanted to describe a frame that was hang on the wall, and when making the sentence, they had the feeling that the sentence was not correct. They were able to identify the wrong meaning, but found it difficult to explain it. They ended up by translating it into their mother tongue to have an idea and there was the answer to their questions.

This example is a concrete product that learners came up with from the instantiation of the English grammar knowledge. They moved from the general knowledge which grouped all the different historical and cultural codified forms of thinking and doing, and among them the grammatical rules of English language that they actualized it through the activity which required a specific rule of the passive voice. This step is seen as being an acquisition of reality into the activity which later leads to a concrete image or a tangible example. This latter can be observed when learners extract the rules, apply them into a particular context and come up with a concrete example which constitute their individual example.

To perform such activity, learners were interacting among themselves. This interaction created a relationship between them and they were engaged in the activity through a form of knowledge that is socially and historically constituted. Learners were expected to go back to the past knowledge on which they base their perception of the task, build up their arguments and construct their answers to share with the peers. As explained earlier, when asking learners to make sentences in the passive form, I expected them to be aware of the sentence structure, the parts of speech and all the necessary changes that the verb form may require.

- The singular: the examples given by the learners are the result of the actualization of the knowledge of the passive form rules through the activity. Through the mediating activity (questions, interaction with the peers) learners became conscious of the fact that in some cases the passive form was not possible from an active sentence. They became aware of new language forms of structure that they were not familiar with yet.

Admittedly, in example b) learners were not able to explain that difficulty in terms of grammatical structure, but they were aware that the “Object” of the active could not be the “Subject” of the passive. In this process, I am referring to the *Objectifying* dimension taking place among learners. In such situation, I believe that learners reach a certain level of learning

and understanding that they will be able to use in contexts outside the classroom. In other words, when they will be reading or producing a document or when they will be reporting an action or an event, they will be able to use one form of a sentence or the other depending on the importance of the event itself.

This example is taken from one of the activities used in this research. Through those learning activities the teaching and learning processes were investigated through the key concepts of the theory of *objectification*. As this theory suggests, learning is a social process in which learners become progressively conscious and aware about the encoded form of thinking and doing. Generally, through their exposure to different activities and the exchange with the peers the “in itself” knowledge (the cultural knowledge) is transformed to the “for itself” the cultural knowledge as seen, experienced and lived by the learners. On one hand, the “in itself” knowledge is the form of cultural encoded forms of action and reflection that before instruction starts, remain without being noticed by the learners. On the other hand, the “for itself” knowledge is the actualization of the ‘in itself’ knowledge. In fact, this process is characterized by a process of consciousness of what was not noticed. Indeed, this transformation is what Radford (2013) calls *objectification*.

This process of actualizing knowledge was described through the examples that I presented earlier, in this section, in which learners progressively moved from a general form of doing and thinking to acquire a reality through particular activities. In fact, it is the process where the learners become progressively conscious of the rules they are supposed to apply in order to actualize knowledge. The exchange between the learners help them acquire familiarity with the target knowledge, but would often require the educator’s intervention to ask questions, give explanations, provide feedback and make learners more active. So through a specific context learners were exposed to an activity in which general knowledge was mediated by the particular and resulted in a singular which was the production of a meaningful sentence in the passive voice. *Objectification* through this transformation of the student’s consciousness occurs.

b) Negative Sentences and Questions:

Without entering, at this point, into a discussion about the methodological details about the data collection and analysis (which will be addressed in Chapter 4), let us illustrate this relationship through another example in (to which I will refer to in the following chapter) which international learners may have difficulties in their learning process and the actualization of codified forms of language, thinking and talking in the target language related to a grammar activity. This activity is related to making negative sentences and asking questions in English. Let us take one example which deals with making a negative sentence as follows:

Negative sentence: Subject + **Auxiliary Verb** + ‘**not**’ + Verb in the infinitive

The rules show that the auxiliary verb is used in making a negative sentence and in a question. Moreover, the verb used in both of them has to be in the infinitive. So to teach learners these rules, the educator started by writing the following affirmative sentence on the board: “I speak English”. Learners were asked to identify the words in the sentence by underlining the verb. Then, the educator asked them how to put this affirmative sentence into a negative one. Most of the answers were as follows: “I **not** speak English” or “I **no** speak English”.

From these examples, learners were not aware of the grammatical structures of the target language. So, to help them find the correct form, the educator invited them for a discussion about the rules, about how to make a negative sentence. Yet, learners could not understand why their examples were false.

The educator wrote the rule on the board just above the example of the learners. Also, the educator used three different colors: a) the color red to write ‘auxiliary verb’, b) the color green to write ‘not’, and c) the other words were written in white. Then, the educator asked the learners to indicate how those colored words were represented in their examples. Doing that, learners become aware, progressively, that their examples were missing one word. Through this strategy,

they got engaged and became conscious of other forms of learning that were taking place. In other words, they could notice that the word missing is the auxiliary.

Of course, at the beginning learners find it hard to understand the use of the auxiliary because they do not have equivalent grammatical forms of the auxiliary in their language and culture. In the Arabic grammar there is no auxiliary verb and the formation of negative sentences or questions are made differently. Hence, learners' actualization of the linguistic knowledge is challenging in terms of finding a relationship between their general and the singular they are faced with. The rule of adding the auxiliary in a negative sentence or in a question where it should be is a form of modifying their previous knowledge. In fact, the possibility of actualizing knowledge and modifying it is considered as a form of learning: here the awareness of new forms of understanding, reflection and action. This example shows that learners might be faced with a situation that makes their learning process harder and challenging, but not impossible.

3.2.4 Subjectification

Generally speaking, the process of *objectification* cannot occur without the process of *subjectification*. In *subjectification* the learner positions him/herself as an individual within the activity that he/she is subject to and has to share with others. The process of *subjectifying* is a contextual process. It deals with the way each individual is trying to position him/herself in relation to the peers, within the learning community, and to knowledge.

There are many dimensions that could be listed to explicitly show the process of *subjectification* among learners, especially when the cultural differences among the learners and their learning environment is referred to. The process of *subjectification* is very cultural and through this dimension I would like to emphasize that learning a language does not simply refer to knowing its

individual technicalities and mastering it. Learning is also the subjective positioning of the learner in a social practice.

When taking a position, this position of course is relative to cultural categories. We tend to base our understanding upon categories that belong to Western culture and that this culture considers as valid and valuable. Consequently, those cultural categories can go against the forms of subjectivity that can exist in the learners' culture of origin. This difference may create some barriers and tensions in their state of being with others and their learning process. Naturally, this dialectic and tension among the learners is there and should be investigated and explained. In other words, the way learners learn, behave, think, and feel cannot be dissociated from their sociocultural background (Radford, 2013).

I will present one example of *subjectification* through one of the activities used in this research. The activity was related to forming sentences in the second conditional. Learners were given a list of unfinished sentences in the second conditional and they had to finish the missing part. Each learner had to give the verb in the correct form in a meaningful context. For example learners had the following parts: "If I looked like a model, I ...", or "If I had a million dollar, I ...". In this activity learners were engaged in performing the task and challenging each other in their examples. The group was composed of Saudi Arabian learners; they were all from the same cultural background. Among them there were three males and one female. The female learner was playing an important leadership role who used different means to explain the structure of the second conditional to the other learners who faced difficulties. This is not a common practice as most of the time Saudi female learners are shy.

The Saudi female learner wanted to give her example related to the sentence: "If I looked like a model, I would ...". She hesitated a lot before giving the sentence in the second conditional, but the peers were encouraging her to start. She wanted to make it clear to the peers that it was just

an example because she was worried about the cultural misinterpretation towards herself. She ended up by saying:

- “If I looked like a model, I would eat out with handsome man”.

When the example was given, the peers were silent. They did not say anything and the female learner wanted to do something to change that strange feeling. She wanted to position herself in a different context, so she added that her sentence was correct, and the form of the verb was right. She repeated that her example was grammatically correct. In fact she wanted to justify herself by convincing the peers that this example does not reflect her behavior. She wanted to attract the peers’ attention towards the form, to put the focus on it and not on the content of it. There was a kind of judgment from the peers and she did not want to be associated with that.

Culturally speaking Saudi girls are not allowed to go out with male friends or to date someone and go to eat out with. The only male people they can be with are; the father, the brother or the husband. Therefore, when the female learner gave the example that she would eat out with a man, the peers were surprised if not culturally chocked. Even if it was an example, it seemed hard for the Saudi learners to accept the idea expressed by the female learner because it is not part of their cultural beliefs. From a cultural perspective, Saudi learners are more conservative and do not mix with the opposite sex.

This example might not have the same impact on those learners if it was coming from any international learner not belonging to the same cultural background. If compared to the Western World, this form of practice is much acceptable and perceived than among Saudi people. The process of *subjectification* in this part reflected the manner in which the female learner positions herself in performing the activity via-à-vis the other learners is shaped, afforded and constrained by the cultural forms of being. The female learner was knowledgeable in terms of using the rule

of the second conditional and helped learners in performing the activity. She succeeded in providing learners with various examples of verb forms and tenses to help them understand how to make a correct sentence in the second conditional. She was very engaged in the activity and dedicated. However, the random choice of the example made her in an uncomfortable situation towards the peers. Male learners had different attitudes when she gave the example. Culturally speaking, they could not make a distinction between the example and her. The female learner gave a correct form of sentence, and even if the rule of using the second conditional refers to impossible situations, which definitely was the case of the female learner's example, the male learners were culturally offended and had a judgmental behavior towards her. The female noticed that and she explained to them that it was just an example. She did not want to be judged and she insisted on the fact that it was 'just' an example. Meaning she did not have to be associated to it.

The learning environment as the social space in which learners meet with the peers, exchange their knowledge and are engaged in doing the tasks and behave openly to others, is a social process culturally mediated. Learners develop their strategies and tools which emerge from their social and cultural heritage. In those situations, interaction is seen between the subject and the object. That the main actors are the learners and the peers, but what is the role of the educator? I will answer this question in the following sub-section.

3.2.5 The Role of the Educator

The theory of *objectification* does not conceive the educator as the provider of knowledge. Of course, the educator is present in the classroom, but he/she is not the only holder of knowledge. The educator is part of the learning activity through which learners become aware of their cultural knowledge and the one of the peers. In the theory of *objectification* the educator is not conceived as the only social individual to explain the lesson and assign tasks. He is neither perceived as a moderator, a listener or a helper. The educator is also a participant in the activity to the same extent as learners in becoming aware of their cultural knowledge. Of course, the educator has more profound cultural knowledge, but he cannot be in this dynamics on his own.

The question of *objectification* can be compared to dancing. For example, someone can be a good dancer; a professional dancer who has the skills of dancing and doing it in a gracious and rhythmic way. However, he/she cannot inject those artistic skills on someone who is learning to dance. The professional dancer teaching the learner how to dance should participate in doing or showing the steps. In other words, the teacher should “dance” with the learner so that learning happens.

Also, the role of the educator is to “*incite*” the learner who has succeeded in doing a task, to help the one who finds it difficult. For example, inviting one learner to explain to another the way he answered the question or the reason he used one specific rule instead of another or one specific tense and verb form. In such case, the educator will not give his/her explanation to the “weaker” learner, but create opportunities for learners to interact with each other. This strategy will not only enhance interaction between the peers, but will give them more chances to communicate, argue, listen to the others, be with them and get engaged.

Another example that reflects the educator’s role in the classroom is also related to the choice of the tasks. Of course, when choosing one activity among many others, the educator has to focus on specific goals to reach. In other words, when an educator gives a task to the learners to do it; they are expected to know what to do; to know what they are asked to do. However, the educator will not tell them how to do it, but rather watch the learners how they deal with the task and come up with the answer. The educator is the only one who decides when is best time to intervene, mostly when the learners face difficulties to go forward in doing the task. The intervention may be in a form of questions about what they are doing or what they are willing to do. Also, learners may be asked to help the peers and explain to them. In such situation, learners will use their personal strategies cope with the task.

By being part of the learning process in classroom interaction, the educator does contribute to the learners' awareness towards cultural knowledge. The learning process is a form of being, sharing and familiarizing oneself with new ways of reflection and action. In the next section, I will develop more this idea through the concept of the “*Communitarian Self*” which is a pedagogical idea of the theory of *objectification*.

3.3 “*Communitarian Self*” Concept and its Implications

Radford (2006-a) has introduced the concept of “*Communitarian Self*” which stresses the idea that learning is the formation of subjectivities and promotes forms of ethical conducts that guide social interaction and values. Within this context, the classroom is conceived as a learning community where the learners work together and each member has his/her own place in the community, is respected and respects the other learners' values. Being a member of the same community means also sharing the same objectives and be involved in classroom tasks with other learners.

Communication is an essential element in the construction of the “*Communitarian Self*”. Considering it as a pedagogical approach in the teaching process, it will be integrated within this research. Radford (2006-a) lists four paramount elements in classroom interaction that educators could be encouraged to serve as the basis for the creation of a social and responsible consciousness. These elements are as follows:

- a) learn to be attentive to other learners' remarks and perspectives,
- b) interpret in a responsible way other learners' arguments,
- c) have a critical evaluation of others' arguments (going deeper or refuting them), and
- d) express appropriate arguments in a given situation using concepts and symbols socially and culturally relevant.

Through the “*Communitarian Self*” concept, the learner is encouraged to listen to the peers, learn to give them time to express their opinions, ideas and arguments, interact with them and give more insights to the activities and tasks. This collaboration contributes to the learners’ understanding and learning and permits critical thinking and knowledge adjustment so that knowledge is shared within and between the members of the learning community.

Communication and learning are inter-related. According to Radford and Demers (2004), the kind of communication that underpins the “*Communitarian Self*” has to fulfill different requirements. The communication has to promote a deep understanding of the target language. In order to achieve this, the authors propose four different learning strategies. Firstly, interaction in the classroom may be performed through small groups of learners working on specific tasks given by the educator. Secondly, interaction may be processed the same way, but ends up with a discussion directed by the educator to make learners exchange their results and compare them. Thirdly, interactions between groups of learners in which they formulate hypotheses, test, evaluate and report them in writing. Lastly, the last strategy is hybrid of the ones I have just listed. In other words, interaction in the last strategy is found at different steps. The interaction is done within different groups of learners, with the learners of the same group and the educator. In doing so, the learner increases his conceptual level and cooperates with the others to perform the task and reach the learning objectives.

The objective of those learning strategies is to make learners socially interacting and sharing their points of view and express their arguments in order to perform the task. The learning is a process through which the learners express their values based on their culture and beliefs. Activities may vary from a mathematics problem to a grammar exercise or a scientific experimentation. What is more, the choice of the strategy and the allocated tasks depend on the level of learners and their background in the subject-matter (Radford and Demers, 2004). Generally, when learners have a high level, they are more competitive communicator, at least in

the mother tongue. Also, the learner's level of socialization and cognitive development are to be considered in the learning strategies (Radford and Demers, 2004).

In the next section I will present a figure which describes the different interactions taking place in a classroom environment where participants communicate within its socio-cultural community.

3.4 Various Levels of Interactions

This research is meant to resort the theory of *Objectification* and the application of the “*Communitarian Self*” Concept which focuses on the different interactions taking place in the classroom environment with an emphasis on the historico-socio-cultural aspects of the entities involved in learning and their awareness of others and their contribution in their learning. The proposed **Figure 3.4** describes the various interactions between the three participating actors in the communication and learning within the learning community.

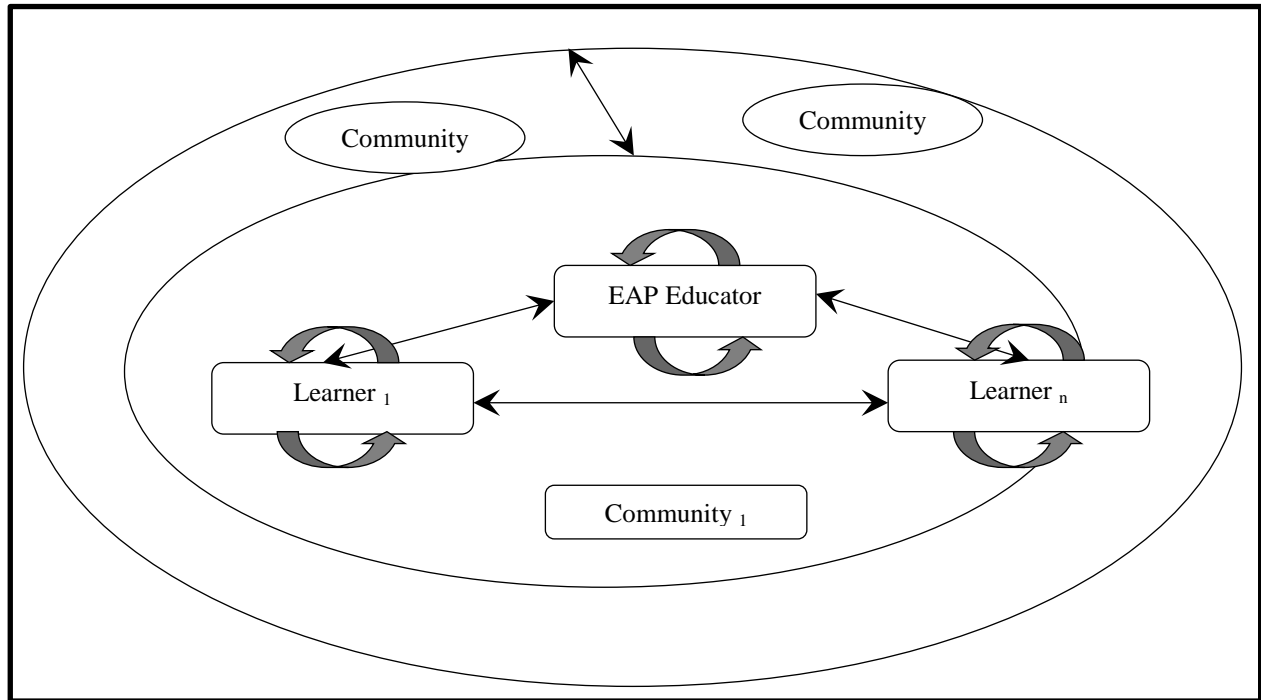


Figure 3.4: Communication and learning within a socio-cultural community

The three entities are the EAP educator, Learner₁, and Learner_n (which constitute the peers). They all belong to the same learning community that is the classroom environment (i.e. Community₁). Within this learning community, there are six interactions. These interactions involve the collaboration of three entities and the three remaining ones are self-directed interactions. This term will be used to refer to the interactions with oneself.

Let us start with the first kind of interactions. First of all, the EAP educator is at the top of the figure because he/she is the first actor in the target language delivery. The EAP educator is the one who sets up the objectives of the course and delivers its content. He/she decides about what content to give in the classroom and what activities to do. The EAP educator interacts with the Learner₁ and with Learner_n, and the whole group. Then, there is Learner₁ and Learner_n. These three entities and their mutual interactions form the learning community.

Through course delivery, the educator addresses the content to the whole class, but at the same time through individual questions asked by the learners, the educator adjusts the teaching strategy according to the needs expressed by Learner₁, in particular, and Learner_n, in general. The question-answer times foster the interactions between Learner₁, Learner_n, and the educator. However, this may happen mostly with extroverted learners than introverted ones. This will create a misbalance in the learning process in the classroom. Therefore, I believe that interaction between the learners and the community is the next important interaction in the figure. The collaboration between the learner and his peers will make the whole community participate. In some cases, learners would feel more confident to exchange thoughts and opinions with their peers than with the educator. The educator may be regarded as a controller and some learners may not be at ease to express themselves. It is a way to escape from being corrected in case they make mistakes. Of course not all learners behave in the same way.

The three interactions relating the EAP educator, Learner₁, and Learner_n, within the same learning community are bidirectional. Each entity interacts with one another in both directions. Each one learns from the other and it is not only the educator who should be regarded as the only “*Knower*”. Exchanging thoughts, sharing opinions and producing knowledge in a socio-cultural environment constitutes the main focus through this figure. What is more, each component of this figure contributes to ones’ personal learning process. In other words, the three participants learn by, not only, interacting with others, but also interacting with oneself. This self-interaction constitutes the three remaining interactions of the figure.

For example, the EAP educator as the person who holds knowledge and shares it with the whole learning community learns from the others. At the same time, the educator learns by himself. Knowledge acquisition takes place through the contact with other individuals or with oneself. Regarding the learner, his/her interaction with the educator allows him/her to learn new concepts, new rules and be able to do activities. Meanwhile, interacting with the other peers contributes to learn more, and share knowledge which is important for the learning process as a whole and for all. The learner will benefit from the community knowledge, culture and

experience, and will be engaged in shaping knowledge to others which will facilitate communication in the field of study.

Interaction taking place in the classroom environment between all the participants of the learning community will contribute to the learning of each part. It is not only the educator who is the provider of knowledge, but learners can share their thoughts and experiences with the educator and the other peers, especially, when the cultural issue is concerned. In other words, the more we know the more ignorant we discover we are. This means that anyone possessing the ability of a better understanding and knowledge of particular topic, concept, thought or process than someone else is, according to Vygotsky, the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO). The MKO is not necessarily the educator, but can be the learner as far as he/she possesses a higher level of ability than others, especially when it comes to cultural issues. Furthermore, it is expected from this MKO to have a certain responsibility to share and explain to his/her learning community and make sure the message has been understood.

Any learner should always have in mind the other learners (or peers). It is his/her responsibility as a learner to act and assume the consequences of his/her own act. In other words, when acting in a particular context, the learner should respect his/her values and those of the others. Gutierrez *et al.* (1995) believe that when an individual becomes a member of a “*community of practice*” there are steps in which he/she develops particular identity and mode of behavior. Learners should be aware that learning by themselves and sharing with the others is also another form of learning. Each one becomes responsible of what to say, how to say it and to whom he/she addresses this knowledge. This awareness makes learners having more duty towards the others. This latter is one of the many components of the theory of *Objectification* that this research project emphasizes on with EAP international learners.

The remaining interactions between Learner₁-Learner_n, and Learner_n-EAP educator will help the learner to develop learning strategies. The learners learn by themselves by incorporating or

transferring what they have learnt around them. The learners are interrelated to their social environment. They co-exist and each one's action has meaning with respect to the other (Rogoff, 1990).

Interactions between the three entities shown and described in the figure contribute to the learning of the educator and the learners. This means that when the learner interacts with the educator he/she will learn from him/her, and the educator learns from the learners as well. The EAP educator does benefit from the different interactions taking place in the classroom. Of course, this depends on the topics and the discussions held in class. From a socio-cultural point of view, all entities will learn from each other at different levels, as they belong to different cultural and educational backgrounds. They share their knowledge and experiences and benefit from them mutually. Moreover, learning takes place not only when there is an interaction with a second or third party, but also within the self.

3.5 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to provide a framework of the theory of objectification and an illustration of the “Communitarian Self” concept as an idea to be applied in the teaching and learning or EAP. The learning is an aggregation of subjectivities that promote different forms of ethical conducts based on historico-social interactions and value systems.

Learning is an act of being (Radford, 2003; 2006-a; 2009) which takes place through interaction, exchange and share with the peers in their learning contexts. These are the basic foundation of the “*Communitarian Self*” concept which constitutes one of theory's ideas in order to promote cultural subjectivities in the learning environment.

Also, this process of learning is set through the “*theory of objectification*” which conceptualises thought as being “*sensible*” and “*historical*” (Radford, 2002; 2006-b; 2008; 2012). According to the author, this concept refers to thought as being fundamentally related to the individual’s ideas, gestures, signs, artefacts and way of understanding. These elements are the different parts that contribute to construct the thought. However, thought is also a “*social practice*” in which the individual goes beyond his/her thought in acquiring and learning with his/her constitutive elements. Learners are expected to get more involved and responsible in performing the tasks through the various activities performed in class. Moreover, learners and EAP educator should be aware of the socio-cultural aspect of the whole members, as all learners come from different foreign countries. It should be noted that each learner might have had a different educational system where he/she has developed specific behavior, and cultural beliefs. In other words, the EAP educator should be ready to act as a learner him/herself when it comes to topics or subjects in which the “*Knower*” can be the learner.

More explicitly, through the proposed theory, the process of learning takes place within the whole community. Indeed, it is challenging for learners as I assume they will be given more duties to perform tasks, and more responsibilities in sharing personal knowledge or experiences, and criticizing their peers. Learners should be more engaged as social “*beings*” in their learning process. The social individual is part and parcel of the world surrounding him/her. He/she is not isolated from his environment and his/her learning context. Learners cannot be decontextualize from their socio-historico-cultural background because this latter does contribute to the construction of the self and of the learning process.

CHAPTER 4

The Research Methodology and the Activities used in EAP Teaching/Learning Processes

4.0 Abstract

This approach is based on the philosophy of a learning community where EAP learners and educators share responsibility for creating learning opportunities and sharing knowledge. The main objective is to understand how learning occurs in EAP classrooms among international learners with different socio-historico-cultural background. This research was conducted through two phases. Phase I in which learners were taught through the traditional teaching approach and Phase II which was based on the application of the theory of Objectification. Two groups of EAP learners were video-taped in the two phases while doing their tasks. The activities used in the class were varied and covered the courses taught. Only Phase II was characterized by the refinement of the activities which targeted the requirements of the applied theory. The aim of this chapter is to present the research methodology utilized in this thesis.

4.1 Introduction

Education is not only a matter of knowing and speaking a new language; solving problems or performing tasks. Education has also to address two main components that are: a) knowledge and, b) being (Radford, 2008). Acquisition of knowledge occurs through an interactional mode of learning that takes place in the learning environment. Learning should include the different social aspects in being and sharing with others. Through activities done in the classroom environment, learners should be aware that being in a group implies having a responsibility towards the peers. In the sense that learners should be aware that they have to engage themselves in the work, take time to explain to the peers and to assure that they understand each other. Moreover, involvement in the tasks should be done by the whole members of the group. Learners who are present physically, and absent intellectually should be invited to participate, and this is one of the roles played by the educator when needed. The aim of this research is to examine how the learning of English occurs at the program of English for academic Preparation (EAP) where the cultural dimension is an important factor and the interactions among the learners is part of the learning process

This research is based on an ethnographic approach. Two groups of international learners enrolled at Laurentian university at two different times were observed. There were two phases in this research; Phase I was characterized by attending the classes and observing the learning process of EAP learners who were taught through the traditional teaching approach. Phase II was characterized by the application of the theory of a Cultural Historical Approach targeted by the theory of *objectification*. Both phases were video-recorded with the consent of all participants. The educator was the only one managing the class and I did not intervene at any time. I was interested in understanding how learning occurs in the classroom environment in a traditional setting and how it occurs in an interventional setting in which a specific design was applied in the learning activities. More specifically, I was interested in understanding the possibilities and constraints of those approaches.

It is clear that what had changed was the way learning happened among the learning community. It is very difficult to compare numerically two teaching approaches. This difficulty is not related to the various used tools, but to many variables and factors. Consequently, through this research, video-recordings were used to help analyze the way in which learners engaged in a process of knowing and becoming. To do so, the learner's processes of *objectification* and the processes of *subjectification* in language learning were investigated. The former include the 'Knowing' and how the meaning is understood by learner. The latter include the 'becoming' which includes the engagement and responsibilities of learners toward the peers, and their behaviors in the learning process.

This ethnographic qualitative research aimed at applying the theory of *Objectification* which deals with the nature of the practices in which language is used and on the learners' socio-historico-cultural background. Through this social process, learners become more aware that knowing and being are constitutive parts of the learning process. Indeed, the theory of *Objectification* not only takes into consideration the socio-cultural background of the learners, but also provides them with a nurturing environment in which they share their knowledge, argue, comment and exchange with the learning community.

The sample was composed of two random groups of international adult learners and the observations were made through two phases. Both groups followed the same course content, but each one through a different teaching approach. There was one educator involved in the research, who used the 'traditional teaching approach' with the first group in phase I and the Cultural historical approach targeted by the theory of *objectification*, in particular its application of the the '*Communitarian Self*' concept with the second group in Phase II. This theory provided some parameters to design activities that were adapted to the sample which was composed of male and female learners from China and Saudi Arabia.

This chapter comprises ten sections. In section 2, I will be dealing with the research design. A diagram is given to illustrate the design of the research and the two phases followed in the process of observations. Section 3, describes the research strategy in which I give more details about the two phases that I followed. Section 4 describes the research methodology and section 5 deals with the samples used in the research. In section 6, I give more details about the EAP research steps. There were many steps to follow before starting the process of observations and the data collection. Section 7 describes the EAP program offered at Laurentian University for international learners. This section will be divided into the two following sub-sections:

- a) The first deals with the EAP learners and educators and their interaction in the classroom environment for sharing knowledge in the learning process. In this sub-section, I will provide some brief examples based on my observations related mainly to language transfer and use of gestures as a learning strategy and component,
- b) The second one discusses the importance of the socio-cultural aspects in language teaching and learning.

Section 8 describes the process of observations that took place in the EAP classroom within the two phases. I also describe the activities used in phase I and the revised activities used in phase II in section 9. Only the activities used in Phase II were designed in a certain way to meet the preconized theory's goals. The activities used in the two phases were related to learning new vocabulary, producing sentences, commenting and arguing about the peers' work. Some concluding remarks are formulated in section 10.

4.2 Research Design

This research is based on an ethnographic qualitative design adapted from the work of Goetz and LeCompte (1984) having a three-part framework. The first two parts are related to the research strategy, that is, how the research in the classroom was conducted. This part gives a description of the two teaching approaches undertaken in this thesis. In this section, each teaching approach will be detailed through the steps followed to implement the activities. The third part is devoted to the data collection and data description. The data analysis will be presented in Chapter 5.

This qualitative research is based on observations. In order to collect data, I used recorded videos. The content of these videos has been considered as the input of the analysis. This tool was helpful to keep all the data and use it to consider all the interactional dimensions between the learners and the whole learning community. The data analysis was based on the transcriptions made from the video sequences in which learners were performing tasks and doing activities with the peers in their daily learning process.

Using a video-camera to collect data was purposefully chosen rather than using questionnaires. This choice was made to meet the objectives of this research. In other words, using questionnaires or asking learners to answer a set of questions or give their personal feedback about their learning process will not contribute to this research because with questionnaires it would not be possible to observe the various elements that I was looking for to explain or try to understand. Those questionnaires could not help us understand how learning occurs, how learners share their knowledge with the peers, and it would be hard to see and explain the impact of the learners' socio-cultural background in their learning process and their interaction with the learning community. Therefore, to understand when and why learners are active or passive participants, how they are sitting in a certain way while doing an activity, why female learners do not or do mix with male learners, how learners make a call for help or answer a call to help, when learners use bodily gestures to express themselves all those questions could not be answered through questionnaires; but observed through recorded sequences and transcriptions.

4.3 Research Strategy

A study of two teaching approaches was conducted and applied to two different groups of international learners in two sessions. All observed groups had to perform different activities through a similar course content based on the four skills; namely: reading, writing, speaking and listening. One group focused on the “Traditional Teaching Approach” where the educator followed his personal teaching strategies and learners were expected to be less active and less involved in the learning process. The other group followed the classroom activities designed according to the theory of *objectification* and revised with the educator.

Approximately 36 lessons were videotaped in all the classes between October 2010 and March 2011. These lessons took place when the educator was teaching the identified EAP topics. The two phases that characterized this research will be described in this section. The common steps of observations for both of them are listed below:

- Be in the classroom before the EAP learners come and set the video-camera in the corner of the classroom. This place was agreed with the educator prior to starting the project,
- Observe the learners while the educator is delivering the course. In Phase I, I recorded the course content and all the activities. In Phase II, I recorded only some activities that I identified with the educator,
- Focus the video-camera on the learners while doing an activity or performing a task,
- Take notes while watching the learners,
- Rename the tapes after each recording, and
- Watch and transcribe the content of the video-tapes at the end of the day. The transcription of the videos consisted of writing all what the EAP learners said while doing a specific activity and sharing their thoughts. Also, the gestures and bodily interaction were taken into consideration and reported in the transcriptions.

Those steps were followed in both phases: the Traditional Approach and the Cultural Historical Approach targeted by the theory of objectification. Yet, to reach my research objectives, the implementation of each approach followed specific steps (see **Figure 4.1**) which are described and explained in the next sub-section.

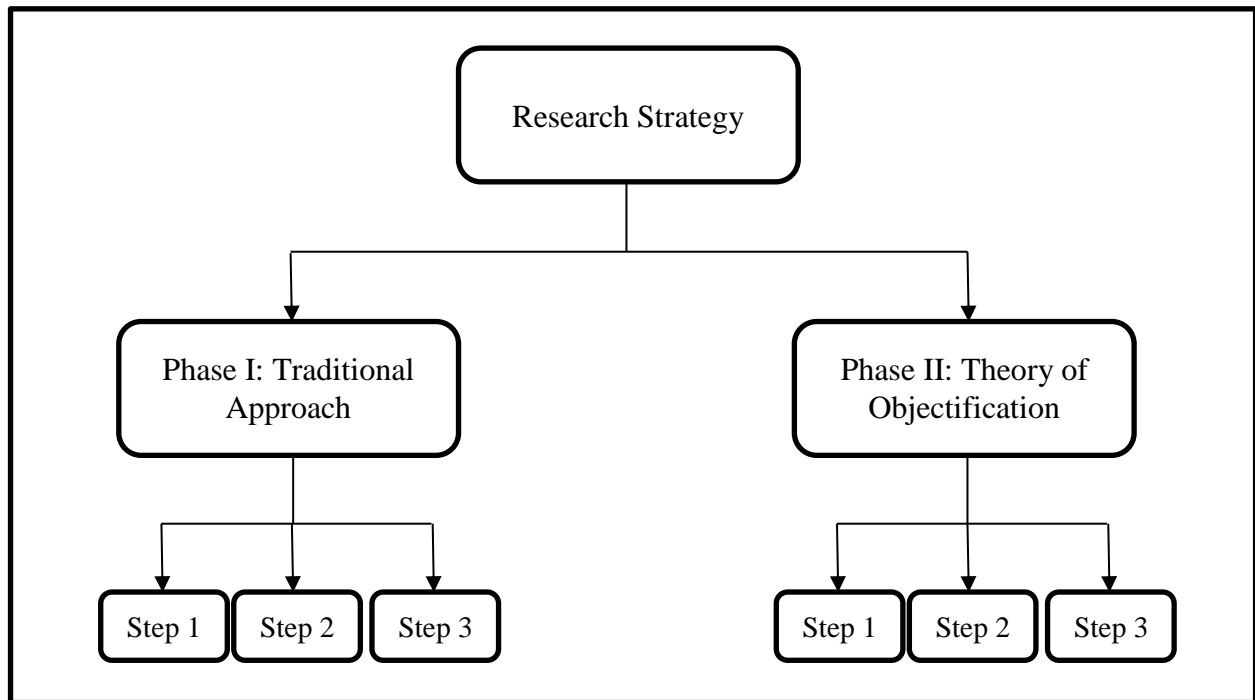


Figure 4.1: Research Strategy

4.3.1 Phase I: Traditional Teaching Approach

The Traditional Teaching Approach is the process of teaching used by the EAP educator involved in this research. In this phase, the educator had the entire freedom to manage his class the way he has always done. There was no change undertaken neither in the content of the courses, nor on the way of delivering it. This phase comprised the observation of three groups of international learners coming at three different times. There was a three-step process as follows:

Step 1:

In the first week of my presence in the EAP classes, I did not use any recording equipment. There was no video-camera in the classroom. There was an agreement with the educator to attend the EAP classes and sit with the EAP learners somewhere in the classroom. This was a classroom strategy in order not to change the learners' routine, and make them feel comfortable and get used to see me in their learning environment.

Step 2:

In the second week, the video-camera was introduced into the classroom and learners were recorded during the whole class. For those recordings, there were sequences when the educator was delivering the course content through his teaching approach; and other sequences when EAP learners were performing the activities with the peers.

Step 3:

This step was characterized by collecting all the video-tapes, labelling them, watching the sequences and doing the transcription. Since there were three groups of EAP learners every day, one video-tape was used for each group.

4.3.2 Phase II: Cultural Historical Approach of the Theory of *Objectification*

For the application of the theory of *objectification* in the EAP classroom, the three steps were reviewed with the educator. The design of some activities was set prior to starting the application of the theory. The steps are as follows:

Step 1:

This step comprised the elaboration of the classroom activities based on the course the educator delivered in class and inspired from some activities that were used in Phase I. The application of the “*Communitarian Self*” concept based on the theory of *objectification* included a varied range of activities that were discussed with the educator. The changes concerned mainly the way to present the activities to the learners and the tasks they had to perform.

The educator applied a new teaching strategy in which he brought forward motivating learning situations and made the whole learning community interact, collaborate with the peers, be more engaged in the activities and more responsible in the learning process. Learners were encouraged to share their knowledge with the peers and develop awareness that being and learning are important in constructing the self and sharing knowledge.

Step 2:

This step consisted of the implementation and video recording the group-work activities. The activities were elaborated in such a way that the learners work together in small groups (2 to 4 learners per group). Also, through the application of the theory of *objectification* the learners were encouraged to share their ideas, work together, interpret and discuss the texts produced by other peers. Then, the educator had to be present from time to time in the groups to provide them with any help in case they needed it, keep the learners on the discussion thread or the purpose of the activity, get them involved in the task and express themselves. The educator was asked to create a certain learning environment in which learners become more active participants and be aware of the learning dynamics taking place among the learning community.

In fact, the educator’s role could be seen more as a helper within the group rather than the person who decided on how the activity should be done. In other words, the educator’s role was

intervene when necessary to help learners express their thought, share with the peers and take part in the activity.

Step 3:

An audio recorder was given to the educator after each recorded activity. He was asked to use it and give his impressions, comments and feedback regarding the activity. Sometimes the educator had reported the learners' feedback about the activities when they shared it with him. Some activities seemed more motivating and funny, and learners enjoyed doing them, and some others were boring and un-motivating. Those audio-recordings were transcribed and kept for data analysis.

4.4 Methodology

The theory of *objectification* in this research project gives some parameters to design learning activities that were adapted for international learners enrolled in the EAP program. Through this design, learning conditions were created to control some dimensions to emerge with a learning process among the peers that meet the objectives. The theory of *objectification* allows investigation of the learning process in its niche, and its ecology. This human interaction is transformed through the design of the course content and social interactions taking place within the learning community. In fact, through the application of the theory of *objectification*, I wanted to see the interactional dynamics that happen between the learners, the way they behave with others, their engagement in the activity, interaction with the peers, addressing other learners, and how communication and learning happens. This research was motivated by addressing many questions as follows:

- How can EAP learners be active participants in their learning process?
- How do EAP learners contribute to the learning process of their peers/learning community?

- How can EAP learners be more aware and responsible of their learning process and that of the peers?
- How does learning take place among learners?
- To what extent does the socio-cultural aspect contribute to language learning?
- How does learning occur among multicultural learners in a Western learning environment?

However, only the following research question was addressed:

How does learning occur in teaching EAP to international learners through the traditional teaching approach and the socio-cultural approach?

The theory of *objectification* groups many parameters to investigate those questions and can help answer them. Based on the literature review, the theory of *objectification* had significant contribution in the teaching and learning of mathematics at different learning levels among young learners. Consequently, I wanted to apply this theory in the teaching and learning processes of foreign language among international learners entering university. My hypotheses are as follows:

The application of the theory of *objectification* in the EAP program helps learners to be more active, responsible and aware of their learning process and the learning of others. The design of the courses contributed to creating a more interactive setting in which the whole learning community becomes more involved in the learning process. Those interactional dynamics may show how communication performs and learning happens in a socio-historico-cultural setting.

The research employed a randomized sample of about 12 international learners registered at Laurentian University in the English for Academic Preparation program in two semesters. The number of registered learners varied from one academic session to another and not all the

learners attended the classes. Consequently, the focus groups were managed accordingly. The syllabus was the same and learners were administered the same content. Only one educator from the EAP program was involved in the research.

In this research, I wanted to see how alterity was expressed through the learning process of international learners. I wanted to see the following dimensions: a) the relationship between learners in terms of responsibility and being with others, b) the learners taking care of the peers and giving an answer to the other whenever there is a call, b) the relationship to others in terms of being active/passive in the learning process, and c) observations of the learning obstacles related to the sociocultural dimension. In both semesters, learning occurred at different levels and through varied processes. There were three steps in the data collection process.

Basically, the first step concerned the choice and transcription of the video activities. In both sessions the choice was related to the two dimensions: knowledge and being. Indeed, in the first session I spoke about conceptual framework of learning the language and its technicalities. Yet, in the second session I dealt more with the subjectivity and alterity. Indeed, the process of the theory of *objectification* was very important to set out who was engaged in the activity, who had verbal or non-verbal engagement, who had the power and responsibility in helping others. One of the observations I made was that in Phase I, those pedagogical structures in the classroom were less conducive in providing room for stronger interaction and intersubjective processes. Nevertheless, in Phase II, there was a stronger emphasis on setting out the process of the theory of *objectification*, not only on the refinement of the activities, but also on the content and the way of delivering it. Taking into consideration the same content in both sessions facilitated the observation process, description and analysis of the data.

In the second step, the raw material resulting from the first step was categorized, then refined into “salient segments” (Côté *et al.*, 1993). Usually, a salient segment was comprised of several utterances such as: learners’ verbal interventions in the ongoing discourse showing features

related to cultural dimension. Those features may be gestures, when learners wanted to explain an idea and did not know the words in the target language, to language-use which might be a word used in their culture and trying to use it in English, meaning construction through already known concepts or new ones they learnt or other important elements of the semiotic activity. The segments were then contextualized by adding a social interactionist dimension which was captured through interpretative comments that I inserted between slashes into the dialogue, emphasizing one or more aspects in relation to the research question.

In the third step, the cadence of the dialogue was inserted by indicating pauses, gestures, verbal hesitations, places where mediated actions took place. In this step, I also included descriptive elements of non-linguistic activity in the transcription. These steps allowed us to identify types of meanings, layers of generality, language understanding, cultural sensitivity, difficulties of translation from one language to another and cultural understanding which was one of the most important aspects to consider in the teaching/learning processes.

4.5 The Samples

In this thesis, there was a focus on international adult learners in the EAP program taking level two as being an intermediate level. Comparatively with level one and level three, the former was mainly for beginners and interactions might be lacking since learners were dealing with some basics of the target language. It should be noted that learners in this level had less knowledge of the subject matter, and poor vocabulary to perform well. The latter, which was considered mainly as an advanced level, was based on more writing and listening skills which prepares learners for university academic program. What is more, for the academic year 2010-2011 the EAP program decided to form three groups for level two as the number of learners had increased considerably. Therefore, three EAP educators covered a specific content of level two. However, EAP educators did not meet with only one group of learners in level two and did not deliver all the content of the syllabus. In fact the syllabus was divided into three parts. Each EAP educator

met with the three groups, daily, at three different times in the morning. These changes in the EAP program were taken into consideration in selecting the samples.

Theoretically, each educator focused on one specific skill rather than the four skills altogether. To explain more, in one morning a level-two-group had to change the classroom twice and meet three EAP educators one after the other for a course of an hour and 10 minutes with a break of thirty minutes after the second course. For example, among the three EAP educators, one taught the EAP learners grammar and speaking, the second EAP educator did more reading tasks with the learners, and with the third EAP educator learners had more listening and writing activities and presented projects. Needless to say that the speaking skill was present in the three courses since the approach was more communicative. Also, EAP learners had to do some homework and sometimes they were asked to prepare presentations either individually or with a partner.

In order to conduct the research and since humans are involved, it is required to get the ethical approval. In the next section, I will describe the process of ethics approval of this research.

4.6 EAP Research Project Steps

The launching of the research project was done during two steps and during two semesters. Before starting the process of observations, there were some important ethical procedures to follow that are listing below:

4.6.1 Ethics Approval:

I contacted the Research Ethics Board (REB) at Laurentian University to give me a formal authorization to start the research project. Since this research involves humans (students at Laurentian University), I had to assure the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and meet the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS) requirements. The research did not involve participants from any type of vulnerable population group as described in the TCPS, in section of

minimal risk. The required documents were submitted to the REB. After review by the REB the project was approved on August 18, 2010 and the data collection started early in the fall term 2010.

4.6.2 Laurentian International Office:

A private meeting was held with the responsible staff of Laurentian International Office in which the project was presented and all questions were answered. The director of the program suggested level two as being an intermediate level. Later, another meeting took place with the head educator and coordinator of the program and EAP educators of all levels. Since the focus was put more on level two learners, so the discussion was directed towards the educators of that level. The EAP group welcomed the idea of experiencing a new teaching approach in their classes and an agreement was set to meet again in order to inform the EAP learners and set up a schedule for the process of observations. A few days later, a memorandum was signed in to undertake the research with level two EAP learners for the academic year 2010-2011.

4.6.3 EAP Agreement's Modifications:

By the time the agreement was signed and the schedule was getting set, the EAP office made some changes in the teaching process of the EAP program as well as the EAP educators involved in teaching level two. Consequently, when time came for signing the consent forms and starting with the project, most EAP educators of level two did not accept to participate. They did not feel at ease with the project and did not want to be recorded on the video-camera. Only one EAP educator accepted to work with us and welcomed the idea of experiencing a new teaching approach in his class. The two other EAP educators apologized for not participating. Therefore, it was not possible to attend and observe three groups of EAP learners taking level two in which the lessons were focused more on grammar, vocabulary and speaking rather than the other skills grouped altogether. More details about the implementation of the project is described in section 8.

A meeting was held with the EAP educator involved in the research project and a schedule was established in order to meet the EAP learners and explain to them the aim of my doctoral research project. The visit was planned at the beginning of classes of the fall term 2010.

4.6.4 EAP Learners:

The last week of September 2010, I went to the Laurentian International Office in order to meet with the EAP educator and the EAP learners. I explained to the learners the purpose of the project and described the process to follow for the data collection. Some learners welcomed the idea of participating in the research project, others were reluctant, and some of them did not want to participate. The EAP learners were given an idea about the ethical protocol of Laurentian University and I insisted on the fact that their participation was voluntary and they were not identified at any time. Also, I explained to them that they could withdraw from the research project at any time without penalty. Also, their relation to Laurentian International Office or any program at the university would not affect their refusal or withdrawal from participation in the project. EAP learners were informed of the incentives they could get as a reward for their participation in the research project. The first reward was about winning a memory stick and the second one was an amount of money that only three learners from each group could receive in a draw at the end of the project.

4.6.5 Consent Forms:

I met three groups of EAP learners. They all belonged to the same cultural community. They were from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I met each group before the lesson started in order to explain the research project process, and then I left the class after giving all the documents (Consent Forms and Information sheets). In addition, before EAP learners left the grammar course and joined their next class, I was back to collect the signed consent forms. Meanwhile, when the next group came to the classroom I explained and handed the forms to them as well. Of course there were some EAP learners who needed much time to think about the project, read the information sheet and then decide whether to participate or not. I did agree to give them much time to decide. After that, they communicated with their EAP educator and me to provide their decision.

Among the three groups, 27 learners accepted to participate in the project. They were as follows: a) group 1 with ten learners out of eleven, b) group 2 with eight learners out of thirteen, and c) group 3 with nine learners out of thirteen. All the participants received an information sheet that summarized the process and the conditions of the research project and asked to sign a consent form. I answered all the questions that learners had asked. All the EAP learners who signed the consent forms and accepted to be recorded on the video-camera received a copy of the signed document. The EAP educator had his own form to sign and got a copy of it, too. The signed consent forms were scanned and kept in a password protected file on my personal computer in my office at Laurentian University; Fraser building.

4.6.6 Video-Camera:

The place to put the video-camera was agreed with the EAP educator. I made sure that the video-camera was placed in a position that the learners having not signed the consent form will not be recorded. It was clearly stated in the information sheet that learners participating in the research project should tick the box to give their consent of recording them while they were interacting in class and working with the peers. They were assured that their identities will never be revealed whatsoever. Also, I had to check the names of EAP learners participating in the project when it was time to record a particular group as they were randomly formed.

When collecting data, the choice of recorded groups was random. Most participants changed seats every day. Sometimes, there was not much choice for choosing one group over the other due to the following reasons: a) many EAP learners signing the consent form were absent, b) in two of the three small groups there was at least one EAP learner who did not sign the consent form, therefore, was not participating in the project and I could not video-tape the group, and c) only the nearest groups sitting beside the video-camera were considered as it was not easy to move the equipment in the classroom due to the room size.

In the next section I will give a description of the English for Academic Preparation Program for international learners who want to enroll at Laurentian University. I will highlight its important

requirements and objectives that are set, not only, by the university, but also by the EAP program for an efficient learning process.

4.7 English for Academic Preparation Program at Laurentian University

English for Academic Preparation (EAP) program is a non-credit intensive English language program. It is designed, mainly, for international learners who do not meet English language requirements for studying at Laurentian University. Consequently, Laurentian international office is offering a supportive learning environment for international learners to prepare them for academic success in different undergrad and graduate programs. EAP program enhances learners' proficiency in the English language through activities in reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Moreover, this program contributes for developing the academic skills needed for success in different academic university programs. In addition, EAP program not only focuses on academic matters, but also offers activities for international students to learn more about Canadian life and culture. To do so, the program offers a various range of activities and covers the different skills, for example; producing posters and written reports, organizing visits to elderly institutions once a week, so as to be in touch with English speaking people and have some voluntary hours with them. These activities contribute to EAP learners' acquisition of language, exchange of thoughts and improvement of their socio-cultural knowledge through an English speaking environment still new to them.

EAP program offers three English levels to all international learners whose mother tongue or second language is not English. International learners who want further their studies in a degree program and meet the requirements of Laurentian University, or who want to develop their skills in the target language for work or any other studies have to take the course. Each level is a twelve-week program offered to the learners. To determine the English level of the learners, a placement test is given to them. From the obtained results, learners join a specific group sharing

the same level. Furthermore, a minimum of 70% is one of the admission requirements to any program at Laurentian University. Each learner must meet this requirement.

There are three sessions within EAP program. One session begins in September, the second one in January and the third one in May of each academic year. The program consists of a four-hour language instruction a day from Monday to Thursday. The course content combines different activities in reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. EAP learners work in computer labs, prepare oral Power Point Presentations, make written assignments and participate in group discussions. Some of these activities are done individually and some others are group work. Generally, Fridays are exam days. EAP learners sit for a test that covers the material taught during the week. A part from that, EAP learners have one mid-term exam and a final exam. All the exams are written, but they are also evaluated while they are doing their presentations in class. Moreover, each EAP learner has tutorial schedule in which he/she meets with a tutor once a week for one hour. During those mandatory meetings, EAP learners can do their homework, ask questions about their assignments/presentations, or any difficulties related to the content of the courses or any work related to the program, in general, and English language, in particular.

EAP program at Laurentian University is always making changes in its syllabus and adapt its teaching approaches to satisfy the needs of the learners and the requirements of the different academic programs. These changes concern not only, the way EAP educators deliver the course, but also the content delivered. Also, the number of international learners coming to Laurentian University is increasing every year, mainly from China, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Brazil.

In the next section I will discuss the interaction between the EAP learners and educators and the role each one plays in the learning/teaching processes.

4.7.1 EAP Learners and Educators

Learners of any foreign language (or any other subject-matter) at their first stage, certainly understand more, however, they are not able to produce much. Consequently, when learners do not participate in discussions this does not mean they do not understand or have nothing to say (Mohr and Mohr, 2007), they simply have difficulties to express themselves in the target language. According to Cazden (2001), teachers and researchers should be careful in their interpretation of silence in the classroom. In fact, the author states that if learners are silent or give a one-word answer this should not be interpreted as a lack of knowledge.

In this case, EAP learners coming to the English program rely more on their background from which they base their learning. They tend to make a comparison between the language acquired along their life and the one they are learning for future studies. The choice of using the one or the other will differ according to their needs, for example, the mother tongue is used for first stages of communication, whereas the English language is used for academic purposes. However, the two languages are commonly used as means of communication in different socio-cultural contexts. To add more, learners have prior knowledge acquired through their mother tongue which might be used in different other contexts. However, according to Lu (1998), the more knowledge a learner might have in his mother tongue, the less knowledgeable he/she is when it comes to a foreign/second language. For example, learners with a little or no English language knowledge bring their mother tongue, their cultural and linguistic values into their learning environment (Lu, 1998). The author focuses on the fact that this transfer is also related to the cultural and linguistic values of the learners.

When learners have recourse to their mother tongue is mainly to make themselves more explicit to their interlocutors from the same socio-cultural background. Having said that, it is important for educators, in general, and EAP educators, in particular, to be aware of those differences

regarding cultural and linguistic values of EAP learners so as to adopt and adapt a conducive learning context for all the participants (Lu, 1998). Those difficulties faced among international learners, may appear within the same cultural background. For example, learners coming from The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia share the same culture and language. However, there is a difference in their socio-cultural and cognitive learning processes and behavior as they come from different cities and towns of the Kingdom.

Many learners enrolled in a North American education and culture is shy to express themselves (Mohr and Mohr, 2007). According to the authors, this is one of the reasons why learners play a less active role in classroom interaction. In fact, English language learners do not have sufficient target language to express their thoughts; therefore, the educator should be aware of the vocabulary used so as to facilitate learners' understanding and comprehension. As Gibbons (2002) advised them to amplify and not simplify, Mohr and Mohr (2007) added that to help convey meaning, rephrasing and gesturing are helpful tools in language learning. Moreover, the way learners learn and acquire language is as important as the specific language they already use (Heath, 1986).

However, learners are united in their differences. Each one contributes to the learning of the other. What is lacking or ignored by one can be covered by the other. Therefore, through different interactions between the learners knowledge is shared and learning takes place. As mentioned by Smith (2003) learners' become socially and linguistically competent when they participate in real conversations. Such activities make them learn how to deal with the target language in asking questions, expressing their views agreeing or refuting ideas (Smith, 2003).

The next section will deal with the socio-cultural aspects in teaching and learning a foreign or second language to international learners.

4.7.2 Socio-Cultural Dimension in Language Teaching/Learning

Language is not only a means that individuals learn or acquire in order to communicate and exchange between each other. It is also a means to think of the world surrounding us. Learning a language is associated with learning its culture (Radford, 2005). Learning a language is learning about its heritage, the people, and the community in general, it is a “*socio-cultural process*”, (Lu, 1998). It gives learners a sense of pride regarding themselves, their origin and their identity.

The participation of learners in the EAP program will open new doors to the cultural world in which they learn about what could be done or not. The learning environment is a dynamic system of relationships and structures where the learners communicate between them through different means (Gutierrez *et al.*, 1995). In fact, dialogues take place in the EAP classrooms not only between learners and language, but also within learners and between the frames that they use to categorize experience. According to the authors, becoming a member of a community of practice is a process of developing a particular identity and mode of behavior. The authors insist on the fact that through interaction in socio-cultural practices, participants learn in which discourses and reforms of participation are valued and not valued by the members of the community. The discourse includes not only the language, but also the artifacts, the experiences and the practices shared by a particular learning community (Gutierrez *et al.*, 1995). In other words, the cultural environment of the social individual gives him a certain position, power and place within the rest of the community. Being in this cultural world helps the individual to know more about it, address other individuals, communicate, share with them and have a place within the community.

Individuals learn to think through the language and take a position of the different values and knowledge that this language vehicles. In fact, by taking the perspective that exists in the socio-cultural world in which human beings are embedded from birth that we come to exist as self-interpreting beings at all (Mead, 1934). Interactions with others makes the individual become

other to himself, as Martin (2006) states that the social individual does this by taking the perspectives of others, by reacting to the self and other perspectives that emerge within their ongoing interactivity.

When learners of the English language are active culturally and linguistically in the classroom environment, they acquire the target language, acquire the literacy and do better in the academic field (Mc Carthy *et al.*, 1991; Jordan *et al.*, 1992; Moll and Gonzales, 1995). In addition, learners' background and culture play an important part in their learning process. It is through their acquired knowledge that they build up their critical thinking and thoughts. Their exposure to a new culture makes them think and see the world differently. In this way, learners are expected to be aware that what can be acceptable in one culture may not be the same in another culture and vice versa; such as: the way of greeting someone, addressing a stranger, asking for information, or making a business decision. In any particular situation, solving the problem vary from one individual to another and from one cultural background to another. However, the cultural heritage is always present to guide the individual to analyze the situation and make decisions.

In the next section, I will describe the process of observations and data collection started in the EAP classrooms through the preconized phases.

4.8 Process of Observations

4.8.1 Phase I: Observations through the “Traditional Teaching Approach”

The sample was composed of three groups of 27 Saudi Arabian learners enrolled in level two in the EAP program. Some of them had already taken level one at Laurentian International, and

others joined level two based on their performance in the placement test. Those learners either had some courses in other schools in Canada or they had good English background from Western English schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. All the learners joining the EAP program were willing to study at Laurentian University in different fields such as: commerce and administration, biology, chemistry, health and engineering. Some EAP learners wanted to enroll in an undergrad program and a few were aiming at entering a graduate program (mainly a master's degree).

The observation process started at the end of September 2010. It was only at that time of the semester that most EAP learners joined their groups. The agreement made with EAP educator was to attend the classes three times a week; on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Each group had one hour and 10 minutes class daily. This choice was based on the teaching process followed at Laurentian International. Learners had their lessons and activities during the three first days of the week, and on Thursdays they had a review session of the material learnt during the week. On Fridays, learners sat for an exam. They were tested on the lessons they had learnt during the week. Moreover, in the first week and for the three days of my presence in class, I did not use the video-camera. I sat in the classroom with the EAP learners so as they get used to my presence in the classroom. During class time, I took notes of the number of learners present in class, what was happening in the classroom, the interactions with the educator and among the peers, also, a description of the activities given in the classroom and their goals.

One week later, the video-camera was introduced into the classroom and the EAP learners, who consented, were recorded during their course. The recording time for each group was for one hour and ten minutes. When the EAP educator was delivering the course, the video-camera was pointed only towards the EAP learners participating in the project. However, when it was time to record group work activities, I focused more on one group only. At the beginning, I always had to check the names of EAP learners who agreed to participate from those who did not so as to respect the agreement signed with them.

For each group I used one video-tape. This means that I had three recordings a day for one hour and ten minutes length for each group. All the video-tapes were labeled using the following format: day-month-year-group number. For example, 23-11-10-G1 means that on the 23rd of November 2010 group one was recorded. This information was recorded on tapes before the EAP educator started the lesson, using my voice so as to keep track in case labels might be lost. When all the daily recordings were done, I rewrote my notes and kept them on my password protected computer at my office. I also printed them out and kept them in a secure file in my office.

In the fall session, I had 54 video-tapes. All data was transferred on Compact Disks (Cds) for analyses. Some data could not be used for analysis due to some unexpected technical problems.

4.8.2 Phase II: Observations through the Application of the Theory of *Objectification*

Before starting the second part of the research project in which the introduction of the “*Communitarian Self*” Concept and the theory of *objectification* are the main focus, there was a meeting with the EAP educator in order to introduce him to the new teaching approach. We discussed about the different activities used in class and we suggested some other strategies that could be used for the new teaching tool and the way the teaching process could be followed in the winter session. The EAP educator was open to all the required adjustments through the application of the theory of *objectification* in delivering his course and monitoring the activities in the classroom.

The second part of the observations was scheduled for the winter session. Therefore, I met with the EAP educator and learners in mid-January. EAP learners were joining Laurentian International progressively and groups were set up accordingly. The EAP educator informed us that there were some changes in the teaching process of EAP learners taking level two courses. In fact, for the winter session, three groups of level two were formed and each group was assigned to one EAP educator. Comparatively to the teaching process dealt with in the fall session, in the winter session each EAP level-two group was taught the four skills altogether by

the same EAP educator. Each EAP educator had only one group of learners and covered the four skills. The EAP educator had to deliver all the courses which varied from grammar, to vocabulary, reading, writing, listening, speaking activities and individual or group presentations. The course was planned for 4 hours daily, from 08:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. with a break of 30 minutes at 9:50 a.m.

The sample in the second part of this research project was composed of 12 international learners taking level two. All the group members accepted, unanimously, to participate in the research project. Consequently, it was easier for us to use the video-camera in the classroom and handle it without any constraints when learners were performing their activities.

The process of observation was similar to the one followed in the first part of the research project. The first week the observations were made without the video-camera. The latter was introduced by the following week. In this Phase, only the activities that were elaborated and refined with the EAP educator through the application of the theory of *objectification* were recorded. The emphasis was put more on the interaction between the learners and their awareness of responsibility towards the peers to explain and share their knowledge. The focus was also related to the ability to explain and give one's point of view in doing the activity and reaching the same target which is learning.

In the next section, I will describe the content of the performed activities within this research. This will help to understand how the research methodology was implemented.

4.9 Description of the Activities

There were many activities used in this research project, some of them were grammatical, for example the use on tenses and others concerned the learning of new vocabulary words. I focused

more on activities that involved group work in order to meet the objectives of this research project. Indeed, it was agreed with the educator was that learners should be encouraged to work in groups and share their knowledge. Also, the educator was encouraged to intervene during the activities when necessary. We believe that to some extent, learners would need some guidance and advice from the educator in order to perform the tasks, especially when they were having some difficulties in conducting some activities.

As per the content of the activities in Phase I and Phase II, there were not any changes. However, for the objectives of the research, the activities of Phase II were designed differently. The changes were related to the steps the activities were presented to the learners and the way they performed to do the tasks. For example, the learning process of the groups in Phase I went through the traditional setting, whereas groups in Phase II followed a process of learning based on designed activities in which the parameters were the main components of the theory of *objectification*. More details about the activities are explained in the sub-section below. I will list the activities used in this research and the objectives that were targeted in the two phases. Also, I will describe the refined activities used in Phase II.

This section will be composed of two sub-sections. The first one deals with a detailed description of the activities used in Phase I in which the observations were made through the traditional teaching approach, and the elaborated activities used in Phase II which was based on the application of the theory of *objectification*.

4.9.1 Phase I: Activities used within the Traditional Teaching Approach

There were six activities used in this Phase. Learners were asked to produce sentences in different forms and tenses, use appropriate clauses, give definition of some words and explain them to the peers. The activities are as follows:

Activity one: Passive voice (At the restaurant)

Learners were given a picture of a restaurant in which many actions were taking place (See **Figure 4.3**). They were asked to look at the picture and to come up with ten active sentences (subject, verb and object) in which they describe the actions happening in the restaurant. Then, they had to turn the active sentences into passive sentences. The educator gave them the choice whether they wanted to work in groups or not. The aim of the activity was to see if learners were able to make sentences in the passive voice based on the active sentences they had first to make. Also, to use the correct form of verbs, especially irregular verbs and make the necessary changes that a passive voice requires.

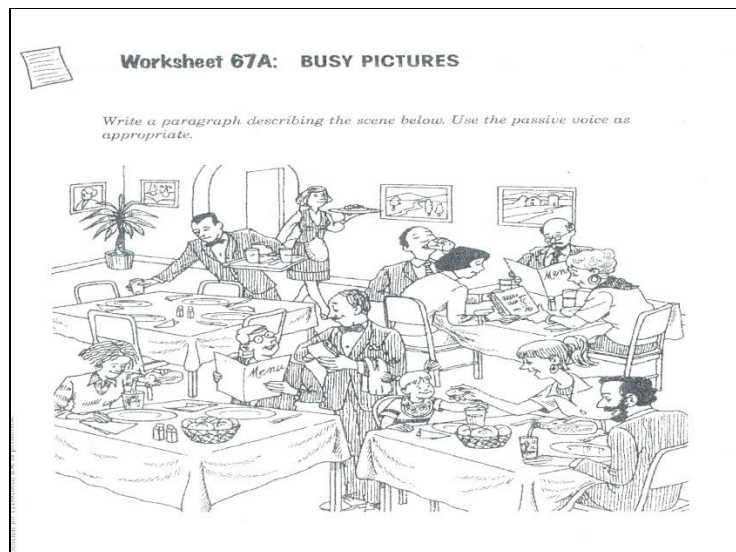


Figure 4.2: At the restaurant (Woodward, 1997)

Activity two: Grammar auction

The aim of the activity was to see if learners were able to use the correct form of verbs and sentences in the list provided to them. The educator divided the class into small groups then he gave them a sheet of paper with nine sentences. He asked them to work over the questions or the sentences and decide with the team which sentences they were able to correct and best to buy from the auction. The first step was to read the sentences and each group had to decide which

sentences they were able to correct. Then, the auction started and the one who bit the most on a sentence would have it. Indeed, the educator insisted on the fact that the group to score a point was the one who succeeded in giving the correct form of the sentence at 100%. Otherwise, if the sentence was still not correct there was no point scored for the group.

Each group had \$3000 bills of fake money. The auction started at \$200 which was the minimum bid, then learners had to go by \$100 each time they bit on a sentence. At the end the educator invited the learners to write the sentences they corrected on the board so that everyone could see them. The instructions for correcting the sentence were as follows: a) change the active sentence into passive, b) put the verbs in brackets in the simple past or past perfect, c) put the verbs in brackets in the future simple or future continuous, d) give the past participle of the verbs, e) create sentences in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd conditional, f) underline the dependent clause, g) join the subordinate clauses using a conjunction, h) join the sentences using which, where, who or that, and i) put the verbs in the correct form: gerund or infinitive (see **appendix A**).

Activity three: Passive voice (Indiana Jones)

The educator explained that the aim of the activity consisted of making sentences in the passive voice. He explained to the learners that there was a movie clip about Indiana Jones; a male scientist who went exploring ancient ruins and hidden treasures. He asked them to watch the clip and understand what was happening. Then, they had to answer twelve questions about what happened in the scene. The answers to the questions had to be in the passive form.

When the educator handed the sheets to the learners he told them to have a look at the vocabulary words given on the top of the page which can be used in their answers. The words were: **Boulder, Chase, Exchange, Flattened, Follow, Hole, Idol, Indians, Opening, Replacing Sand, Skeleton, Spear, Spiders, Squash, Stones, Surround, and Whip**. The educator started by explaining the words that learners did not know, to familiarize them with the

meaning and facilitate the choice of words when answering the questions, then they started watching the clip and ended up by working in groups to find out the answers to the questions. The twelve questions are shown in **Figure 4.3** below:

Worksheet 66: AT THE MOVIES

Answer the questions about the movie excerpt you just watched. Use the vocabulary words below to help you. Be sure to answer in complete sentences, using the passive.

boulder	baton	idol	replace	spear	stones
chase	follow	Indians	sand	spiders	surround
exchange	hole	opening	skeleton	squash	whip

1. What was placed in the bag by Indiana Jones?
2. What was Indiana's helper frightened by?
3. What had happened to the other scientist (skeleton) earlier?
4. What happened to the idol?
5. What almost happened to Indiana Jones when he tried to get under the door?
6. What had already happened to the helper when Indiana reached him?
7. What happened to Indiana next?
8. What happened to Indiana when he got outside the cave?
9. What happened to the idol outside the cave?
10. What happened to Indiana when he tried to escape?
11. What was Indiana scared by in the plane?
12. What do you think will happen to Indiana next?

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Figure 4.3: Indiana Jones' worksheet (Woodward, 1997)

Activity four: Relative clause

In this activity, the educator divided the class into two groups, for example group A and group B. The educator had prepared a list of random words and each time one learner was chosen from his/her group, members to go in front of the class and pick up a random word from the list. Then, the learners had to describe the word to the peers using a relative pronoun. Learners were expected to use the appropriate relative pronoun in their personal descriptive sentences. If the members of group A found the word they would get one point, if not the educator would give a chance to group B. If group B found the word, they definitely get the point; otherwise no one would get anything. The list was composed of the following fifteen vocabulary words: **Bus, Pyramids, Dictionary, Calculators, Whale, Dog, Michael Jordan, Titanic, George Bush,**

Soccer, McDonald's, The Beatles, Christina (EAP teacher of reading), South Africa, Madonna.

The relative pronouns learners had to use were: 'who', 'where', and 'which'. The educator reminded them that the relative pronoun 'who' is used to refer to a person or people, 'where' refers to a place or places, 'which' refers to a thing or things and finally the relative pronoun 'that' can be used to refer to a person or a thing. However, he added that they had to use only 'who', 'where' and 'which' to make it more challenging for them and see if they were able to make the difference in the use of those relative pronouns.

Activity five: Vocabulary

Learners received a list of 10 vocabulary words and were asked to work with their partners sitting beside. The educator decided to give 5 words to each pair of learners and asked them to explain it and give a definition, for example, in this list there were the following vocabulary words: **Identify, Critic, Tuition, Weather, Whether, Complain, Lecture, Rural, Urban, and Stubborn.** The educator explained that learners could use the dictionary to describe the words and give examples to illustrate more the meaning of the words.

At the end of the activity each group had to give the definition of the 5 words and one example. In doing so, each group will complete the missing words of the list. For example let us say that group A had the first five words and group B had the last five words. When a learner from group A was giving the definition of the first word to the whole class, all the learners from group B were taking notes and writing down the examples. At the end all the groups had ten definitions and examples based on the list they had.

Activity six: Second conditional

The educator asked learners to make sentences in the second conditional. Learners had a list of sentences in a board which were not complete; each square in the board contained half a sentence in the conditional. Learners were asked to read them and complete the sentences meaningfully. The board was a combination of many squares, and each one contained the beginning or the ending of a sentence in the second conditional, for example, 'If I were you, I' Or 'I would accept your invitation, if ...'. Each learner had his/her turn to finish the missing part using the correct form of verbs and only one chance to give the sentence. Learners had to choose different verbs and express different ideas to make a maximum of meaningful sentences in the second conditional. The educator made it clear that all the learners had to finish the same sentence using a different verb. Next, to make it more challenging, the educator requested that if any of the learners thought the sentence was wrong they could ask the peer to give another sentence. If the sentence was correct, the learner got to go ahead two spaces, but if a learner challenged another learner and got wrong, he got punished by going back one space. The aim of this activity was to practice the use of the second conditional with the peers and exchange their ideas. Also, to make the difference between regular and irregular forms of verbs in the simple past.

4.9.2 Phase II: Activities used within The Theory of *Objectification*

Seven activities were used in this phase. Five of them were similar to the ones used in Phase I, but based on the parameters of the theory of *objectification*. The activities were revised and designed according to the preconized theory in order to meet the objectives set forth in teaching and learning the language. The two other activities were added to illustrate more the impact of the socio-cultural aspect in language learning. More details about data analysis will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Through those activities, some pedagogical processes were introduced to make learners work more in groups and share with the peers. The educator was asked to create motivating

environment which could help learners to be more active, responsible and caring of others. The design of the activities focused more on the question of responsibility, answerability, being, engagement and interacting with other among the groups.

Activity one: Passive voice (At the restaurant)

This activity required the use of the passive and active sentences. The educator provided the learners with a picture of a restaurant in which there were five verbs. He asked them to work with their groups, look at the picture and describe the actions happening in the restaurant. The description should be in a form of sentences in the passive voice. To help them perform better, the educator advised them to write a sentence in the active and then transform it into the passive. He also mentioned that they can practice different tenses and make their examples in the present simple, perfect or continuous, past simple, perfect or continuous or future tense. The aim of this activity was to make learners share their knowledge in terms of correct sentence structure in the passive form and the use of the provided verbs in different tenses.

Activity two: Grammar auction

The activity was about reviewing different grammar rules and vocabulary words that learners had seen in their previous activities, for example: tenses, conditional, prepositions, linking words, vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. The educator introduced the activity through an auction in which learners had to collect a big number of correct sentences. In fact learners had a list of 14 sentences which contained mistakes. They had to work in groups and decide with the peers which sentences they could correct and then would bet on them when the auction started. This means that once the peers decided which sentences they think they were able to correct, they had to bet on them and buy them. The activity consisted of spotting out the mistakes or the wrong words and correcting them. To make it more challenging, the educator explained that each group betting on a sentence and finding its correct form would get a point. The winner group was the one who accumulated the highest score of correct sentences.

Learners had to buy the sentences they were sure about, and were able to correct them later if needed. The educator gave each group an amount of \$3000 of fake money. Then, he explained that the auction starts with \$200 which was the minimum bid, and learners had to go by \$100 all the time until they buy all the sentences. The design of this activity included the lessons learners had before. The sentences were as follows: *a)* I was going to married, but I changed my mind, *b)* Joe saves a lot of money, so he is always in the red, *c)* I live in a rural area where there are many tall buildings, an underground and a lot of entertainments, *d)* When the king visited my city, the white carpet was rolled out, *e)* I have played soccer since I was a young child, *i)* They told her get her visa from the immigration department, *g)* When were you studying?, *h)* Have you ever rode a motorcycle?, *i)* Tomorrow, we go to the store buy some groceries, *j)* I have worked here for many years, but I am thinking about quitting my job, *k)* My best friend gave me some great advice yesterday, *l)* Your report was very clear, in black or white, *m)* If you want improve your English, you must to study hard!, *n)* Daryn buy coffees from Tim Horton's every day.

Activity three: Passive voice (Indiana Jones)

Learners were introduced to a clip of Indiana Jones. The activity was about watching the clip for about fifteen minutes, then the educator told them that they had to work in groups to make sentence in the passive voice based on the story of Indiana Jones. The educator gave them a worksheet in which there was a list of vocabulary words related to the topic and twelve questions. Learners had to answer the questions using the appropriate vocabulary words from the list and the verbs in the passive form. The educator was asked to mix the learners in groups and encourage them to work together, instead of giving them the choice to work individually or in groups. In this activity the educator divided the groups into four small groups and split the list of questions into two. Each group had six questions to answer; from one to six to two groups and from seven to twelve to the two other groups. Then, when the learners answered the questions he mixed the groups having the same list of questions and asked them to compare their answers and choose the best six ones. At the end learners were invited to write their sentences on the board and share it with the peers. The main interest was to observe the socio-cultural aspect in learning

new vocabulary words. Especially for those learners who were not familiar with the movie as it was not part of their culture.

Activity four: Relative clause

The educator divided the class into small groups and explained that each group received a bunch of cards with different words written on them. Each learner from the same group had to pick up a card, read the word and try to describe it to the other peers using an appropriate relative pronoun. The aim of the activity was to use the relative pronouns namely: who, where, which and that. In addition, the peers had to guess the word described through those relative clauses and say it to the peers.

The words provided by the educator were as follows: **Titanic, The Beatles** (the educator removed this word in Phase II when the learner picked it up. Based on the experience in Phase I, in which learners did not know the band he assumed that the learners in Phase II would not know it), **The Pyramids, George Bush, Michael Jordan, McDonalds, Dictionary, Calculator, Soccer, Bus, Whale, Daryn, South Africa and Dog.**

Activity five: Vocabulary

a) List 1:

Learners were divided into small groups of 3 or 4 learners in each group. Each group received a list of 10 vocabulary words, for example in one of the vocabulary activities there were the following words: **Identify, Critic, Tuition, Weather, Whether, Complain, Lecture, Rural, Urban, and Stubborn.** The educator explained that each group had to use the dictionary to describe the words and give examples to illustrate more the meaning of the words. As the list contained 10 words, some groups had the first five words, and the other groups had the five last words. Then, each group wrote the definitions and the examples. After that, the educator mixed

the groups and asked them to exchange their work. For example, let us say that group A had the first five words and group B had the last five words. Those groups were mixed together and each member of the group had to teach the other members the words missing in their list in order to complete it.

The aim of this activity was to make learners not only work with their peers in providing definitions and examples, but also be engaged in the activity and share their knowledge with the others when they were mixed. It was in this part of the activity that interaction between the learners and their awareness in providing the information and getting involved in the activity were observed. A process of being and doing for learning to happen and to take place.

b) List 2:

This was another vocabulary activity related to providing definitions of some new words and three sentences for each one. The educator explained to the learners that they had to work in groups and perform three tasks as follows: a) Write a definition that states clearly the meaning of the vocabulary words, b) Write three sentences for each vocabulary word, in which, among these sentences two examples had to be in the correct form (correct meaning and right context) and one sentence that had to be not exactly correct but almost correct, and c) all the examples had to be written on the worksheet the educator gave them. The educator divided the class into four small groups and each group received a vocabulary sheet with 5 different words. In fact, two groups had list “A” and two other groups had list “B”. For example, in list “A” there were the following words: **Treatment, Symptom, Infection, Cure, Resident**, and in list “B” there were the following words: **Injection, Trigger, Respiratory, Solve and Investigate**.

The activity comprised five steps. First, each group had to work on the five words and come up with a definition and three personal examples in which two were correct and one wrong. Second, after all the groups had finished doing the activity, they exchanged their sheets without moving from their seats. Each group had to read the definitions and the sentences of the other group and try to argue and discuss about them among the same group. Third, this step consisted of mixing

the groups having the same list of words. Therefore, the groups moved from their seats and mixed together. Each member had to discuss about their sentences and make comments about their examples. Learners had to compare, discuss and argue about their definitions and the choice of examples they came up with. In this step the educator's role was to encourage learners to work together, to listen to the other team-members, and to be helpful to those who needed more explanation. The fourth step was to come with a final group work. Learners were given a new worksheet and were asked to write down the definitions and examples that they had agreed about with the peers. Finally, in the fifth step, learners were asked to explain the words and give the three sentences to the other groups.

The aim of the activity was that all the groups came up with definitions and examples, and when exchanging them each member from the other groups could understand the meaning and spot the wrong example among the two correct ones. The educator made it clear that the exchange between the peers should be arguable. Learners had to share and express themselves about their choices and be able to convince others about their choices.

Activity six: Comic Strip

In this activity, the educator chose a comic strip, in which there were only a few callouts filled up with sentences and the rest was left blank (See **Figure 4.5**). He divided the class into small groups and explained to the learners that they had a copy of a comic strip on which they had to make predictions. As a first step of the activity, learners had to work in groups to fill in the callouts of the comic strip and come up with a story. After that the educator invited the learners to exchange their worksheets without moving seats and each group had to read and work on the other group's comic strip. This step required the learners to analyze the work of the peers and make comments about the work, whether they agreed or not and what the reasons were. Learners had to justify their ideas and argue about them. The third step consisted of mixing the groups that previously exchanged their work and the educator gave them a new comic strip sheet. In this step the two groups, forming a new one, had to work together and decide what ideas to keep and what ideas to change to have a consistent story. Learners were expected to discuss their choices and

work altogether to refine their work. Finally step four consisted of producing the story in the new sheet and choosing two members from the group to perform the dialogue in front of the class with a discussion about their choices and decisions made with the peers.

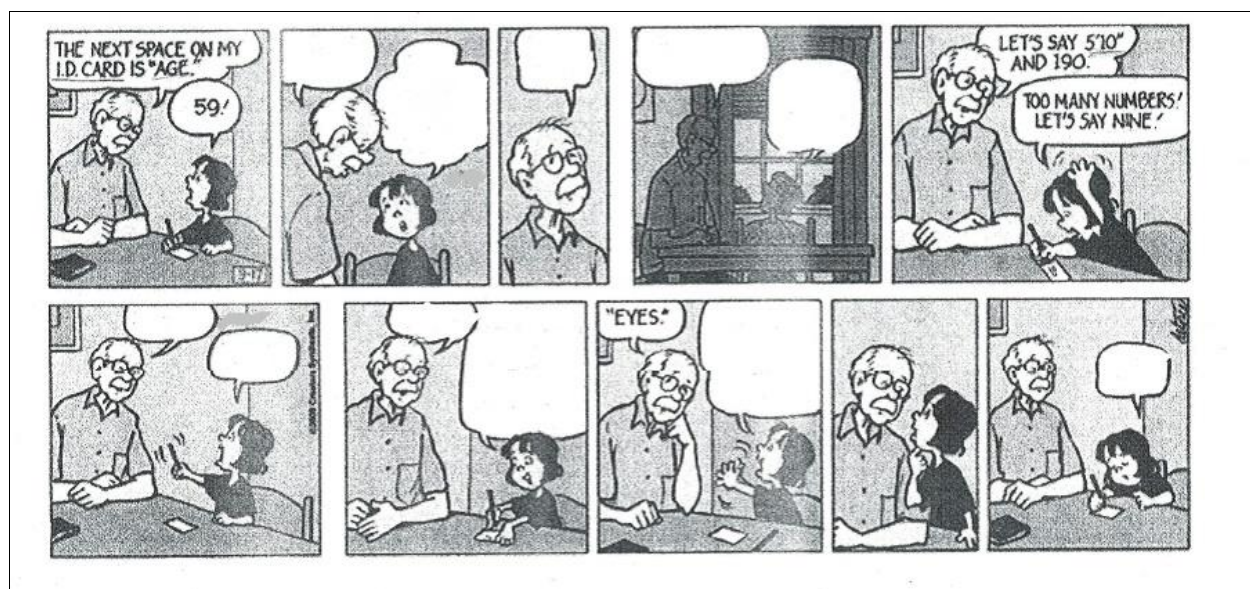


Figure 4.4: The Comic Strip Activity (Woodward, 1997)

Activity seven: Vocabulary (Ethics)

The aim of the activity was to introduce the learners to the part of speech and meaning of five words derived from the same root. The educator explained to the learners that they had to use a dictionary to check the meaning of new vocabulary words given in bold in a paragraph. Then, they had to use them in the appropriate place in the sentences he provided to them. There were five sentences with five gaps. At the beginning, each group had to work with the peers to understand the words and find the appropriate place of each word in the sentences. Then groups were mixed together. They had to compare their work and in case they had different sentences, they had to discuss and find the right place of the words. This activity seemed more difficult for the learners as they were not familiar with the new words and their meaning.

4.10 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to describe the preconized methodology that was utilized to conduct this research. For each phase of this research, the participants agreed to take part in this research project. Before starting the observations the ethical approval was provided. In order to study and analyze the way that the learning occurs within an EAP classroom, I recorded the meetings for the two approaches; the traditional approach and the one the cultural historical approach targeted by the theory of *objectification* in order to better understand the possibilities and constraints of teaching/learning in these two modalities.

The methodology was directed towards the need to investigate the processes of learning and understanding modes of social collaboration.

Through the described activities used in the traditional teaching approach and the activities designed and refined according to the requirements of the theory of *Objectification*, the learning process of EAP learners was explored. This process not only goes beyond the technicalities of learning a language, but the entire cultural dimension that mediates it. **Table 4.1** below summarizes the design of the activities used in Phase I and the changes occurred in Phase II. Basically, the changes occurred in the elaboration of questions (the grammar auction activity) and in the process of performing the tasks in groups (all other activities). I will present the analysis and the interpretation of those activities in Chapter 5.

The design of the activities	Phase I	Phase II
Passive voice (At the restaurant)	Learners were given the choice to work in groups or individually to make 10 sentences in the passive form. They all had a picture of a restaurant in which many actions were happening.	Learners were asked to work in groups to make five sentences in the passive. The educator advised them to write the sentence in the active and turn it into the passive and use different verb tenses. Also they had a list of verbs to choose from
Grammar auction	Two groups of learners received a paper with nine sentences that included different kinds of mistakes. Learners had to read the sentences and see which ones they were able to correct. Then, they had to bet on them and buy them. When all the sentences were bought, learners had to give the correct form where necessary. The challenge was to buy the most sentences and be able to correct them.	The process of performing the activity was similar to Phase I. the difference was in the design of the sentences learners had to bet on and buy. The educator included different lessons that learners had in their learning process. The sentences contained the use of different tenses, conditional, vocabulary, idioms, and linking words.
Passive voice (Indiana Jones)	Learners had to watch a clip and answer 12 questions in the passive form. They were given a list of new vocabulary words to use in the answers. The educator gave them the choice to work alone or in groups.	Learners were encouraged to work in groups instead of giving them the choice. Also, the educator started by explaining the activity and the vocabulary words from the beginning. In this phase, the educator divided the list of questions into two lists of 6 questions. Each group received one list to work on and share it later with the peers and compare their work.
Relative clause	Two groups of learners were involved in the activity. The educator prepared a list of 15 words and asked them to randomly pick a word and describe it to the peers. Learners were asked to practice the use of relative pronouns (who,	The process of conducting this activity was similar to Phase I. However, based on some difficulties learners faced in Phase I, some vocabulary words were removed (such as: The Beatles, Madonna and Titanic)

Vocabulary	<p>which and where).</p> <p>The educator provided learners with a list of 10 vocabulary words. He divided the class into small groups. Each pair of learners received 5 vocabulary words and was asked to give a definition and examples to illustrate the meaning of the words. Learners were given dictionaries to help them doing the activity.</p>	<p>Learners received the list of 5 words, but the process of performing the activity was refined. The activity comprised five steps. First, each group had to work on the five words and come up with a definition and three personal examples in which two were correct and one wrong. Second, groups exchanged their sheets without moving from their seats. Each group had to read the work of the peers and argue about it. Third, groups having the same list of words were mixed and were asked to compare their work. The educator encouraged learners to work together. The fourth step was to come with a final group work. In the fifth step, learners were asked to explain the words and give the three sentences to the other groups.</p>
Second conditional	<p>Learners were asked to work in groups to make sentence in the first conditional. They were given a sheet of paper in which there was a board drawn on it and by turn to finish the sentence. Learners were asked to use the maximum verbs possible and avoid repeating the same ones.</p>	
Comic strip		<p>Learners were divided into groups and were given a comic strip with blanks to fill in. This activity was also divided into steps as done in vocabulary activity. Learners worked in small groups, then they exchanged their work with the peers. After that they were grouped together to</p>

Vocabulary about ethics		<p>compare their work and finally they had to produce a final work and present it to the class.</p> <p>Learners were given a list of words from the same word root “ethics”. They had to work in groups and fill in the sentences with the appropriate part of speech, then compare their work with the other groups.</p>
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Table 4.1: The design of activities in Phase I and Phase II

CHAPTER 5

The Theory of *Objectification/Subjectification* in Language Learning: An Interventional Ethnographic Study

5.0 Abstract

The application of the theory of objectification helps learners to be more pre-occupied by the well-being of other learners of their learning community. This theory puts more emphasis on the teamwork, discussions and interactions among the learners. Also, it helps EAP learners developing strategies and experiencing new learning contexts in which they become aware that knowing and being are constitutive parts of their learning process that is mediated by their historico-socio-cultural backgrounds. Through this ethnographic study, I wanted to investigate language teaching and learning according to two different teaching models, the first model gave raise to Phase I and the second model gave raise to Phase II. The teaching in the first phase was performed according to a traditional approach where the learners' interactions with the educator and among themselves were limited. Moreover, the learning activities were not focused on the socio-cultural background of the learners. However, the activities in the second phase, which was focused on the application of the theory of objectification, were designed differently. This chapter highlights the fact that learning and subjectification took place in both phases with different ways. The aim of this chapter is to analyse different activities that were conducted in this research and understand how teaching and learning occur in the traditional and the sociocultural approaches.

5.1 Introduction

The theory of *objectification* offers a refinement of the activities and follows a process of learning and teaching different from the usual one used in the traditional approach. The observations were not related to learning and being only, but also to the aspects of learners' behavior and their position in the learning process.

Through the application of the theory of *objectification*, the learning process of international students was a combination of different learning strategies adopted according to each needed context. Among those strategies I noticed the engagement of learners in developing awareness that the learning of other becomes the responsibility of each one. This responsibility lied on the way each learner took the time to share knowledge and make sure the peers had understood well. Also, the socio-cultural dimension of learners should be highlighted, especially when they were interacting with the peers through the use of gestures, bodily movement, facial expressions and specific vocabulary in the mother tongue. In fact, when a group of learners sharing the same culture had an activity together, they systematically used their mother tongue to explain the vocabulary words, and make sure there was no misunderstanding.

The concepts of *objectification* and *subjectification* will be illustrated in this chapter through the observed activities in which EAP learners performed many tasks. The analysis of those activities is based on knowledge, knowing and learning, which are the three key concepts of this theory. Through this chapter I will analyze how learning took place in both phases. In other words, how the knowing happens through *objectification* and how the becoming happens through *subjectification*. The former is related to the way learners became aware of the structure of a sentence and how they use different learning strategies such as the mother tongue and gestures to perform activities in the classroom. The latter is related to the cultural aspect and background of learners. *Subjectification* deals with the question of gender, engagement and responsibility towards the peers. The research question deals with the different possibilities and constraints of each approach in terms of learning. It helps to see how each pedagogical approach (the

traditional approach and the cultural historical approach targeted by the theory of *objectification*) contribute to the learning/teaching processes and examine their limits. The study framework of the theory of *objectification* in the EAP learning process is summarized in Table 5.1 as follows:

	Phase I	Phase II
1. Knowing (<i>Objectification</i>): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness/consciousness, - Making meaning process - Learning strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of personal ideas, - Use of mother tongue, - Use of gestures. 2. Becoming (<i>Subjectification</i>): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interaction, - Socio-cultural dimension, - Engagement/disengagement, - Responsibility towards the peers, - Question of gender, - Power. 	List of activities as per selected by the educator based on the traditional teaching approach	List of redesigned activities done by the educator based on the cultural historical approach targeted by the theory of <i>objectification</i>

Table 5.1: Categories of the Study Framework

The different items of the framework illustrated in **Table 5.1** will be described in this chapter that has four sections. Section 2 deals with the analysis of the activities in the two phases. This section is divided into two sub-sections. Each sub-section deals with the activities learners performed in class. Those activities were selected and presented according to the criteria used for analyses. Also, pictures of learners and verbatim extracts are given to illustrate the analysis. Section 3 summarizes the concluding remarks of both phases in Tables 5.6 and 5.7. The conclusion of this chapter is summarized in section 4.

5.2 Data analysis

The data analysis is based on observations collected in this research project. All the observations were video-recorded, then watched and transcribed. In Phase I, EAP learners were observed while performing their activities during their classes. In this phase the educator did not modify the activities and the teaching/learning process was done through the traditional teaching approach. Phase II has seen some changes in the way learners had to perform some grammar and vocabulary activities. Those activities were refined and adapted to meet the objectives of the theory of *objectification*, and create more interactional settings among the learners. Also, there was more emphasis on the socio-cultural aspect of learners while performing the tasks. The next subsections provide more details about the analysis of data in both phases. Each sub-section will deal with specific learning activities. In addition, pictures are provided and some extracts of the transcribed discussions that EAP learners had with the peers while performing their tasks.

A summary of the analysis is presented in the following sub-sections with the categories used in each phase through four tables. There are two tables for phase I and two tables for phase II. One table shows how knowing happens through *objectification* and the other table shows how the becoming happens through *subjectification*. These two dimensions constitute the categories for data analysis.

5.2.1 Phase I: Observations through the Traditional Teaching Approach

In phase I, learners were taught through the traditional teaching approach. The educator followed his teaching strategies where his interactions with the learning community were limited. Interactions remained more spontaneous and learners were acting naturally as they had always behaved in the classroom. The activities set by the educator were related to grammar and vocabulary. There were some individual-work activities and some group-work activities. However, when learners had the chance to choose the members of their group, they preferred to work alone. Only a few learners were interacting with the peers and members of the learning

community showing engagement in the activities. Yet, most of them had difficulties to go to the other and express themselves in the target language.

In this sub-section, I will refer to some learning activities to highlight this dynamic where the learners are international students from The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In previous lessons, the learners became familiar with the manner in which sentences are made in the passive and active forms and the second conditional. They were also aware about the sentence structure and parts of speech and all the necessary changes that the verb form may require when constructing a meaningful sentence. In addition, there were other activities based on learning new vocabulary and concepts in which learners tried to give their own definitions, understanding of the concepts and illustrate them with personal examples.

In phase I, all the learners were from the same culture and shared the same traditions. It is important to highlight that in their country, females and males are separated in the educational system. Female and male learners study in separate classrooms. They have schools for boys only and schools for girls only and basically they are taught by the same gender. At the university level, they study in separate sections. Consequently, the first time they found themselves in mixed classes was when they came to Canada and when they took courses in colleges or at universities. So being in a mixed classroom is a cultural adaptation of a new learning environment where the opposite sex is present. In fact, for all of them, being mixed in the learning space is a new challenge and a different learning environment. The sample of the EAP learners that I have observed in both phases was performing activities within mixed classes.

The collected data will be analyzed based on some activities that learners performed in class. The main criteria used to analyze the data are related to the three key concepts of the theory of *objectification*, namely: knowledge, knowing and learning. First I looked at this aspect of the theory in the teaching and learning processes in the two phases, and then I looked at the *subjectification* aspect in the teaching and learning of EAP.

To start with, Phase I was characterized by a selection of six activities that learners performed in class with the peers. Those activities were divided into two sub-sections. The first sub-section deals with the activities that illustrate the knowing and the second sub-section deals with the activities that illustrate the process of becoming. **Table 5.2** and **Table 5.3** below show the activities related to each dimension. For the purpose of the analysis, each dimension of the *objectification* theory will be presented separately and as per summarized in the following tables:

Knowing (<i>Objectification</i>)	Activities
Awareness/consciousness	- Passive voice: picture of a restaurant with several actions happening.
Learning strategies:	- Second conditional: board game.
- Use of personal ideas	- Passive voice: watching Indiana Jones clip.
- Use of mother tongue	- Relative clause: making sentences using vocabulary words.
- Use of gestures	

Table 5.2: Knowing in Phase I

Becoming (<i>Subjectification</i>)	Activities
Interaction	- Passive voice: picture of a restaurant with several actions happening.
-Learner/peers	- Grammar auction: buy sentences and correct them.
-Learner/Educator	- Vocabulary: give definitions and examples.
Socio-cultural dimension	- Passive voice: picture of a restaurant with several actions happening.
	- Second conditional: board game.
	- Passive voice: watching Indiana Jones clip.
	- Relative clause: making sentences using vocabulary words.
Engagement/disengagement	- Passive voice: picture of a restaurant with several actions happening.
	- Second conditional: board game.
Question of gender	- Passive voice: picture of a restaurant with several actions happening.
	- Second conditional: board game.

Table 5.3: Becoming in Phase I

In the next sub-section each dimension of the theory of *objectification* will be illustrated through the analyzed activities that learners performed in the classroom. I will start by presenting the knowing, then the becoming dimensions as follows:

5.2.1.1 Knowing

As mentioned previously, the dimension of knowing was investigated through the analysis of the teaching and learning processes of *objectification*. This part of the analysis deals with those activities in which learners developed certain awareness and consciousness of the target knowledge towards other individuals in doing the task and sharing their knowledge with the peers. Also, learners used different strategies in their *objectification* process such as: the mother tongue and the gestures.

The two dimensions of the theory (*objectification/subjectification*) are linked and it is hard to dissociate them. However, for the purpose of the analysis I will be presenting them in two different sub-sections. First of all, I will start by presenting the activities related to knowing, then the activities related to becoming as follows:

The selected activities for the first part of the analysis are related to making sentences in the passive voice, making sentences in the second conditional, using new vocabulary words in personal sentences, correcting sentences and giving definitions.

Activity one: Passive voice (At the restaurant)

Reminder:

The aim of this activity was to make sentences in the passive form. Learners were asked to look at a picture of a restaurant where several actions were taking place. The details of this activity are available in sub-section 4.9.1.

In this activity two groups were chosen. One group was composed of two male learners and the other one was composed of one male learner and one female learner. Those two groups were considered according to the criteria selected for data analysis.

The first group was composed of two Saudi Male Learners; SML1 and SML2 (from left to right in **Figure 5.1**). At the beginning of the activity each learner looked at the picture and they did not communicate. Each one had his sheet in front of him and was reading it. The educator explained to the class what they had to do and gave an example of illustration. The explanation was not given to one particular group, but to the whole class.

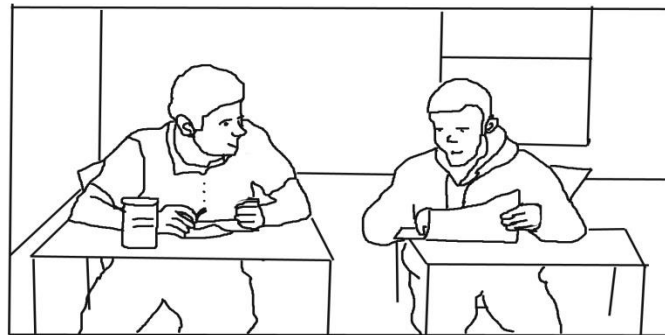


Figure 5.1: SML2 explaining to SML1

SML1 did not know how to make the sentence in the passive and from time to time he was looking at SML2 without saying anything. Finally, he decided to talk to him by giving his personal example as follows: *“The water is be drink, drunk. Here, the water is drinking. It’s the same sentence. You see what I mean?”*, line [1]. SML1 used different tenses, but not in the correct form of the passive voice. From lines [3] to [13] SML1 asked SML2 and insisted that the tense was continuous, but at the same time he was aware that there were some changes in the verb tense that should be done in the passive, line [13]. SML2 replied to him and gave him the way the sentence should be, but he was hesitant. Their discussion was as follows:

- [1] SML1: *The water is be drink, drunk. Here, the water is drinking. It's the same sentence. You see what I mean?*
- [2] SML2: *yes I know*
- [3] SML1: *so what are the changes here?*
- [4] SML2: *(no answer)*
Silent period
- [5] SML1: *even the first sentence ... still doing the action, still drinking*
- [6] SML2: *yeah. Does not matter. Still passive voice*
- [7] SML1: *you mean for the first sentence?*
- [8] SML2: *for both, yeah*
- [9] SML1: *yeah, but what I mean here is ... the simple form, and the second one 'were'*
- [10] SML2: *heuh ... like here in the picture (showing his sheet). The waiter stay*
- [11] SML1: *ok, alright*
- [12] SML2: *that mean, the two ... present continuous*
- [13] SML1: *ok, ok, the present continuous, but we change it to passive voice*
- [14] SML2: *ok, the orders are being taking, heuh taken.*
- [15] SML1: *ahh taking?*
- [16] SML2: *are being.*
- [17] SML1: *ahhh*
- [18] SML2: *taken by*
- [19] SML1: *we cannot say 'taking by'?*
- [20] SML2: *no, because it's plural 'orders'*
- [21] SML1: *ohh ok, alright, alright ... ohhh now, now makes sense yeah. I forget about that. So the order, I mean the orders ...*
- [22] SML2: *are being taken*

Also, from line [1] to line [12], SML1 seemed not to know exactly what to do and he kept asking his peer. His main focus was about the verb tense of the sentence rather than the form of the sentence. SML1 had many questions, yet he did not know how to ask them and express his ideas clearly. In addition, SML2 was aware about what to do and how to do it, but maybe did not know how to explain it. For example in line [12], SML2 confirmed that the tense used is the present continuous but he added that there were changes that should occur in the passive; in line [13]. SML2 neither reminded SML1 about the rules of the passive in which there is an inversion of the subject and object of the active nor about the use of the auxiliary 'to be'. This part shows that SML2 became progressively aware and conscious that SML1 was facing difficulties and he decided to help the peer by providing an example as shown in line [14]. From lines [14] to [22], SML2 became more engaged in explaining the form of the past participle than using the passive voice. This part of the discussion will be analyzed later when dealing with *subjectification* in the next sub-section.

Within this activity, SML1 suggested another strategy to make the sentences in the passive (Line [23]). SML1 suggested keeping the sentence in the passive form that they made earlier, and at the same time he proposed to make some changes and provide a question instead of an affirmative sentence. He asked SML2 to give him a question and after a silent period SML1 gave his own example; saying: “*Is the restaurant expensive?*”. This strategy was a good alternative to diversify their work. However, SML2 did not say anything and he was writing down his examples. This may be seen as an example of the lack of awareness and absence of responsibility towards SML1’s part. SML1 asked him for a second time, and he gave a question as an example “*Is the restaurant expensive?*”. Then, it was only after the third call that SML2 started communicating and explaining his thoughts as follows:

- [23] SML1: *let’s change the form. All the sentences continue, you know?. Let’s practice use that thing. Let’s make some questions. The mother’s feeding the daughter. Keep this. Give me a question (silence). Is the restaurant expensive?*
- [24] SML2: *yes, but there is no connection with ... heuh ...*
- [25] SML1: *yeah. It’s ok we can make it. It’s about the restaurant so ... you know ...*
- [26] SML2: *it’s different*
- [27] SML1: *hein?*
- [28] SML2: *it’s different. How you’re gonna make the question?*
- [29] SML1: *the restaurant?*
- [30] SML2: *yes because it’s ... ‘expensive’ heu... ‘expensive’ it’s an adjective*
- [31] SML1: *but there is object and there is a verb*
- [32] SML2: *ok, but it is adjective ... ‘expensive’ how you’re gonna make it?*
- [33] SML1: *the adjective is ‘expensive’?*
- [34] SML2: *adjective ... yeah, so how?*
- [35] SML1: *so if there is adjective we don’t? it is difficult to make it? Or we can’t do it?*
- [36] SML2: *no ... no I think we can’t*
- [37] SML1: *ok ... ok give me a question then*

SML2’s answer to his friend was that there was no connection between the tasks of the activity and what the other peer suggested. Yet, SML2 was not able to convince him that it was not possible to make a question in the passive form when there is an adjective.

SML1 insisted on the fact that they could make it because for him it was related to the restaurant and he wanted to say that the restaurant was expensive. However, SML2 explained in line [30] that there was an adjective in the example. Still SML1 did not understand the reason because for him the example had an object and a verb; line [31]. Also, from line [32] to line [37] the two learners were sharing their thoughts, but SML2 could not deliver well his understanding to his

friend. In line [36], SML2 mentioned that he did not think it was possible to make a passive sentence with an adjective and it was the only argument he could give.

This activity was a good example of showing the progressive awareness of SML2 towards the peer. He was knowledgeable in making the passive form and mastering the rule, but had difficulties to explain that to SML1 who did not understand well the task from the beginning and the kind of sentences to provide. Even if SML1 suggested good learning strategy to perform the tasks, but was not successful to get a better explanation from SML2 regarding the use of adjectives in making a passive sentence. Also, the educator was not present in this part of the activity to help them more and provide clarifications in the use of adjectives in the passive voice.

So to summarize the above extract of the discussion between SML2 and SML1, they could come up with a correct grammatical sentence as required in the activity. The sentence they both made was: *"The orders are being taken"*. It is clearly shown here that the process of *objectification*, took place in the traditional approach to language learning. SML2 made calls to SML1 to check his examples and share his sentences in the passive voice. First, he started by giving the sentence *"the water is be drink, is drinking"*. The learner understood that the passive sentence contains three forms of verb. However, he did not use the correct form of those verbs. SML2 was going through the process of actualizing the general into the singular, but did not find the necessary help to make the sentence correct. Second, SML2 wanted to try another example in the continuous form and he made another call to SML1. The latter explained to him that there were some changes that should occur in the passive. However, SML1 did not further his explanation to the peer. He did not show him or explain to him more about the changes of the verb, that there is an auxiliary to be added and so on. SML1 just gave the sentence in the passive as follows: *"the orders are being taken"*.

As per the second group, I would like to highlight that the analysis of the verbatim covered the two aspects of the theory (knowing and becoming). I will present the whole discussion between

the learners and the educator as it happened in class. Then for the analysis, I will start investigating the process of *objectification* (knowing) first, which is the purpose of this sub-section, followed by examples of *subjectification* (becoming) in the next sub-section. Therefore, in this part of the analysis I will refer only to the extracts of the discussion related to knowing.

The group was, initially, composed of four learners. There were three Saudi Male Learners (SML1, SML2 and SML3) and one Saudi Female Learner (SFL4). The educator invited SML3 to sit beside SFL4 and work together. Learners started by looking at the pictures and tried to make the sentences. Interaction between the four learners was very poor, and again the educator told them before that they could choose to work with a partner or alone. He said: “*You can work in groups if you want*”, “*Feel free to work with your partner, too if you want to discuss what you see*”. The educator did not insist on team work. Generally, learners end up by working alone even if they hear the educator saying that they can work with a partner. Finally, among the four learners forming the group only SML3 and SFL4 were working together (**Figure 5.2**). The two others were sitting on SML3’s right hand. They were not participating in the learning activity. They were playing a passive role in conducting the activity and each one was working alone.



Figure 5.2: SML3 and SFL4 working together

Both learners in **Figure 5.2** were originated from the same country and having the same cultural background. They were sitting beside each other, each one had his/her table, but they shared the same picture of the restaurant which was put in the middle, as shown in the picture. I will present the entire discussion that took place during this activity just below and when I present the analysis I will refer to each extracts by the number of lines.

- [38] *SML3 to E: the woman will be feeding*
 [39] *SFL4: give, give*
 [40] *E: ok*
 [41] *SML3: ... her daughter*
 [42] *E to SML3: sure*
 [43] *SML2: what about 'give'?*
 [44] *E: you have to be specific, giving you food. You have to say someone will be giving you food*
 [45] *SML2: yeah (...)*
 [46] *E: ok the verb is 'feed' F-E-E-D ... (the educator is spelling the verb)*
 [47] *SML3: the woman, the woman has been feeding her daughter?*
 [48] *SFL4 to E: like this?*
 [49] *E: that's 'fed' that's past. That's past form*
 [50] *SML3: it is supposed to be past? Heuh past?*
 [51] *E: you can choose to use whatever tenses you want. You can practice using different tenses. You can use present continuous, if you want you can say 'is feeding ...*
- [52] *E: P ... P-O-U-R ... so the man is pouring*
 [53] *SML2: it's a verb*
 [54] *E: yes it's a verb*
 [55] *SML3 to SML2: where is it? Where is it? /eech hiya/? (What is it?)*
 [56] *SML2: /hadi/ (This one, showing the action on the picture) Pour.*
 [57] *SML4: where?*
 [58] *SML2: /yssob/ (pour)*
 [59] *SML3: /aywa hadi/ pour (yes, this one)*
- [60] *SML3 to SML2: P-O-U-R? hein? P-O-U-R?*
 [61] *SML3: the man has been ... been?*
 [62] *SFL4: pourrr*
 [63] *SML3: pour?*
 [64] *SFL4: E-D*
 [65] *SML3: poured ... the wiiiine, the wine or ...*
 [66] *SFL4: the what?*
 [67] *SML3: the wine*
 [68] *SFL4: (showing the picture) this wine?*
 [69] *SML3: (smile) the wine, the wine /machroub kohli/ (Alcoholic drink)*
 [70] *SFL4: (laughs) maybe*
- [71] *SFL4: the food has been carried*
 [72] *SML3: C-A-R-R? (giving the spelling)*
 [73] *SFL4: R-R-E-D (helping him with the spelling)*
 [74] *SML3: yes? Carried by*
 [75] *SFL4: by the woman*
 [76] *SML3: the woman /la2 la2/ /ich essmou hadha, khallina ... mokadim al talabat/ (No,no, what's it called, this one, serving orders ...gesturing like serving)*
 [77] *SFL4: heuh the person? The person maybe ... (silent period)*
- [78] *SFL4: "the garçon"*
 [79] *SML3: what is called, heuh what is called the guy who just carries the food*
 [80] *SFL4: "the garçon"? what?*
 [81] *E: well guys don't keep looking at her ... you're trying to say "the garçon"? or what? (the learners were looking at the camera, in fact they were asking me to help them!)*
 [82] *SML3: heuh no, actually*
 [83] *E: we don't say that ... we used to say like "waiter"*
 [84] *SML3: we actually get from Egypt movies, you know*

- [85] *SML3: seven ... seven, The wood has been ...*
- [86] *SFL4: picture?*
- [87] *SML3: no, the picture has been ...*
- [88] *SFL4: has been*
- [89] *SML3: heuh ... hanger, hanging by*
- [90] *SFL4: by the wall.*
- [91] *SML3: by the wall (they laughed)*
- [92] *SFL4: ok, ok. The ... heuh, the picture*
- [93] *SML3: I don't think so*
- [94] *SFL4: yeah*
- [95] *SML3: but I don't think so ...the wall, he...heuh he doesn't carry the picture and he put it in it*
- [96] *SFL4: ok ok, already, already carry*
- [97] *SML3: but it is put by the owner, the owner*

In the first part of the activity SML3 was giving his example to the educator. He wanted to try the first sentence in the passive and check it with the educator. Then in line [50], SML3 asked the educator if the verbs should be in the past, but he learned that he could practice different other tenses, line [51].

From lines [55] to [59] learners were using their mother tongue to show the action, give the verb and make sure each one had understood the word. At this level of their engagement, the educator was not present which explains their use of the mother tongue. The educator gave the spelling of the verb in line [52] and answered SML2's question about its part of speech, then he went to see another group of learners. At the same time, SML3 wanted to know which verb they were talking about. In line [55], SML3 asked his peer about it in English then in his mother tongue. Learners frequently used their dialect when the educator was not around. In fact, having recourse to the mother tongue was one of the strategies that Saudi learners used among their groups to explain the English words and share their ideas. Using their dialect looked like an easy alternative for them to make sure they have understood well the meaning of the word. Mother tongue facilitated communication between them. For example in line [56] SML2 showed on the picture the action of pouring and he used the mother tongue to say "this one" and at the same time pronouncing the action verb. Through this verb, learners learnt a new word. They not only became progressively aware of its spelling, but also of its part of speech and meaning.

The example of learning a new verb, in this case the verb ‘pour’, can be compared to the nut cracking example, illustrated by Radford (2013) and referred to in Chapter 3. For the chimps, learning how to crack the nut and eat the kernel was based on a process of observation and intense trials. When we see the chimps in action, it seems easier, however, the process of holding a nut, choosing the stone and knowing how to hit the nut to eat the kernel takes a long process to be successful. Basically, observing attentively how the mother chimp does the actions many times teaches the little ones how to do it by themselves. In this perspective, the example related to learning the verb “pour” went through a process of reading the word, asking about the spelling, referring to the part of speech and using a picture to identify the action. Learners could understand and conceptualize the word in their minds based on some pre-existed knowledge that they shared altogether. The previous knowledge was actualized through the activity and a new word was learned and shared among the group.

Through this activity both knowing (*objectification*) and becoming (*subjectification*) took place simultaneously. Awareness and use of different learning strategies took place through some interactions among the learners within a socio-cultural framework. Even if the educator was not paying much attention to the socio-cultural dimension of the learners, the learners themselves were behaving according to this dimension.

So when learners understood the verb “pour”, SML3 was making the example and writing it (lines from [60] to [70]). SML3 was writing the sentence and reading it loudly. At the same time, SFL4 was listening to him and trying to write the sentence. However, when SML3 used the word “wine” she expressed astonishment in line [66], and in line [68] she wanted to make sure about what she heard and she pointed to the picture asking SML3 if that drink on the picture was wine. Then SML3 confirmed that and gave its synonym in Arabic (line [69]), SFL4 laughed and seemed to accept it with difficulty because of her cultural background where alcoholic drinks are forbidden. This idea will be developed more when referring to examples about the socio-cultural aspect in the next sub-section, under the dimension of *subjectification*.

In addition, within the same activity, SML3 and SFL4 wanted to make another sentence in the passive. SML3 mentioned that it will be their seventh sentence, line [85]. From lines [85] to [97], the two learners wanted to make a sentence about the frame that was on the wall, but they ended up by making a sentence in the passive that did not have any meaning. They understood that the sentence was meaningless and they started laughing. In line [87] SML3 started well his passive sentence, but he was not sure what to add after “been”. Also, he was looking to add an object to his sentence. Even if the educator explained during the lesson that in the passive sentence the object can be omitted as it does not have much importance in the sentence. However, learners always wanted to make the sentence with the three parts of speech, namely: the subject, the verb and the object. Therefore, in line [89] SML3 was giving his sentence loudly and looking for an object after the preposition “by” and at the same time SFL4 was trying to help him and she said “the wall”. She used the word “wall” as an object to the passive sentence. They both recognized that the sentence had no meaning and they both laughed (line [91]). In line [95] SML3 explained in his own words that the wall could be an object of the passive, as it was an object which cannot do the action of the active sentence. This learner was aware of the rules used to make a passive sentence and was successful in explaining it to the peer. SML3 added in line [97] that the frame was added by the owner, which made sense to them.

This part of the activity shows that not only the two learners were engaged in the activity, but they expressed themselves freely and equally. Unconsciously, they agreed that something was wrong with the sentence which made them laugh and have fun. Then, after they tried to find why the sentence seemed not correct and they could agree about it at the end. This passage can be interpreted using the lenses of the theory of *objectification* as follows: learners based their understanding on a pre-existed knowledge that was actualized through a sentence they tried to produce when performing the activity. They were aware that in making a sentence they needed a subject, verb and an object. However, when they tried to read the sentence and understand it, they clearly showed their disagreement about the meaning. Structurally speaking the sentence was correct, but semantically it was not. They explained it saying that the subject used could not do the action they wanted to refer to. This exchange between the learners was successful in terms of arguing about the sentence, sharing their knowledge and learning a new form of sentences.

In addition, both learners were feeling comfortable working together. In fact something not common in mixed groups happened in that activity. When learners laughed about the example of “the wall” in line [91], SML3 while laughing with SFL4 was likely to punch her on the shoulder. This is a common friendly gesture that men or boys do for a joke when they are together. SML3 was about to do it, he even started the gesture but did not finish it. He just stopped at the last moment because culturally speaking it is not appropriate to behave that way with the opposite sex, who is from the same cultural origin.

Activity two: Passive voice (Indiana Jones)

Reminder:

The aim of this activity was to make sentences in the passive form based on questions. The learners were asked to watch a clip and then answer questions using some new vocabulary words. The details of this activity are available in sub-section 4.9.1.

After all the new vocabulary words were described, the groups were formed and each group had to provide the answers in the passive form. The group was composed of four learners: three Saudi Male Learners and one Saudi Female Learner. **Figure 5.3** below shows how they were sitting; from right to left SML1, SML2, SML3 and SFL4. SML1 and SFL4 started working together. SML2 was listening to another group and answering to the educator who was helping that group, and SML3 was writing his answers alone.

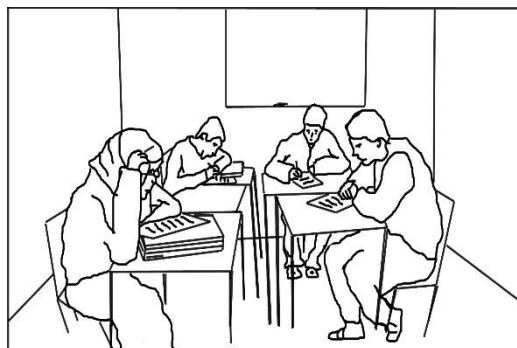


Figure 5.3: Learners working individually

For this group, the educator noticed that they were not working together. He decided to intervene. He read the first question: “*What was Indiana’s helper frightened by?*”, line [98] below. SML2 tried to give the answer. He suggested two things that he thought they scared Indiana Jones, which were: spider or spear. When SML2 said spear he was gesturing with his right hand as if he was throwing a spear to show it to the others. The educator corrected him in line [104] and said that it was not a spear, but spiders. The other learners were copying the answer and they did not say anything. Also, the educator was talking to SML2 who responded to his question the first:

- [98] *E: what was Indiana’s helper frightened by?*
- [99] *SML2: was frightened by what?*
- [100] *E: what?*
- [101] *SML2: spider?*
- [102] *E: you can say spider. There were two things that scared him*
- [103] *SML2: or spear? (Gesturing)*
- [104] *E: no, not spear. You can just say spiders*

As the activity was going, each learner was writing the answers individually. SML3 was having difficulties to write one of the sentences. He asked SFL4 to help him by giving him the whole sentence. The discussion between them was as follows:

- [105] *SML1: number three, what had happened to the other scientist? Killed. He was killed. When he see the (gesturing)*
- [106] *SML2: saw (he corrected SML1) the ...*
- [107] *SML3: this thing (showing the word in the paper)*
- [108] *SML1: yes*
- [109] *SFL4: what happened?*
- [110] *SML1: you have to write this (showing the words on the sheet) word in the sentence for the answer, because when he open something he see the skeleton at the same time*
- [111] *SFL4: by the man or? Who?*
- [112] *SML1: start with the man, who is (...) the Indian or the man?*

From lines [105] to [112] SML1, SML2 and SFL4 were all working together to find the answer. They were trying many ways and applying different strategies to come up with the sentences but they found it difficult. SML3 was not working with them; he only interrupted them once to

correct the verb tense to SML1. He was writing and thinking about his answers individually and did not share it with the peers. However, he was attentive to what they were doing. SML2 was showing an absence of awareness towards the peers. Especially, when they did not know what to do. After a few minutes, the educator came again to the group and tried to see what they had done, but he did not see what they wrote. He just asked them to keep on working together without checking what they did.

In the transcript below, learners tried to make another sentence, but they were not sure about the correct verb to use. In line [114], SFL4 tried to provide her answer but she added that she was not sure about it. In fact, she was not following the others. They were doing question four and she was thinking of another question. SML1 corrected her and mentioned the word “gold”. He was referring to the “idol”; SFL4 said something in Arabic. She said ‘statue’, but she wanted to mean the ‘idol’: when they agreed about the verb, they made their sentence in line [120], but it was not fully given.

- [113] *SML3: what happened to the*
- [114] *SFL4: it was replace by? Indians? I don't know.*
- [115] *SML1: no, number four, for the gold (gesturing the statue with his hands)*
- [116] *SFL4: /al sanam/ (meaning the Idol, but the learner used the word statue)*
- [117] *SML3: what happened?*
- [118] *SFL4: heuh, he changed ... heuh!*
- [119] *SML1: ahhh, it's exchange*
- [120] *SML3: he exchanged the bag to...*

Among the four learners only three were working together and helping each other to write the answers in the passive form. Each one was trying to give his/her feedback and they finally agreed about one answer. This activity was less motivating to the learners, on the one hand they were not familiar with the movie itself, and on the other one they had to learn new words which seemed difficult for them to understand. Also, the activity was done early in the morning which might be not the appropriate time for them.

When the educator came and asked SFL4 about one of the sentences, she said that she did not watch the whole clip and therefore she did not have the answer. She complained about the clip the whole time. She said that she slept all the time, and she preferred romantic movies and comedies rather than such kind of movies which she found boring.

5.2.1.2 Becoming

As mentioned previously, the dimension of becoming was investigated through the analysis of the teaching and learning processes of *subjectification*. This part of the analysis deals with those activities in which learners interacted with the peers in performing the tasks showing sometimes an engagement and other times a dis-engagement. Also this part focuses on the socio-cultural dimension where learners were influenced not only by their cultural beliefs in positioning themselves in the tasks of the activities they performed but also to the gender relationship while exchanging their ideas within the learning community. The activities were analyzed using the following three categories: a) interaction, b) socio-cultural dimension, and c) gender.

a) Interaction: this part deals with the interaction between the peers and also with the educator. It concerns all the dynamics that take place in the classroom within the learning community as described in Figure 3.4, in Chapter 3. Three activities will be analyzed to illustrate the becoming:

Activity one: passive voice (At the restaurant)

This activity is similar to the transcript from line [1] to line [37]. The group was composed of two male learners as shown in Figure 5.1. SML2 was not successful to explain the rule to SML1. Consequently, SML1 called the educator and asked him for more explanation whether he can use the adjective or not and if he can, so how to use it. It was only through the interaction between SML1 and the educator that things were clarified and explained. The two learners finished the activity individually. This part of the activity showed that one of the learners wanted to be

perfectionist in doing the task, but there was a lack of communication between the peers. This aspect of learning made each one works alone. Also the only way SML1 could understand well how to make the example was when he called the educator. The educator could help the learner to clarify the ideas and understand more about making questions in the passive form. The interaction between SML1 and the educator took place, but it was in a limited way.

The only time the educator came to the group. it was when SML1 called him to ask a question. A part from that, the educator did not come to make them interact and work together. In fact, the educator was explaining a sentence to another learner from another group, and SML1 was listening to the explanation from his seat. It looked like SML1 was taking advantage from the explanation which might helped him understand better, but he did not ask SML2.

As per the second group; the learners had the picture in front of them, they looked at it and tried together to come up with five sentences in the passive form. The educator suggested to start with sentences in the active form, and then make the necessary changes into the passive. This was a suggested strategy that could help learners to perform their task. One of the examples learners came up with was “*the woman has been feeding her daughter*”, and it was with the help of the educator who was guiding them in making the first example. However, they had to try different forms of verbs before they could come with the final sentence.

This part of the analysis deals with lines [38] to [51]. The educator was present in the group to help them come up with the first example. He was interacting more with SML3 as he was the most active one. SFL2 was listening all the time and taking notes. She did not intervene much except when she suggested the verb “give”. In line [47], SML3 was aware about the rule of using the continuous tense, which is characterized by a description of an action happening now. He made his sentence using a subject and a verb in the future perfect continuous, and he uttered it loudly to check its accuracy with the educator who was there for help. Yet, he ended up by using the present perfect continuous. At the same time, in line [48], SFL4 proposed another verb which

could be used, but in a different form, and the educator explained that they could choose whatever tense they wanted.

The educator suggested practicing different tenses so that they can see the differences. The exchange between the learners and the educator was fruitful in terms of their learning process, but for this example learners did not make the transformation to the passive. Their learning process of using the continuous tense was, at a certain level, attained, and the context was right. However, the example provided was in the active sentence and not the passive. While the two learners were working together, they were interrupted by another learner (SML1) who was asking help for the verb “pour”. He showed them the action on the picture and at the same time called the educator to help him with the word.

SML1 showed him the action in the picture and at the same time he was gesturing the action. The educator gave him the verb, the spelling and confirmed that it was a verb (lines [52] to [54]). Meanwhile, SML3 was listening to them and he asked SML2 to show him the action and tell him about the verb. He not only asked the question in English, but at the same time used the mother tongue to make sure he understood well the action and the verb (See line [55]).

Through those examples learners showed a sense of responsibility towards the peers at different levels. For example, in the first group responsible interaction took place progressively while learners were making the sentences in the passive form. However, the knowledgeable learner was not skillful enough to share his knowledge to the other peer, especially when the latter asked his questions. Even if the knowledgeable learner tried his best, he was limited in terms of explaining the rule to the peer. As per the second group, there was a mutual interaction between the two members of the group. Basically, there was not much questioning among the members of this group. Learners followed the instructions provided to them and tried to make the sentence in an affirmative form to their best. This dynamics between the learners took place throughout the activity to reach the aim of the activity. However, the educator’s presence within the groups was

important. Learners faced difficulties with some sentences and forms of words that they could not solve by themselves. I could observe that the presence of the educator was helpful for most learners to understand more the use of some words in their appropriate context. The aim of the activity was not totally reached since the groups did not all come up with the sentences in the passive form.

Activity two: Grammar auction

Reminder:

The aim of this activity was to make correct sentences. The learners were asked to bet on sentences, buy them and provide the correct form if necessary. The details of this activity are available in sub-section 4.9.1.

The group was composed of three learners, two males and one female (**Figure 5.4**, from right to left SML1, SML2, and SFL3). They were engaged in the activity from the start by correcting the sentences and discussing the rules of some tenses to make sure which sentences to buy. They collaborated well and each one was giving his/her own understanding of the grammar rules, especially when it was for the forms of conditionals. They used their notes to make sure they had the right answers. During the whole discussion, the educator did not come to check what they were doing. In **Figure 5.4**, SFL3 asked SML1 to keep his notes on the table and check about the compound nouns. In fact, their discussion and explanation was all the time in their Arabian dialect, as follows:

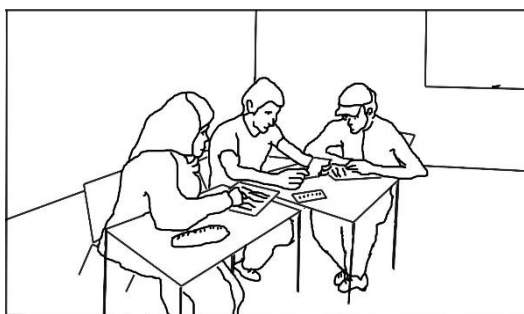


Figure 5.4: the three learners talking about the grammar rules

- [209] *SFL3: Compound sentence /tiji maaha/(is used with), after, so, before*
- [210] *SML1: after, so, before /la la ... tiji/ (no no, it is used with) so, and ... conjunction*
- [211] *SFL3: /la la la/ (No-No-No)*
- [212] *SML2: /ay wahda? Hena?/ (showing SFL3 the sentence on the sheet asking which one? Here?)*
- [213] *SML2: /hiya/ (it is) or, and*
- [214] *SFL3: no no, compound*
- [215] *SML2: /hadi/ (this one) compound ... or, and, but*

SFL3 was not convinced about what the two SMLs were telling her and she asked SML1 to check the compound sentences from his notes. Then, she checked with him and she said ‘*you’re right*’. From lines [209] to [215] the three learners were talking about the rules and which word could be correct, but they were not successful to apply the rule. The Males gave their strategies, they asked SFL3 not to buy the definitions. But SML1 told her that he will just increase the prices so that the other groups will pay much.

In this activity learners were expected to be challenging in buying a number of sentence and working together by providing the correct form of each sentence bought. However, learners, mostly SML1, was motivated more by increasing the bid and making the other groups buy the sentences and lose their money. This group did not reach the objectives of the activity and when using their notes they were copying the sentences and the rules instead of discussing them and sharing their knowledge. Also, they were sharing their ideas in their mother tongue all the time. This activity showed that males on all groups were enthusiastic by the auction and increasing the prices, but they did not really focus on the aim of the activity. The female learner was the only one interested in finding the correct form of the sentences, but as the two males were monopolizing the activity, she gave up. Overall, this activity was so noisy and the educator was not present to guide them and make them reach the objectives of the activity.

This activity needs a pedagogical intervention to make the male learners aware of one of the aims or objectives of the activity, namely that learners are supposed to show a sensitivity towards the other learners and a social and intersubjective involvement into the matters under discussion (e.g., English sentence form).

Activity three: Vocabulary

Reminder:

The aim of this activity was to give definitions of some words and explain it more using an example. The learners were asked to use dictionaries and look up the words. The details of this activity are available in sub-section 4.9.1.

In this activity learners were asked to use dictionaries and work with their partners to describe 5 vocabulary words and give an example to illustrate the word. After that, each member had to read the definition and the example to the rest of the class. The group was composed of two learners; SML1 and SFL2. The words they had in their list were: **Identify, Critic, Tuition, Weather, Whether**. Each one took a dictionary and was working individually. The two learners did not communicate much and did not do the activity together. When the educator came and asked if everything was good, they just said yes. When it was time to correct the activity, both learners used the definitions of the dictionary and the examples. They did not rephrase them in their personal words, nor did they make their own examples. Also, it was not easy to see if they could understand the meaning of the sentences they gave and the new words they were supposed to learn.

This activity did not see much interaction between the learners. Learners were expected to work together and share their knowledge regarding the vocabulary words given to them. Learners did not discuss about the meaning of words and did not share their ideas about them. Also, they did not make personal sentences to illustrate their understanding of the words. Using dictionaries in this activity was just a tool to help learners find the right meaning of words. They were expected to explain the words. However, learners did copy the definitions and examples without going further in showing their understanding. The educator could have helped them by interacting with them and giving them an example to illustrate the aim of the activity. Learners did not show enough responsibility or develop certain awareness towards each other. They did not give personal examples to show that they learned something new. It should be noted that among the

five vocabulary words that learners had in their list two of them were easier (e.g, tuition and weather). Yet, it is not sure that they understood well the meaning of the remaining words.

b) Socio-cultural dimension: examples used in this part were related to the social aspect of the learners and the background they were brought up in. the activities are as listed below:

Activity one: Passive voice (At the restaurant)

Before starting with the analysis related to the activity, I would like to highlight the way the two learners were sitting. **Figure 5.2** shows that each learner was sitting at his/her table, but they were sharing the picture of the restaurant in the middle. SFL4 was pointing with her pen at a word, but at the same time she was trespassing her territory to her peer's territory. In fact, she was making the call for the peer to perform the task. From **Figure 5.2**, SFL4 was not putting her arms on the table or even touching her peer's table. There was a feeling of discomfort which could be explained by the cultural heritage she comes from. On the contrary, SML3 was much more comfortable and he was putting his two arms on the table and writing his examples. He was sitting straight and not aside like the female learner. This example showed how the female learner defined her territory and reflected her way of being in class. This behavior is part of her socio-cultural background in which she grew-up. As mentioned earlier, Saudi learners do not mix with the opposite sex and when it comes to being in the same classroom and doing an activity together there are still some barriers in sharing and working with the opposite sex.

The discussion from lines [60] to [70], more specifically in line [66] the SFL4 said loudly “the what?” and she pointed at the picture; and when SML3 repeated the word “wine”, she kept asking if it was wine by pointing at the picture (line [68]), asking if that was wine. Her reaction was due to her cultural beliefs and background in which alcoholic drinks are forbidden. She seemed not to accept that, but did not argue much. She ended the discussion by a laugh. This activity was totally performed by the two learners and the educator did not come to check what

they were doing. In fact, his presence could be very helpful, especially, when learners had difficulties looking for some vocabulary words and their spellings. The choice of this activity in Phase I indicates how the educator was not aware of the cultural dimension of the learners. Alcoholic drinks are not allowed in the culture of these learners and writing sentences that refer to wine can be seen as an offence to their culture and beliefs.

Within the same activity, SML3 and SFL4 were working together and the two other learners were doing the activity individually. SML3 wanted to make another sentence and he was looking for the word “*waiter*”, but he referred to the word “*garçon*” thinking it was an English word describing the person who serves food in the restaurant (Lines [71] to [84]. For example, in line [76] SML3 was giving a definition of the waiter and pointing at the picture to show the character in the restaurant, then SFL4 came out with the word “*garçon*”. This learner gave the sentence in the passive form and she succeeded in providing the form. The only difficulty she faced with the peer was to find the word “*waiter*”. In line [76], SML3 used the mother tongue to describe the waiter and SFL4 gave him the answer in line [78]. The two learners were not aware that the word SFL4 provided was not English word meaning “*waiter*”. Consequently, the educator who was paying attention to their discussion decided to intervene. He explained to them that in English there is another word to describe the person serving in the restaurant and it is ‘*waiter*’. In fact culturally speaking, those Arab learners used to see old Egyptian movies where the waiter was called “*garçon*” which is the way of calling the person serving in restaurants in the French language. For those learners, as the word was not an Arabic word, they concluded that it was English.

Through the above examples it is clear that the socio-cultural background of learners plays an important part in their learning process. The female learner’s position in the group tells much about her behavior in interacting with the opposite gender. In fact he delimited her territory that did not share with the peer. Also the choice of the vocabulary words used in the activity was different between the peers. The female learner had a different attitude in using the word ‘*wine*’ as compared to the male learner. She barely accepted a word that is culturally not acceptable in

her culture. Engaging learners in an activity and sharing their knowledge gives more possibilities to find new words and learn new meanings. However, the educator was not aware of such social practice in which culture may refrain learners from learning. In other words, the socio-cultural dimension was more observed in the female learner attitudes towards learning in general, and the use of some specific words in particular.

Activity two: Second conditional

Reminder:

The aim of this activity was to finish the sentences in the second conditional. The learners were asked to use the appropriate verb form and challenge the peers. The details of this activity are available in sub-section 4.9.1.

In this part the process of *subjectification* was highly observed among learners and how they coped with it. The examples vary from a form of resistance in participating, engagement or disengagement in an activity over the other to the use of bodily gestures to explain to the peers, way of addressing the others and even the way of sitting at a table. It should be noted that since the learners were from the same culture, there were less difference that could be observed. However, examples with mixed cultures will be discussed in Phase II. I decided to consider this activity for the analysis because of the impact of the socio-cultural dimension that took place during the task.

I will present one example to see how *subjectification* unfolded in the activities that learners were performing. The example was about forming sentences in the second conditional based on the first part of the sentence given to them, for example “If I looked like a model, I ...”. This activity was particularly characterized by the engagement of its members and challenging the

peers. The group was formed of three Saudi Male Learners and one Saudi Female Learner. See **Figure 5.5** below (from left to right: SML1, SML2, SML3 and SFL4):

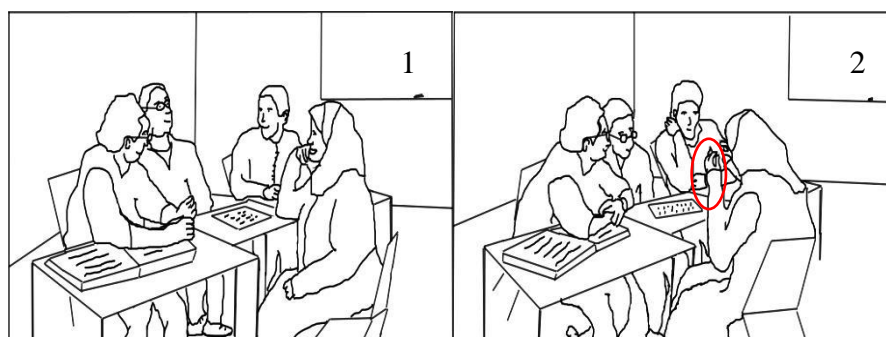


Figure 5.5: Female learner listening and explaining the rules using gestures

Three of the learners had a better English proficiency, but only one learner was facing some difficulties. In this activity SFL4 was playing an important role as the one who monopolized the activity and who used different means to explain the structure of the second conditional to the other learner. She started by giving the first part of the example and was expecting SML3 to finish it (Lines [142] to [145]). The discussion (from lines [142] to [208]) is presented below, but each extract will be referred to according to the part analyzed in this sub-section.

- [142] SFL4: *If I looked like a model?* (SFL4 started giving the beginning of the sentence and waiting the other learner to finish it)
- [143] SML3: *what means a model?*
- [144] SFL4: *Model? Heuh! (Putting her hands up to describe) model, heuh like a star /yaani aaridet azyaa/ (she gave the synonym in the mother tongue) (Figure 5.5.2)*
- [145] SML3: *ahh (his face was so expressive and his mouth wide open!)*

(The other learners were waiting for SML3 to give his example)

- [146] SML2: */yallah/ (meaning GO) you can do it*
- [147] SML3: *hey, yes or not (the learner did not know what to do)*
- [148] SML2: *No, (using his fingers and counting each word he was using) If I would look like a model, I would (the learner's intonation emphasizes more on the last word) ... complete*
- [149] SML1: *you use would when after 'If' (he was interrupted by SFL4)*
- [150] SFL4: *The rule is if, past ... would and infinitive (using gestures as to show the two parts of the sentence and pointing at the paper where the sentence is given)*
- [151] SML3: *Mmmm, If I would looked like ...*
- [152] SFL4: *No, not if I would ... if I looked ... I would*
- [153] SML2: *I would, I would (repeating with a strong intonation)*
- [154] SML3: *I would*
- [155] SFL4: *I would*
- [156] SML3: *looked like*
- [157] SFL4: *(gesturing with her right hand finger saying NO)*
- [158] SML1: *No, no no. the rule, he said if I looked like a model I would*
- [159] SFL4: *(pointing on the paper) If I looked like a model, I would ...*

- [160] SML1: complete the sentence
 [161] SML2: complete, 'I would?'. (making a sound with his mouth) bla bla bla
 [162] SML1: complete the sentence, first part of the sentence (he was interrupted by SFL4)
 [163] SFL4: after 'I would' the infinitive ... any any verb
 [164] SML3: with?
 [165] SFL4: (gesturing saying NO), infinitive. Without 'ed' without 's', not past (she was gesturing and counting with her fingers)
 [166] SML2: grammar class now (smiling)
 [167] SFL4: If I looked like a model, I would ... anything
 [168] SML1: anything
 [169] SML2: anything, anything
- [170] SML2: /eech rah tjawbin?/ (he asked her what she would answer)
 [171] SML1: just a second (gesturing with his hand)
 [172] SML2: just a minute, just a minute. We start by you (pointing at the female learner) than you (SML3) (showing the turn of the next counterclockwise)
 [173] SFL4: ok. If I looked like a model (she was laughing), just word
 [174] SML1 and SML2: I would? (with intonation)
 [175] SML2: I would
 [176] SML1: would what?
 [177] SFL4: ok I am shy to say the word
 [178] SML1: don't be shy say it
 [179] SFL4: If I were a model, would eat out with handsome man.

(The male learners were silent and looking at each other than SFL4 said 'it's correct!')

- [180] SFL4 to SML3: ok you understand my, my sentence?
 [181] SML3: yeah
 [189] SFL4 If I loved you ... heuh If I lived (she was repeating the sentence again but there was lapses the verb was pronounced as 'loved' like a model. She quickly recognized her mistake as it was shown on the peers' faces their misunderstanding, she quickly repeated the sentence).
 [182] SFL4: if I looked like a model, I would eat out. 'Eat out' is the infinitive. 'eat' not 'ate', 'eaten'
 [183] SML3: ok
- [185] SFL4: you have to finish the sentence ... ok, but if he saying the sentence wrong?
 [186] SML2: No, no, no stay, go out
 [187] SML1: No, no. if you don't challenge him, he will stay. But if you challenge him he will go to back. For example I am here (pointing at the chart, inside one square), you challenge me, I am mistake so I came back here (pointing on another square backward). If I am successful I go two box (pointing on a square forward)
 [188] SFL4: ok
- [189] SFL4: the sentence have two words, two different. The first with would and the second with if. /al guissm al awal fih/ (the first part) if, subject, simple past
 [190] SML3: ok
 [191] SFL4: /al guissm al thani/ (the second part) would, subject and infinitive (she was gesturing all the time). /taaref eech houwa infinitive/? (do you know what is infinitive?)
 [192] SML3: yes, past
 [193] SFL4: infinitive is
 [194] SML3: heu simple
 [195] T: the infinitive is the verb without any change
 [196] SFL4: like eat, go, play, see walk, watch, listen
- [197] SFL4: if I were invisible (laughing) if I were invisible, I would ...
 [198] SML2: steal?
 [199] SFL4: (nodding her head saying no) if I were invisible, I would ... I have a sentence but not

- good*
- [200] *SML1: say it, say it*
- [201] *SFL4: you laugh at me, no*
- [202] *SML2: do it, say it, say it*
- [203] *SML3: what is mean 'invisible'*
- [204] *SFL4: /ghir marii/ (cannot see it)*
- [205] *SML2: /ma yenchaf, makhfi/ (cannot be seen, hidden)*
- [206] *SML1: we do not have time*
- [207] *SML2: please*
- [208] *SFL4: ok, ok*

From the beginning and with the first vocabulary word, the cultural dimension was taking place in the learners' way of being. SML3 did not know the meaning of the word 'model'; he was probably not familiar with. Also, he did not have any conceptual idea made about it. So SFL4 used some gestures and gave the synonym in the mother tongue (Line [144]). When SFL4 said the word in Arabic, SML2 said: *"/goul astaghfirou Allah bass/"*. The meaning of this sentence was asking the forgiveness of God. Culturally speaking, being a model is not well seen among some communities, so the learners said something in Arabic which showed their disagreement with being a model. Also, this idea was shared with SML3 who had a weird facial expression when he heard the meaning of the word in Arabic.

SFL4's explanation to the peers was accurate. However, SML3 had a kind of surprise and his mouth was wide open when he recognized the meaning of the word 'model'. In fact, he had a spontaneous innocent reaction. The word 'model' referred to something not well perceived in his culture as Saudi people are more conservative among the Muslim world. The example might seem difficult to accept, especially as the description came from a female person. So it took him a few seconds to keep on going in the activity and focus on making a sentence in the second conditional. Then, he was invited and encouraged by another learner to finish.

From lines [146] to [169] the interactions among the learners were tense as they were engaged in helping and explaining the objectives of the activity to the learner having difficulties. SML1 was involved in the explanation through words and gestures. Yet, after agreeing about the rules, SFL4 asked SML3 to start with the first sentence and she explained the purpose of the activity to the group. Each one of the learner was trying to make the explanation simple to SML3. Yet, he

was not able to understand well the rule and finish the sentence. They tried even to give the second part of the sentence using the model verb 'would' so as SML3 will add only a verb in the infinitive. However, he did not seem to realize that.

Shyness is a normal feeling that characterizes human actors, especially, females, but for SFL4 there was a kind of cultural misinterpretation of her peers. To illustrate more, in the Arabian culture women do not date men or go out for restaurant with male friends. In fact, there is no such practice among their education and environment. Women, if they are with a man in a public place that man should be the father, the brother or the husband. There is no way to be with a stranger as the culture and the tradition do not allow it. Consequently, these ideas combined altogether would explain all the dynamics that took place within those short minutes in the mind of each one. This is why SFL4 came back quickly to carry on her explanation to SML3, but there was lapses which made her feel more uncomfortable.

To emphasis more on the explanation of the second conditional form of verb, SFL4 was giving other forms of verb (See lines [180] to [182]). In fact, she was applying a good strategy to keep the peers focused on the example rather than to think about what she said earlier and judge her. This reminds me of another example where learners were asked to use the present perfect with the adverb 'never'. The educator asked the learners to give an example about an action 'they have never done before' and the sentence had to be true. In the group there were three Saudi male learners and one Saudi female learner. When it was the turn of the female learner, she said: "I have never been to a male's washroom". Her sentence was correct, and it described an action she had never done. When the educator heard it, he congratulated her. He even said that she was so smart to give this example. Yet, the peers did not like much her example as it was not culturally appropriate for them. Also, one of them said that it was sure she will never go there as it is a place only for men. He also added that there are other places she cannot go to as the barber. Yet the female learner was challenging the males and arguing with them. She added that being in Canada she can. The idea she wanted to express was that if in their home country places are not mixed and females are not allowed to go where males are, in Canada it is different and

not considered bad behavior. Consequently, what was considered forbidden in their context is no more the case in Canada since all places are mixed and people are free to go wherever they want.

One of the common observations made was that the learners did not follow well the steps of the activity. They were just making sentences and agreeing about the form and not challenging by playing the chart. Still they were all active and engaged in the activity and they helped the peers to understand the rule of the second conditional. What is more, the female learner was monopolizing the activity more than the other. The educator could, in this case, come to the group from time to time and give chance to the others to express themselves and engage in the activity. The process of learning was there for most of the three learners. Yet, SML3 needed more practice because he seemed to know less about the second conditional, in particular, and grammar in general.

This example showed how the cultural dimension affected the learning process and learners became judgmental. Through a *subjectification* process, learners positioned themselves in a social practice where their attitude towards the female peer was judgmental. Culturally speaking, learners had a negative conceptualization of the word ‘model’ that the female learner explained. In fact, the female learner showed a responsible interaction among the other learners. She was positively engaged in explaining the rules. This learner was not only knowledgeable, but also used different strategies to explain the second conditional to the peers and she was efficient. However, her example of illustration was culturally not accepted by the peers. In fact the socio-cultural dimension of learners made them react on the meaning of the sentence rather than focus on the aim of the activity in making sentences in the second conditional. Male learners attributed the meaning of the sentence to the female learner which made her in a very uncomfortable situation. She tried to change her example, and tell the peers that her example was grammatically correct and not an example about her, but the idea about her was already there. In addition, in this part of the activity, the educator was not present in the group and did not know what happened. He could have helped the female learner manage the situation. The choice of activities and vocabulary words has to be considered in multicultural classrooms to avoid such attitudes.

Activity three: Passive voice (Indiana Jones)

This is the activity where learners had to answer questions using the passive voice after they had watched a clip about Indiana Jones. The educator gave them a list of vocabulary words that he explained to them prior to doing the activity. This activity was particularly hard for the learners because they had no idea about the movie ‘Indiana Jones’. Moreover, they found it old movie and they were not showing enough motivation to do the activity.

Below are some examples of the definitions the educator gave the learners before they watched the clip. He was addressing the whole class.

a) Explaining the word “idol”

- [98] *E: an idol. Have you seen the word ‘idol’ before?*
[99] *L: no*
[100] *E: There’s a famous TV shows on TV ... something idol. I don’t think there’s a Saudi Arabian idol yet ... There’s American idol. Have you seen that?*
[101] *L: no*
[102] *E: it’s a show. People go and compete. They sing try to be (...) ... like everyday people. They go to the show and they try to sing... (...) and the whole countries bought the (...) an idol is usually like some people who look, like the verb ‘idealize’ means you look at someone you like, like I wanna be like that person. Ok?*

The educator started explaining the word ‘idol’ by giving an example of an American show, but at the same time he assumed that such show did not exist in the learner’s country. In fact, the same show existed in the Arab world under the name of ‘Arab’s Idol’. On the one hand, the educator was not aware of that, and on the other hand the learners were not able to make a direct link from the start. There was a kind of ignorance in the part of the educator, and so for the learners. Also, the educator wanted to make sure the learners had understood, so he gave another example in a different context as follows:

- [103] *E: in this case the idol, it also means like ... a religious ... sometimes different cultures, different religions they make statues about their Gods ok? Like in Egypt, I think they did that in the past, long time ago, thousands of years ago. Statues were their Gods. Ok? Heuh in this video, he’s going to South America in an ancient temples trying to find this golden head, and I guess the golden head is an idol, it’s a ... it’s the God of those people, those Indians who live there. Ok? That’s what an idol is. Heuh... you know what ‘replace’ means right.*

The educator tried to give another example to describe the word. He used an example from religious practices as it used to be in Egypt. Most learners nodded their head; others were trying to find out the word in Arabic using their electronic dictionaries or phones. They seemed to have an idea but their faces were not convincing.

b) Explaining the word “whip”

Another example concerned the description of the word “Whip”. The educator asked if the learners knew the meaning of the word, one of the learners was gesturing whipping, as if he was hitting something, and another one was checking the meaning in his dictionary and suggested ‘whipping eggs’ (line [105]). The discussion between the learners and the educator was as follows:

- [104] *E: they whip something, whip something someone, whatever ok?*
[105] *SML5: I can see: whip the eggs?*
[106] *E: whip the eggs, yeah. Which has a different meaning, though, so you can whip a whip, or you can whip like you're making a baking, so you can whip the ingredients together. That's different though. Same spelling, but like different meaning.*

[107] *E: yeah like in Saudi Arabia in the past in Saudi Arabia when you get in trouble as punishment they whip you?*
[108] *SML5: yeah, when we drink alcohol (gesturing whipping) fifty*
[109] *E: they whip you? Fifteen?*
[110] *SML5: no fifty*
[111] *SML6, it's just (...) (It was difficult to understand what SML6 wanted to say).*
[112] *E: yeah for something serious right?*

The educator explained to the learners that the same word can have the same spelling and pronunciation, but a different meaning. He wanted to extend more his explanation and he referred to a cultural practice in Saudi Arabia. In line [107] he formulated a question and was expecting an answer from the learners. However, some Saudi learners were not feeling comfortable with that example. One of the learners tempted to explain the context because it was not a punishment for any mistake but for big ones, and the educator noticed that so he said in line [112] ‘*yeah for something serious right?*’ SML6 wanted to explain the context in which punishment may happen, but he could not express himself well and explain the context of the

punishment in English. He had difficulties to find the right words in the target language and teach the educator about it. The other learners did not say anything.

Consequently, this word created a kind of offence to the Saudi learners because of the misunderstanding of such practice. They were not able to explain to the educator, not because they did not know, but because they did not know how to explain it in English. There are some cultural concepts used in their mother tongue that give accurate meaning to the whole practice. Yet, they were not aware of those specific words which made it hard for them. This kind of situations creates a gap in their learning process.

Learners could know at the end the meaning of the word ‘whip’ the concept was clear to them, but they were not successful in sharing their cultural practice and meaning with the educator. The latter did not know that his example was offensive until he noticed the reaction of some learners’ faces. It is clear that the educator did not know much about the culture of his learners and his innocent way of explaining was negatively perceived by the learners who did not argue much. They did not say much because of their poor knowledge of the target language and also because in their culture they do not challenge the educator in class. However, the educator could learn something about the Saudi culture. For example in line [109], the educator asked the learners about the number of whipping a person could have and he thought they were fifteen, but SML5 corrected him and said fifty (Line [110]). Even if the explanation was not complete as per the context in which a person might be whipped, but the interaction between the whole learning community made the educator learn one aspect of a cultural practice in Saudi Arabia. The interaction and the engagement (becoming) towards the learning community benefit both the learners and the educator. This interaction contributes to the awareness and consciousness of the educator about the socio-cultural background of the EAP learners.

Activity four: Relative clause

Reminder:

The aim of this activity was to make sentences using relative pronouns. The learners were asked to pick a word and describe it to the peers. The details of this activity are available in sub-section 4.9.1.

This activity was noisy as all the learners wanted to talk at the same time and find the words. Some vocabulary words were difficult for the learners as they were not familiar with them, and so it was hard to give a definition and make the other peers guess it. The educator was helping the whole time to explain the words to the learners and to give them clues by whispering to the them. Yet, even if some did their best to describe the words, since the peers did not know those words, therefore, they could not find them. Culturally speaking, the vocabulary words did not belong to the learners' knowledge. As some of them were related to American singers or personalities or geographical places that learners did not necessarily know. Here are three examples:

a) The Beatles:

One interesting example was about one Saudi Female Learner, who was trying to make them guess the famous group singer "The Beatles". The educator helped her initially with clues as she did not know the band and she had no idea what it was about. She tried a lot of examples and strategies, but she was unsuccessful. The peers did not know the band.

She said that this was a band that was famous in the 60's, and she added that one member of the group was John Lennon... as the learners couldn't find she said also that Elton John was a member of the band (she might be confused as he was not part of the group! maybe she wanted to refer to Paul McCartney!). So, to help them more she said that this band or the name of this band had the same name like a car and an insect. There were many examples from the peers; some said a Ferrari, a Mercedes, Toyota, Camry, others said: mosquito, butterfly. Learners did not have any idea about what she was referring to, so they gave the brand of cars they knew, and

it was the same for the insects, hoping to come across the right word by chance. Learners gave words randomly hoping to find the appropriate one. Yet, they were not successful. The female learner added that the band shared the name of an insect, and that it was also a small car with the name of an insect as follows: *“This is a band that shares a name with a kind of insect, one of a car”, “this insect has two colors”* (someone said /sersar/, a word in Arabic which means cockroach), *“The band that shares its name with a car is made by Volkswagen, a German car”*.

The learners did not succeed in finding the word, even if the female learner tried many strategies to help them. It is clear that there was a cultural barrier which made the activity difficult for the learners. When choosing the list of words the educator thought that learners might be familiar with ‘The Beatles’. Of course they are very famous worldwide, but it looks like the learners did not know them at all. Culturally speaking, the Beatles were not part of their cultural knowledge and they were not from a similar generation. Sometimes even young people know about singers and stars from their family member or cousins who are older. In this way they learn, however, it was not the case of these EAP learners. After the activity, some learners mentioned to the educator that if he gave them an Arab singer or group that would be much easier for them. They gave some names of Arab singers, which were unknown to the educator.

Through this activity, learners had some knowledge about the name of the band and learnt about a new English band of the 60’s. Yet, I am not sure if they will remember them or not. Maybe if one of the famous hits of The Beatles was presented to them in class, or a picture of the singers could help them know and learn more. Those are some of the options to consider in the future.

b) Madonna:

Another example was given when a SML6 started describing a word to his group (it was the singer: Madonna), he started by saying this person is a singer and the peers started guessing. Yet, they needed more information to guess the word. Then one of the learners said that he never cared about singers. This might be another example related to his culture in which they probably do not listen to music in general, or foreign singers, in particular. Also, he gave an example of a

very famous Arab singer ‘Oum Kelthoum’. This learner added that if it was an Arab singer it would be much easier. Culturally speaking, those learners were not familiar with foreign singers and stars as most of their culture is Arabian. When the learners said that, the educator asked them more about their example of the Arab singer. All the peers were able to say something because they all knew that female singer and some of her songs, which they did not translate to them. There was here an exchange of knowledge between the learners and the educator taking place related to singers from two different cultures. The discussion did not go further and they moved to another word from the list.

In terms of the process of *subjectification* there was a gap between what the educator thought learners might know and what the learners knew. It should be noted that for some other communities Madonna is known worldwide. However, the educator learned that it was not the case for some communities. One of the reasons might be the language since learners do not know English and might appreciate more singers in their mother tongue. Also, when learners suggested an Arab singer to the educator, he did not have a clue. ‘Oum Kelthom’ is a very famous Arab singer, but if you do not know Arabic you cannot understand or appreciate her songs.

c) McDonald’s:

When one of the learners was trying to describe the word ‘McDonald’s’ as one of the most famous fast-food restaurant. The peers were not sure which one to choose as they might have been thinking of many other fast-food restaurants. In this activity, learners had only one chance to give the word. In order not to lose that chance, they were trying to use gestures to communicate with their friend. In line [141] SML5 was thinking of ‘Kentucky Fried Chicken’, but because he was not sure and did not want to miss the chance to find the word, so he used his fingers to make gestures. In fact, with his right hand fingers he showed the letter ‘M’ to the peer when the latter confirmed, so the learner said the word and got a point. This was one of the strategies learners used in class to be more effective and get more points.

- [136] *SML6: This that*
 [137] *SML5: This is that?*
 [138] *SML6: This that*
 [139] *E: This is that what? Remember yesterday we were saying we could say Tom Cruise is an actor who starred in several ...*
 [140] *SML6: Ohh yeah ... this is the restaurant that a lot of people eat fast food in it*
 [141] *SML5: /lahda fih/ (saying: wait a second) Kentucky (the learners was talking to his group as he did not know which fast-food and to make sure he was gesturing the letter 'M' to SML6 then he gave the answer 'McDonalds')*

The aim of this activity was to use the relative pronouns ‘who’, ‘where’, ‘which’ and ‘that’ appropriately in order to describe the list of words that the educator prepared. Most of the learners were just trying to describe the words, at least the ones they knew, but did not follow the instructions. The educator was there all the time to remind them about the aim of the activity, but learners tend to forget that and focused more on what to say rather than how to say it. In addition, from the process of *subjectification* learners were not culturally aware of some words used in the activities listed and explained above. Throughout the activities, the educator recognized and learned that EAP learners were not much aware of foreign singers, bands, stars and some ‘famous’ places. Also, sometimes learners did not know the word itself in English even if they could figure out the meaning, for example, when one of the learners wanted to describe ‘The Pyramids’ he could describe them well and the peers knew the word in Arabic, but did not have any idea how they are called in English. In fact, there was an actualization of knowledge through the activity, but learning could not occur if the educator did not help them. To explain more, learners were successful in describing the words. However, it was hard for the peers to find the word in the target language since they were still learning it.

Consequently, this activity contributed to knowing and learning new vocabulary words that did not belong to the cultural background of the EAP learners. However, learners did not follow the instructions of using the relative pronouns when giving the description of the vocabulary words. They did not practice the use of the relative pronouns as the educator expected from them.

- c) **Engagement/disengagement:** The idea of engagement was related to the progressive awareness of learners and getting involved in the activity. Sometimes learners were

aware that there is a need from the peers, but were not engaged enough for help. The selected activities are as follows:

Activity one: Passive voice (At the restaurant)

This activity concerned the selection of two groups of learners. Each group was composed of two learners. In group one (**Figure 5.2**), interaction took place between the male learner and the female learner, but the male learner was more engaged and ready to help the peer. Also, the male learner was the one writing down the sentence on his sheet and the female was checking from his examples. Regarding the second example where the group was formed by two males (Figure 5.1), there was a disengagement from SML2's part because he did not help much the peer. SML1 made many calls from the beginning of the activity, but SML2 was busy with the sentences he was making. It is true that after many calls, SML2 started answering SML1. Yet, SML seemed not understanding the answers. For example, SML1 wanted to ask a question in the passive form, but SML2 just said that it was not possible. He did not explain much the reason why and he did not give convincing argument about it.

Lines [14] to [22] illustrate well an indirect call from SML1 to SML2 to give him clues to make the sentence in the passive. SML2 showed his engagement in the activity and became responsible towards SML1. On one hand SML2, was able to give the correct sentence in the passive form, but he did not refer to the rule explicitly. Even, he gave it straightforward to SML1. On the other hand, SML2 was not successful in giving the correct explanation to SML1 when he argued about the use of 'taken' or 'taking'. In line [14], SML2 made a mistake in giving the past participle of the verb 'take', but he corrected himself quickly. He produced a correct passive sentence, but because of that slip of the tongue, SML1 wanted to know more. SML1 asked SML2 why it is 'taken' and not 'taking' and the answer to it was given in line [20]. The explanation that SML2 gave for the use of 'taken' instead of 'taking' was that the subject of the passive sentence was in the plural. This explanation, even if it was convincing for SML1, it was therefore, not the right grammatical explanation.

The interaction between the two learners took place progressively. In this part, SML2 was aware that SML1 needed his help. However, SML2 was not successful in explaining the use of the tense which resulted in a communication failure. Therefore, as started by Radford (2012) in this context learning did not occur because there was no awareness from the learner's side. To explain more, the two learners could produce a correct sentence in the passive form. However, the answer provided for the use of the past participle instead of the present participle was not satisfactory to meet the rule. In fact, SML2 was aware of the rule, but maybe did not have the right arguments to explain them. He did perform well in the activity, but had less awareness in providing the right evidence. In addition, none of the learners did notice that. It should be highlighted that in this context, the educator was not involved in the activity. His interaction with the learners could be helpful for them to understand well the use and form of one participle instead of the other.

In this activity engagement was taking place progressively between the learners. However, interaction between them was very poor and the educator was absent most of the time. The group was composed of only two learners. They did not share much their ideas. In fact, the learner who was facing difficulties made many calls to the other peer, yet his calls were not answered. There was a lack of responsibility towards the peer who had difficulties.

Activity two: Second Conditional

SFL4's engagement in the activity was observed at different moments throughout the activity, and she did not hesitate to explain and repeat the rules of the second conditional. She did not give up at any moment. Clearly, she was aware that SML3 needed more practice and help. She, spontaneously, showed her responsibility towards the peers and engaged in the activity by giving them as much help as possible to come up with personal examples in the second conditional. In fact all the other peers were trying to help SML3 to understand the purpose of the activity.

Through this exchange between the learners there was a tension put on SML3 (From lines [170] to [179]). This learner was not able to choose the right words and make the example as the peers

were expecting from him. The peers tried altogether to give him clues and some help. SML3 was trying by repeating the word ‘would’ and hesitating at the same time with no success. The engagement of the three learners was manifested by sound utterances, coordinated gestures and aural tonality. In fact they were showing their determination to help their peer. Finally, when SML2 noticed that SML3 was still having difficulties and they could not have an example from him, he suggested another strategy (line [172]). SML2 asked SFL4 to give her own example so that SML3 will have an idea how to make the sentence.

In this part of the discussion, SFL4 accepted to give her example. However, she was not confident enough about the way the peers will perceive it. Again, for cultural beliefs and interpretation she hesitated for a few minutes before she decided to give the example. She even admitted that she was shy, but her friends encouraged her to give the example. Finally, in line [179] she said: “*If I were a model, I would eat out with handsome man*”. When she gave them the example she noticed a silent period. The peers looked at her, and no one said anything.

She immediately added that her sentence was correct. She wanted them to understand that from a structural point of view the sentence was correct as she applied the rule of the second conditional properly. Yet, from a cultural perspective, she did not want to be judged. She wanted to dissociate herself from the example and kept saying that it was “*just an example*”. She wanted to keep the peers’ attention towards the activity and not the meaning of her example. Consequently, she asked SML3 if he understood her sentence she said: “*So do you understand my sentence? If I looked like a model, I would eat out ... not ate or eaten, eat. Eat out is the infinitive*”. When she repeated the sentence she emphasized more on the tense of the verb rather than finishing the sentence. She wanted to explain only that after “*would*”, the verb has to be in the infinitive.

So coming back to my previous example and right from the beginning the groups were formed, the activity was monopolized by SFL4. She first asked SML1 for more clarification in case someone makes a mistake. In fact, the educator asked them to challenge the peers when they give their example. Challenging was about agreeing whether the sentence was correct and meaningful or not. If they agreed, so the learner will move forward to the next box, which required a new

sentence. If they do not agree so the learner goes one box back, and will have to give a better example when it is his turn.

As SML3 was still facing difficulties with the second conditional, the peers were trying another example to illustrate how the verbs should be used and in what tenses (See lines from [189] to [196]). SML2 and SFL4 were helping using examples and gestures. The three learners were doing an extraordinary job. They were aware of the difficulties SML3 was facing and they were all engaged in explaining the rules to him, and the parts of speech. For example, in line [191] SFL4 asked SML3 if he knew what the infinitive was. She might have noticed that he needed to understand what was beyond the rules, and she was not wrong because his answer clearly showed that he did not have an idea what ‘infinitive’ meant to be.

From lines [197] to [208] SFL4 was hesitating again to give her sentence and she insisted that it was just a sentence. SML2 wanted to help her and in line [198] he said ‘steal?’. SFL4 was hesitant. She wanted to say something and not to be judged another time, SML2 thought of something that could be wrong; as stealing. Yet, it was not the idea SFL4 had in mind. She was repeating the sentence, and not finishing it. At the same time she was laughing because she might suspected the peers’ reaction to her example. While this was happening, SML3 interrupted them and asked a question. He did not know what the word ‘invisible’ mean. Immediately, SFL4 and SML2 gave the synonyms on their mother tongue. This time they did not take much time to explain to him. It was easier for them a translation than an explanation in the target language. Finally, SFL4 decided not to give her sentence orally, but in written form. Only the three learners and the educator, who came at the end, could see what was she had written.

This activity was a good example to illustrate the process of *subjectification*. The female learner in the group was very imposing and engaged in the activity. She showed a positive engagement and a sense of responsibility towards the peers. She was skillful and knowledgeable in terms of grammar rules and did her best to explain the rules and make things clearer to the peers. However, there was some tension on her because of the example she used to illustrate the second conditional. Her example made her feel uncomfortable as the peers judged her. Culturally

speaking, learners could not accept the idea expressed through the example. The cultural dimension was so strong that the female learner was in an uncomfortable situation where the peers judged her. In fact, male learners could not dissociate the idea expressed through the example. In other words, being a model and having a meal with another man (a stranger) was culturally unacceptable for the male learners. It was clear that learners were influenced by their beliefs and had difficulties to focus on the sentence given by the female learner, which was grammatically correct. Learners might have a different reaction if the example were given by a female learner from a different community.

- d) The question of gender:** phase I was characterized by two groups with mixed genders in two different activities as follows:

Activity one: Passive voice (At the restaurant)

In this activity most of the work was monopolized by the male learner. He was writing the sentences and saying them aloud and the female learner was writing them. She did participate from time to time, for example in line [39] when she suggested the verb “give” or when she asked about repeating the verb “pour”. She not even made a sentence as to express herself or to give an example of a sentence in the passive. The whole work was done by the male learner.

Activity two: Second conditional

In this activity the group was composed of three male learners and one female learner. It was clearly observed that the female learner was the leader in the group. She played a big role in explaining the rule to the learners in general and to the weaker male learner in particular. She spent a lot of time repeating the rule of making a passive sentence and the necessary transformation needed for the tenses and the use of “to be”. Also, she gave different examples of the verb tenses to illustrate the rules. Usually in Arabian cultures females are shy and do not talk

much. However, she had a complete outgoing behavior and she insisted on explaining the rules and the lesson to the peers. She was devoted and determined to pass the message to the peers.

5.2.2 Phase II: Observations through the Theory of *Objectification*

In phase II, learners were taught through the application of the theory of *objectification*. The activities set by the educator were related to grammar and vocabulary. The content and purpose of those activities were similar to the activities used in Phase I. However, the activities were refined to meet the objectives of the theory of *objectification*. Also the emphasis was put on the content and the way of performing the tasks.

In this sub-section, I will refer to some selected activities and highlight the different interactions taking place among the learning community where the learners are international students. In this phase most of the learners came from the same country and shared the same culture and beliefs. They were mostly from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. There was only one Asian learner from the Republic of China. He is from a different socio-cultural background.

Phase II was characterized by the application of the cultural historical approach targeted by the theory of *objectification*. **Table 5.4** and **Table 5.5** below show the activities related to the different dimensions of the theory and the tasks performed by the learners:

Knowing (<i>Objectification</i>)	Activities
Awareness/consciousness Learning strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of personal ideas - Use of mother tongue - Use of gestures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Passive voice: picture of a restaurant with several actions happening. - Vocabulary: give definitions and examples. - Passive voice: watching Indiana Jones clip. - Relative clause: making sentences using vocabulary words.

Table 5.4: Knowing in Phase II

Becoming (<i>Subjectification</i>)	Activities
Interaction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learner/peers - Learner/educator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Passive voice: picture of a restaurant with several actions happening. - Vocabulary: give definitions and examples. - Relative clause: making sentences using vocabulary words. - Grammar auction: buy sentences and correct them.
Socio-cultural dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vocabulary: give definitions and examples. - Relative clause: making sentences using vocabulary words. - Comic strip: inventing the story
Engagement/disengagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Passive voice: picture of a restaurant with several actions happening. - Vocabulary: give definitions and examples.
Question of gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Passive voice: picture of a restaurant with several actions happening. - Vocabulary: give definitions and examples.
Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vocabulary: give definitions and examples.

Table 5.5: Becoming in Phase II

Phase II was characterized by the selection of seven activities. As mentioned in chapter 4, five activities used in Phase I were refined in Phase II according to the theory of *objectification*. The two other activities were added to the learners to illustrate the impact of the socio-cultural aspect in language learning.

In the next subsection I will start by analyzing the activities under the dimension of knowing followed by the becoming as follows:

5.2.2.1 Knowing

The process of investigating the dimension of knowing (*objectification*) in Phase II was similar to the process used in Phase I. The emphasis was put on those activities where learners became

aware and develop consciousness in their learning process, employed different learning strategies and shared with the peers.

This sub-section will first deal with knowing and later activities describing the becoming will be presented. As it was mentioned in the previous sub-sections, knowing and becoming are entangled and cannot be separated. Yet, for analytical purposes, I will present each one separately.

The selected activities for this part of the analysis are as follows: a) passive voice, b) vocabulary, c) relative clause.

Activity one: Passive voice

I will start with the activity about the passive voice. In order that the learners know how to produce a correct form of the passive sentence; they participated in the activity “*At the restaurant*”. This activity required writing sentences using the passive and active forms. The educator provided the learners with a picture of a restaurant in which many actions were taking place and asked them to make five sentences in the passive form. The group was composed of three learners originated from the same country (**Figure 5.6**). There were two Saudi Female Learners (from left to right SFL1 and SFL2) and one Saudi Male Learner (SML3).

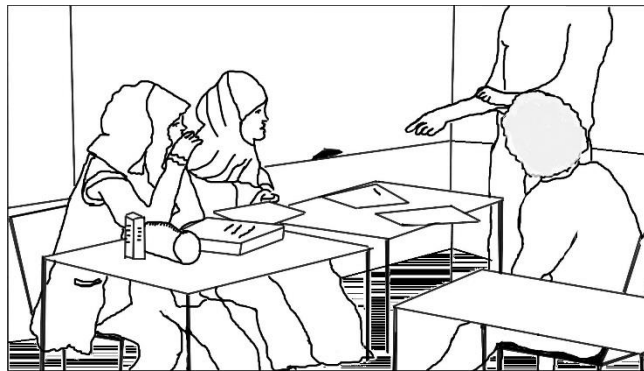


Figure 5.6: The educator explaining to the group

The transcript of the discussion taking place among the learning community is presented below. According to the selected criteria for data analyzes, I will refer to the lines from the verbatim below:

- [216] *SFL2: First we start by five sentences, after that we change them to ...*
[217] *SML3: Yes*
[218] *SFL2: ok*
[219] *E: so make sure you're working with your partner*
[220] *SML3: yes*
[221] *SFL2: yeah I know*
- [222] *SML3: I say, I can say the daughter eat her ... by helping her mother?*
[223] *E: not eat by ... but what's she doing? What's the verb? What's the mother doing? First think what's the active voice*
[224] *SML3: she's feeding*
[225] *E: she's feeding, ok*
[226] *SML3: yes*
[227] *E: so the daughter ... what's the verb then? What's the mother doing?*
[228] *SML3: feed*
[229] *E: ok, so? The daughter? Is?*
[230] *SML3: feeding*
[231] *E: is being, verb to be ... is being fed*
[232] *SML3: ok. What's the spelling of 'fed'?*
[233] *E: F-E-D*
- [234] *SML3: ok, the child is ... is it has?*
[235] *E: is, is being*
[236] *SFL1: is being fed*
[237] *SML3: the child is being fed by her mother.*
[238] *SFL2: The order is been taken by the waiter. Here, the man fell ... heuuu*
[239] *SML3: The man?*
(Silence)
[240] *SFL2: the man, I think the man fell the drink? (Gesturing the action of pouring a drink) or fall the coffee?*
[241] *SFL1: the man has been dranked?*
[242] *SFL2: dranked?*
[243] *SFL1: yes, dranked, E-D*
The educator comes and SML3 asked him
[244] *SML3: the man's so put the water? (Gesturing the action of pouring)*
[245] *E: Poured*
[246] *SML3: poured, yes*
[247] *E: ok, so*
[248] *SFL1: the man has been ...*
[249] *E: No, it's not the man now ... it's the water. You have to change the rule. The man has poured the water. If you want to use the present perfect, ok?. So you use the present perfect? The man has poured the water. Now you have to change the subject into object and so you have the water ...*
[250] *SFL1: the water has been?*
[251] *E: poured*
[252] *SFL1: Poured by the man. Ohhh ok*
[253] *SML3: P-U-R-E-D?*
[254] *E: P-O-U-R-E-D*



Figure 5.7: The two female learners working together

The presence of the educator in this activity was very helpful to guide the learners in performing the activity. The educator asked them many questions in order to help each one find the correct form of verbs and make the sentence in the passive form. Also, SML3 was more involved in the activity as compared to the two female learners, but they started answering the educator when he asked them some questions. SML1 started his sentence by saying “the daughter eat her ... by helping her mother”. It is clear that he understood that the passive sentence contains the word “by” to refer to the person doing the action. However, his sentence was still incorrect. In line [223], the educator asked him some questions to help him correct the form of verb. SML1 tried his best and with the help of the educator he could understand better how to make the sentence and also how to write the past of “feed”. Through the questions asked, the educator was actualizing the learner’s knowledge and helping him reach the objective of the activity. The process of making the passive sentence went from: “the daughter eat her ... by helping her mother” to “she is feeding”, where here the learner used the present continuous tense, to “the child is being fed by the mother”. The last sentence showed the progress of learning not only the passive form, but also the past participle of the verb “feed” that learners seemed not to know. Later female learners got engaged in the activity while the educator started asking them questions. Their interaction with the educator helped them come up with the sentence: “the water has been poured by the man”. Again, this example showed that learners were able to make the passive voice in the correct form after following the question/answer process of the educator. Also, this activity helped them learn the verb “pour” and its past form.

The process of *objectification* can be seen in the interaction taking place between the learners and the educator. There was a strong and responsible co-participation of the instructor and learners throughout the activity. Each one was sharing his/her ideas and knowledge in order to come up with a correct sentence in the passive form. The educator helped learners by guiding them according to the examples they were providing and based on the mistakes they made. In fact, the educator was actualizing their knowledge through questions and forms of verbs to help them find their mistakes and make correct form of sentences. The presence of the educator in the group was very helpful for learners especially when they were not sure about the changes that have to occur in the passive form. Also, the educator gave opportunities to all members of the group to express themselves and share their ideas. This dynamics contributed to the evolution of the meaning of some words like the verb ‘pour’ and its spelling in the past simple.

Activity two: vocabulary

Reminder: Learners had to provide definitions of some new words and make three sentences for each one. Among the three sentences, two had to be correct and one wrong. Learners had to exchange their sentences with another group and argue about them. They work altogether, discuss about the sentences in order to come up with a final group work. The details of this activity are available in sub-section 4.9.1.

The first group involved in the activity was composed of 2 learners; one Chinese Male Learner (CML1), and one Saudi Female Learner (SFL2), **Figure 5.8, pictures 1 to 4**. Then in step three of the activity another group joined CML1 and SFL2. The new group was formed of 3 learners; one Saudi Female Learner (SFL3) and two Saudi Male Learners (SML4 and SML5), so this means that in the mixed group there were five learners, in which four of them were from Saudi Arabia and only one from China (See **Figure 5.8, picture 5**). The list that this group received from the educator contained five words as follows: **Injection, Trigger, Respiratory, Solve, and Investigate**.

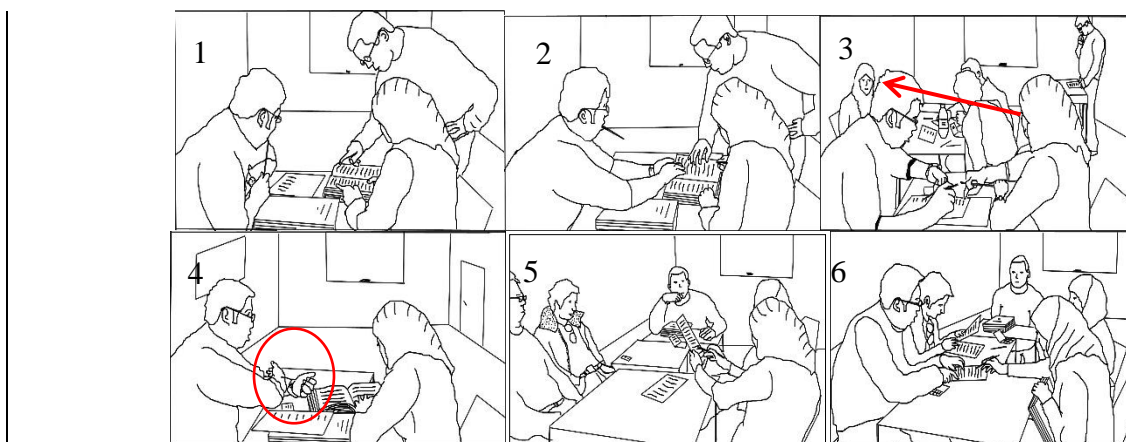


Figure 5.8: Vocabulary activity

At the beginning of the activity, CML1 and SFL2 started working separately. CML1 was using his electronic dictionary and SFL2 was using a hard copy dictionary. They did not talk to each other and each one was doing the task on his own. Then from lines [255] to [267] the educator came to see what the learners were doing. He helped them look up the word on the dictionary, but soon CML1 interrupted him. In fact the educator thought they were looking up the word “investigate”, but CML1 showed him that it was the word “injection” as follows:

- [255] *E: (he sees that SFL2 was trying to find a word on her dictionary and helped) ... so you want to go to 'T', 'N', 'B' right ... 'T', 'N', 'N' ... 'T', 'N', 'S' (turning the page) ... 'T', 'N', 'S' ... 'T', 'N', 'T' ... (turning the page again) so it's coming up here ... 'T', 'N', 'T' (turning the page) ... keep going ... 'T', 'N', 'U' ...*
- [256] *CML1: It's here (showing a word on his paper. The first word in the list was: INJECTION). (CML1 took the dictionary from the top edge and wanted to turn the pages backward to show them the word.*
- [257] *E: Ohh .. I thought you were looking for this one (he pointed to the word: INVESTIGATE, on the sheet of paper). That's why. ...*
- [258] *SFL2: no not this one.*
- [259] *E: oh ok ... you were looking for 'T', 'N', 'J' ... I thought 'T', 'N', 'V'*
CML1 (took the dictionary and turned it to himself to look up the word)
- [260] *SFL2: This one (Showing the word “injection”).*
- [261] *E: so ... heuh ... it's somewhere between 'T' and 'H'... right?*
- [262] *CML1: yes (CML1 Is having his both hands on the dictionary and using his finger to find the word)*
- [263] *E: so 'H', 'T', 'J'... you find it?*
- [264] *CML1: 'H'? (Trying to find on the dictionary)*
- [265] *E: 'injection ... so here (showing with his index) look ... 'Inject' that's your verb*
- [266] *SFL2: yes*
- [267] *E: so 'inject' that's the verb ... and then you see 'T-I-O-N' ... that's the noun ... ok? ... so 'inject'...*
- [268] *CML1: no, no, no ... not this one ... this one (He puts the pen he had in his hand and showed her with his finger)*
- [269] *SFL2: here?*
- [270] *CML1: no, this one (showing her again) ... this is the ... heuh*

- [271] SFL2: *this one*
 [272] CML1: *no, no, no ... this ...*
 [273] SFL2: *nooo, here (she showed him the paper again) here, noun ...*
 [274] CML1: *this is 'injection' (reading the word from the dictionary, then looking at the sheet of paper) this is 'I-N-G' (on the paper he showed) ... this in 'I-N-G ... T ... this one*
 [275] SFL2: *heuh ... but it is ... heuh ...*
 [276] CML1: *this is a verb ... ok? No, no no ... this is adverb*
 [277] SFL2: *yes, I know but ...*
 [278] CML1: *the first one ... to ... heu ...*
- [279] CML1: *heuh ... if you have a sick ... heuh ... you have to ... heu ... you go to ... to ... the ...*
 [280] SFL2: *yeah ... hospital ...*
 [281] CML1: *hospital to ... (making the gesture with hand an arm as taking an injection, Figure 7, picture 4)*
 [282] SFL2: *Mmmm ... yes.*
 [283] CML1: *it's this.*
 [284] CML1: *this means ... heuh ... this means*
 [285] SFL2: *this one? (pointing at a word on the sheet, the word was "respiratory")*
 [286] CML1: *yes ... this means (he breathed to explain the word 'respiratory')*
 [287] SFL2: *breathe?*
 [288] CML1: *yes*
- [289] SFL2: *heuh the third one*
 [290] E: *the third one ... you've just to make one that ... you're just gonna try a trick ... the other group has to see your sentence and decide which two are good, which two are bad*
 [291] SFL2: *ahhh (SFL takes the dictionary beside her and checks the words)*
- [292] CML1 to SFL2: *what about this? (Showing her the word on the paper)*
- [293] CML1: *this word means ... heuh ... the (silence)... heuh ... do you know the gun? (CML1 looked up the word, read the definition then used his cell phone).*
 [294] SFL2: *what?*
 [295] CML1: *this one (CML1 used his right hand thumb and index to, and moved them as she wanted to explain the word 'gun')*
 [296] SFL2: *the gun?*
 [297] CML1: *yeah, this one ... this one means (he moved his index to explain 'trigger') ... if you put this (moving index) ... (then showing her a gun like a bullet went off)*
 [298] SFL2: *yeah*
 [299] CML1: *sometimes this how ... heuh example so ... heuh ... someone because he does for you ... heuh ... some bad things happen ... heuh ... this is why the bad things will happen ... this all ... this (using gestures)*
 [300] SFL2: *yeah (nodding her head, then read the definition from the dictionary)*
- [301] SFL2: *my ring (pointing with her pencil at the sheet)*
 [302] CML1: *what? My?*
 [303] SFL2: *my ring, you know my ring (using gestures, right hand with left hand finger) ring...*
 [304] CML1: *no. how you spell it?*
 (SFL2 wrote it and the CML copied it)
 [305] CML1: *R-I-N-G ... yes*

In lines [255] to [267], CML1 became aware that the educator was referring to the word “investigate” while learners were still working on the first word of the list which was “injection”.

CML1, took the initiative to look up the word for him on the dictionary and show it to the educator and the peer. In this part of the activity, CML1 became active as the educator was present in the group. Earlier he did not say anything and was working on his own, but the presence of the educator made him behave differently.

From lines [268] to [278] SFL2 seemed not to agree about the word and CML1 explained to her that the word they had is a noun “injection” and what she was looking at was the verb “to inject”. There was here another form of engagement from CML1 who explained to SFL2 the parts of speech of the word. In this part CML1 became progressively aware that the peer needed his help and a clarification regarding the word targeted in the activity. To illustrate more, in line [270] CML1 showed SFL2 the verb “to inject” on the dictionary and told her that they were not looking up for the verb but rather the noun “injection”. Also, in line [274] CML1 read to her loudly the word from the dictionary and showed her the word she had written on her sheet. He wanted her to compare the two words and see the difference between the noun and the verb. He added that in the activity they had the noun “injection” and not the verb in the continuous form “injecting” as she did on her sheet.

Then CML1 was writing the definition of the word while SFL2 was pointing at it on the dictionary. As soon as CML1 finished he said “Sentence”. In fact, he referred to the next step of the activity where they had to write two correct sentences and one wrong. CML1 wrote the definition and was expecting the help of SFL2 to finish the activity or to help him with the sentences. Yet, SFL2 seemed to face some difficulties with one word from the list. She looked at another female learner from the other group. SFL2 waved at the other learner and she asked her about the first word of the list by pointing at it with her right index (See **Figure 5.8, picture 3**). The female learner from the other group (SFL3), whispered to her the word and she used gestures in order to explain the word “*injection*”. To make sure about her understanding, SFL3 said the word in Arabic and SFL2 nodded her head as a sign of understanding. Meanwhile, CML1 was witnessing the scene and understood well what SFL2 was asking for, so he decided to explain to her the word by referring to someone being sick and going to the hospital, and he

ended up by using gestures as in Figure 7, picture 4. This is another form of awareness from CML1, who was attentive to the difficulties the other learner faced. CML1 was aware that SFL2 did not know the meaning of a word, and even if she did not ask him, he was totally involved in explaining to her. He showed responsibility towards the peer and tried to explain to her the word “injection” as in line [279]. He tried first to give the context of a hospital and being sick to give her some clues, and then he decided to use another strategy to describe the word through gestures, line [281].

From lines [284] to [288], CML1 was writing his sentence on his sheet or paper, and he wanted to explain to SFL2 the meaning of the word “breath”. He showed her the word and she pointed at it on his sheet, then CML1 confirmed that he was referring to that word and instead of using a descriptive sentence he just did the action of breathing. He took a deep breath and from there she understood what he meant and she said: “breath?”. This process helped the learners not only to share between themselves, but also to learn together new learning strategies and vocabulary words. The call was made and engagement occurred.

This part of the activity was characterized by the interaction of two learners from two different countries and cultures. The only means of communication between them was English and there was no other language interfering in their exchange. Even if there was a difficulty in communicating or understanding some words they could use other strategies like gestures or synonym words to explain the words.

When it was time for the wrong sentences CML1 asked SFL2 to write them. She suggested that she dictates them instead of writing them on the same sheet. It was her strategy because her handwriting was different from his. She added that she did not want to write them down; otherwise it would be easier for the other groups to find out the wrong sentences. Consequently, CML1 was following SFL2 when she was giving him the wrong sentences to write. Also, while CML1 was writing SFL2 asked him to read the sentences for her to check if they were good. She

wanted to make sure he understood her ideas. SFL2 suggested again mixing up the sentences so as not all the wrong sentences come at the bottom of the list. She justified her suggestion by saying that it could be evident for the rest of the group to guess them (**Appendix B**). In one of the wrong sentences, SFL2 was used the word “*ring*”. Her sentence was: “My ring is made of solve”. CML1 did not understand well what she was referring to. He asked her about the word, line [302]. In line [303], SFL2 repeated the word twice and used gestures to explain it, yet it was not clear for CML1. He asked her to spell the word for him, but she did not give the spelling orally. She wrote the word down on her sheet of paper and showed it to him. Using gestures seemed to be an easy strategy for the female learner to explain her word, but it was not the case since the peer did not understand the gesture until he saw the spelling of the word. When he read it, he immediately recognized it.

This is one of the other strategies that learners used to explain to each other. Sometimes because of their different accents and way of pronouncing the words, writing the word solved and overcame this difficulty. Especially when some learners did not or could not pronounce some English sounds because they did not have them in their mother tongue sound system.

The process of *objectification* in this activity was characterized by the awareness and responsibility that the male learner showed towards the female learner. The latter was not that much communicative for some reasons, but the peer did his best to help her. The male learner manifested his awareness by explaining the words using different strategies such as: giving examples, making gestures and defining parts of speech. This learner became more engaged in the activity from the start, and was attentive to the other peer. In addition, when the educator was present, learners could ask their questions and check their examples with him. It should be noted that the female learner did not talk much to the male learner and that because of her cultural background. I will deal with this dimension when I talk about *subjectification* in the next subsection. Also, this activity was designed so as the work can be shared with most learners when they are mixed. At this level, only female learners were monopolizing the whole work and working together. In fact, the female learner who was passive while working with the male learner became more active when there was another female learner. There was a strong co-

participation of the two female learners and more intervention of the educator. However, less responsibility was shown from the side of the other male learners who joined the group later.

This activity was based on providing definitions of some words and give examples to illustrate the meaning of each new vocabulary. Learners used dictionaries, but at the same time they reached the objectives set by the educator, which was to use personal examples in order to show their understanding of the words. There was an evolution of the meaning of words as learners exchanged their work and compared it. The design of this activity gave more opportunities to learners to perform the task differently and develop certain awareness and responsibility towards the peers in learning new vocabulary words.

In the next subsection I will deal with an activity in which learners were asked to provide relative clauses using the appropriate relative pronoun.

Activity three: relative clause

Within the relative clause activity, two vocabulary words were selected: “Pyramids” and “whale”. Learners knew the meaning of these words in their mother tongue, but had no idea how to call it in the target language. The description given by the peers was helpful to guess the word, yet learners did not know what the word was in English. In such examples, learners could make a link between the relative clause as being the sentence describing the word and their general knowledge, but their poor English vocabulary was a barrier for most of them.

The only strategy they could use was to use their mother-tongue to say the word. Through this strategy, learners from the same socio-cultural background could understand the meaning which was obviously validated by SFL3 who described it. However, the fifth learner who did not belong to the same culture and did not speak the same language was not aware of the word. In

the verbatim below I have selected the two extracts where learners described and tried to guess the words: “Pyramids” and “whale”:

- [323] SML2: *that's a place, like if someone move in it. It will die. It's true?*
[324] E: *not exactly*
[325] SML1: */mouthalath al mamat?/ (this student thought of the Bermuda triangle)*
[326] SML2: */bil inglizi/ (asked him to say it in English)*
[327] SFL3: *triangle (using gestures)*
[328] E: *not a triangle*
[329] SML3: *yeah but she said the name*
[330] E: *no, but I am looking for something else. You know what we're talking about right?*
[331] SML3: *no*
[332] E: *ok, come out (they left the classroom)*
[333] SML2: *this is a thing, the important thing in Egypt*
[334] E to CML: *do you know it Joe?*
[335] E to SML2: *so say it gain*
[336] SML2: *this is*
[337] E: *what are they? Are they buildings?*
[338] SML2: *no*
[339] E: *they're not building?*
[340] SML2: *yes, these are buildings where*
[341] E: *or you say that or which*
[342] SML2: *which everybody*
[343] E: *ok or you can say which are found in Egypt. Joe do you know Egypt?*
[344] CML: *yes*
[345] E: *do you know what famous buildings are in Egypt?*
[346] CML: *(uses his both hands to gesture a triangle referring to the pyramids)*
[347] E: *what are they called? You said it before (addressing SFL4)*
[348] SML2: *it's close*
[349] E: *you said it and then you said no*
[350] SFL4: *pyramids?*
[351] E: *yeah*
- [352] SFL4: *This an animal which live in the sea*
[353] SML2: *In the sea?*
[354] SML1: *Fish?*
[355] SFL4: *No, big one*
[356] SML2: */hout/ (meaning whale in Arabic)*
[357] SFL4: *Yes, heuh not in (they all laughed)*
[358] SML1: *shark?*
[359] SFL3: *like shark? yeah?*
[360] SFL4: *no, just one minute (she wanted to check the word on the dictionary)*
[361] E: *what is your word Assia?*
[362] SFL4: *This is an animal that lives in the sea*
[363] E: *you can add another relative clause. That is ...*
[364] SFL4: *that is a big one*
[365] E: *it is very big?*
[366] SFL4: *yes it is very big and ... yes they said it but in Arabic*
[367] E: *it's not a shark. And it's not a fish*
[368] SML2: */hout mahout fish?/ (he was asking the peers whale is not a fish?)*
[369] CML5: *Whale*
[370] E: *yes*
[371] SML1: *it's a kind of fish*
[372] SFL3: *mammal*

[373] *E: yes it's a mammal. Whale breathes oxygen. It comes to the surface like us. Fish has gills that they can breathe with; out of water. Looks like fish but it's not fish.*

From lines [323] to [351] learners were interacting together and the educator's help and involvement were very important to guide them in the activity and explain to them what to do. It was clear that from the beginning SML2 did not understand the meaning of the word, and this could be seen in his description. In line [323], SML1 described the pyramids as a place where someone dies if he moves in it. So SML2 thought of the Bermuda triangle, but he said it in Arabic, line [325], then SFL3 intervened by using the word "triangle".

Learners were not able to find the word, so the educator asked SML2 to leave the classroom with him in order to give him more clues that could help him making more sentences. Once back, SML2 used the word "Egypt" to help learners find the word. However, no one said anything. The educator decided to ask one of the learners directly. In line [334], the educator asked CML5 if he knew the word then later in line [343] he asked him if he knew Egypt and the answer was affirmative. Then in line [346] the educator asked CML5 what buildings were famous in Egypt. CML5 used his hands to form a triangle and showed the class, **Figure 5.9**, but he did not say the word. It was SFL4 who after many hesitations gave the word to the peers.

This activity was interesting as the presence of the educator played a great role in monitoring and guiding the learners to guess the word. The educator not only was helping with more hints, but also trying to make CML5 participate as he was more passive than the other learners. In fact, CML5 understood what the word was about and he used his two hands (**Figure 5.9**) to show the shape of a triangle in order to refer to the word. The gesture was utilized as a strategy for learning. Finally SFL4 ended up, after many hesitations, to give the word.

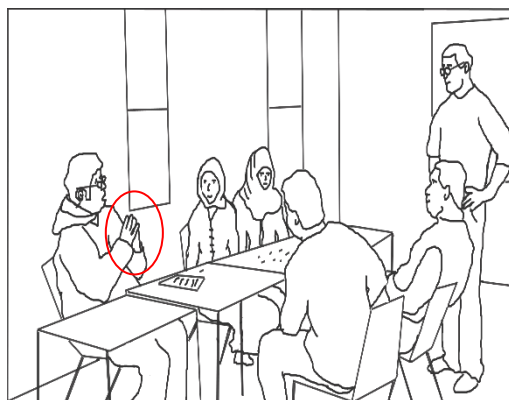


Figure 5.9: CML5 using his hands referring to the Pyramids

The second vocabulary word was “whale”, lines [352] to [373]. Learners had difficulties to understand the description provided by SFL4 and find the word. In fact, SFL4 used the correct relative pronoun “which” to make her sentence as follows: “This an animal which live in the sea”. With the keyword “sea” learners thought of “fish”, but SFL4 added the adjective “big” (line [355]) so as to help them know the kind of animal. Then SML2, who seemed to know the word, said it in his Arabian dialect. He did not know how to say it in English, but he had the right answer. Another learner, SML1 said “shark” which is a big sea animal as well, but it was not the correct word. In line [361] the educator asked SFL4 to repeat her sentence then he encouraged her to add another descriptive sentence using the relative clause, line [363]. Saudi learners were sure about the word they gave in Arabic, but they were confused when the educator said that it was not fish. In line [368], SML2 asked the peers in Arabian dialect: “Whale is not fish?”. In fact the word “whale” in his mother tongue means fish and it was hard for him to dissociate them. Finally in line [369] CML5 gave them the correct word. CML5 did not say anything during the whole discussion as he seemed to know the word. In most activities he was able to find the vocabulary words. He had quite a rich vocabulary in the target language, but he was aware that the other learners had difficulties. Consequently, he did not give the word from the beginning. He wanted the peers to participate as well and try to find the word by themselves. At the end, the educator explained to the group why the whale was not considered fish but rather a mammal, line [373].

The relative clause activity went well with most learners. First of all the aim of the activity was reached because learners could use the appropriate relative pronouns according to the subject used. Sometimes, the educator had to correct the grammar of some verbs. Second, learners could learn new vocabulary words in the target language. It is true that Saudi learners had difficulties to find the words in English since they did not have any idea of some of them. However, they were able to make a link between what they know in their mother tongue with the description they got in the target language. This activity helped them learn new vocabulary words and improve their knowledge in the target language. The activity was motivating and the educator was showing enthusiasm toward the activity. He helped them understand the words in order to describe them well using the appropriate relative pronoun. Also, he encouraged learners all the time to try more sentences to describe the words. The activity went over well and learners had a lot of fun. After the activity the educator was satisfied with the result and he found that the learners seemed too caught on it.

Through this activity the process of *objectification* was happening among the entire group. There was an interaction between the members of the group and the educator was present all time to help them. The aim of the activity was to make the peers guess new words by using relative pronouns. In fact, in order to find or guess the words learners were giving definitions through which the general was actualised through the particular. The particular was that learners engage in a form of thinking and sharing their ideas to find the word. It is clear that some learners were not able to say the word in English because they did not know how to say it. However, through the particular that was based on their previous knowledge and the use of gestures they could conceptualise the idea. Later, the educator helped them with the English word. Also, the educator tried to make all the members participate and share their ideas. He did question some of them who contributed in their learning and the learning of others. learners and educator were engaged in a process of objectification. Learners could not only learn about new words and their meaning, but they also could make a comparison between the English word and the meaning of the words in their mother tongue. Most of those learners tend to use their mother tongue between them to make sure they understood well the word. This strategy is

In the next sub-section, I will be dealing with the other part of the analysis related to the process of *subjectification*.

5.2.2.2 Becoming

This part of the analysis deals with the process of *subjectification*. Learners were observed while performing their tasks and more emphasis was put on the interactions taking place within the learning community, the socio cultural background which influences their learning process whether for being engaged in the activity, share knowledge with others, impose ideas or monopolize the activity. The analysis is based under the following categories: a) interaction, b) sociocultural dimension, c) engagement or disengagement, d) gender and, e) power. The selected activities where these categories were observed are listed below.

a) Interaction

In this category I will present the different interactions that took place in the classroom environment within the learning community. In other words, the selected activities will show the interaction among the learners and the peers and/or the learners and the educator. Under this sub-section activities were selected as follows:

Activity one: passive voice (at the restaurant)

As per this activity, SFL2 explained to the peers that they had to write five sentences and after that change them, line [216]. The peers agreed with her and no one made any comment. SFL2 did not mention that those sentences should be in the active, and the changes in the passive form. Each learner was working alone on the sentences. They did not talk to each other. The educator noticed that they were not discussing and sharing their ideas, therefore, he decided to intervene. **Figure 5.1** shows the presence of the educator who asked the learners to work together and at the same time answered some of their questions about the passive voice.

The educator was trying to show them how to make the correct form of the verb. In line [222] SML3 asked the educator about his example in the passive voice, he tried to make a sentence; however, it was not a correct passive form. The educator asked him some questions about the action taking place in the restaurant. He repeated the question twice by changing the third person pronoun “She” into “mother”, for example: “What is she doing?” “What is the mother doing?”, line [223].

The educator asked SML3 to give the active sentence first, and in line [224] he succeeded in giving the right verb form in the active voice. Then after that, in line [227] the educator started the sentence with “the daughter”, and tried a different strategy to help him recognize the verb and the tense used to describe the action in the passive voice. From line [227] to [235], the educator was interacting with SML3. The two other learners were listening carefully to the discussion, but they did not intervene at any time. In fact, their reaction could be explained based on their cultural background where they do not challenge the educator when this one is explaining and talking. SFL1 and SFL2 were watching and they did not share their example or understanding. It is difficult to conclude if those two learners understood the sentence or if they were aware of its structure. Yet, they wrote down the sentence that was produced by SML3.

Also, the educator was mainly talking to SML3 and trying to help him to build up his sentence in the passive form. He did not invite any of the other learners to share their knowledge, express themselves or argue about what SML3 said at the beginning. At a certain point the interaction between the community members was almost absent.

So SML3 started producing an active simple sentence which described the action of feeding. He gave the sentence to the educator using a continuous tense. In fact, in this activity the general was characterized by the aspect of knowing the use and form of the continuous tense; and it was mediated by the particular which was looking at the picture of the restaurant and describing one of the actions taking place at the restaurant. Then the singular was the production of the sentence

in the future continuous. This process which occurs among the learning process of this practical activity is an example of *objectification*.

Then from lines [238] to [254], learners were engaged in an *objectification* process where each learner was actively participating into the learning activity while the educator was present. The interactions among the group were socially organized. The two female learners started actively making the sentences and the male learner was listening. From lines [240] to [243], SFL1 and SFL2 were trying to make a sentence in which they described a person pouring a liquid. At the beginning they did not know the verb “pour” and instead of that they used the verb “fall”. In line [241], SFL1 decided to change the verb and use the verb “drink”. She said: “the man has been drank”. However SFL2 did not agree with her, she seemed to know that “drink” does not take “ed” in the past. At that time, the educator came to the group and SML3 became active. He asked the educator. Indirectly about the verb “pour” using the verb “put” and gesturing the action of pouring. When the educator gave the verb to the learners, SFL1 was the one who gave to the peers the full correct sentence in the passive form. The sentence was given in lines [250] and [252]: “the water has been poured by the man”. SML3 wanted to write the verb in the past, but was not sure about the spelling. He looked at the educator and spelt the word as: “P-U-R-E-D”, the educator corrected the spelling in line [254] and SML3 wrote the sentence.

This activity started with a passive collaboration of learners, but progressively they started sharing their ideas. Also the educator was present all time to guide them and help them make their sentences in the passive form. The educator used different strategies based on the difficulties learners were facing. For example, he asked the same question in different ways, used different tenses, reminded them about the rule of the passive and suggested to use sentence in the active before making the changes. Learners were engaged in a process of interaction.

Learners were concentrated on the educator’s instructions and feedback. However, they did not challenge him. From a cultural perspective, learners do not challenge the educator as a form of respect. There was not only an active interaction of the three learners, but also a sense of

engagement from all the peers and a sense of responsibility from SML3, who was aware of the correct form of the sentence and he decided to explain it to the peers. His reaction to this was spontaneous and random.

Activity two: vocabulary

In this activity the presence of the educator was very frequent and helpful to guide the learners and assist them when they needed it. The educator read the sentences the CML1 wrote and corrected some mistakes he had made. Then SFL2 asked him about the third sentence they had to write, which was supposed to be the wrong sentence, line [289]. The educator explained to her that the sentence had to be tricky and the other groups had to find out the two correct sentences and the wrong one, line [290].

This part of the activity was one of the adjustments made for the purpose of the applied theory and it seemed that learners did not understand it well. Therefore, the educator had to explain it again to all the class. Learners needed the assistance of the educator as they seemed not sure what they were expected to do in the activity. What is more, the two members of this group did not communicate much. No one asked the other about the sentences they had to write. Only CML1 wrote the definitions and the examples without sharing them with SFL2.

In terms of *subjectification* processes, learners had difficulties to work together. They were learning to position themselves in a social practice where they were expected to show sensibility and cooperation in performing the activity. The educator's co-participation made them understand better the task they and helped them become more active.

Activity three: relative clause

The group was composed of five learners. There were two Saudi Male learners (SML1, SML2), two Saudi Female Learners (SFL3, SFL4), and one Chinese Male Learner (CML5) as in **Figure 5.10** below. They received a bunch of cards with different words written on them. The words learners had to describe using relative pronouns were as follows: **Titanic, The Beatles, The Pyramids, George Bush, Michael Jordan, McDonalds, Dictionary, Calculator, Soccer, Bus, Whale, Daryn** (the educator's first name), **South Africa, dog and Madonna**.



Figure 5.10: Educator helping the learners to use the relative clause

Again, the presence of the educator was important in this activity for two main reasons. The first one, the educator was moderating the activity as who will start and how to manage the speaking time of each learner. The second reason was that learners were not familiar with some vocabulary words, or they needed more assistance to make sure they understood the words, and can describe it to the peers. Therefore, the educator was present the whole time to help them understanding the words, building up the sentences and correcting them if necessary. The educator had to whisper some words to the learners, or to take them outside the classroom to give them clues, especially when learners did not know much about the words. Sometimes he had to give them the whole explanation or definition because they did not have any idea about the word. Two vocabulary words were chosen for analysis. They were “Titanic” and “Michael Jordan”.

The transcript is presented below:

- [306] SML2: *This is a big boat or a ship in the water*
- [307] E: *You have to use a relative clause, ok? So what happened to it?*
- [308] SML2: *which had accident by the ...?*
- [309] SFL3: *Titanic?*
- [310] SML2: *yeah*

- [311] *E: ok, don't make it too obvious though. So what I would say is this is a ship that hit an iceberg and sank. Ok?*
- [312] *SML1: must be when I say ... so my group will give me the name or?*
- [313] *E: yes. So you can give them a clue and then ... you guys can discuss the clue and see if you know and say it.*
- [314] *SML1: that's the famous player*
- [315] *E: so what is it? Is it a person?*
- [316] *SML1: yeah. A person that's a player American*
- [317] *E: ok, a person who is famous for what?*
- [318] *SML1: for basketball*
- [319] *SFL3: I do not have any information about basketball*
- [320] *E: I told you about this basket player before, do you remember the word passionate?*
- [321] *CML5: Michael Jordan*
- [322]] *E: yes*

From lines [306] to [311], the educator took SML2 outside the classroom and explained to him the word “Titanic” because when the learner read the word, he did not know what it was about. Then, when the learner came back, he focused more on the description of the word without an emphasis of the relative clause which was the aim of the activity. The educator reminded the learner again that the aim of the activity was to give a description of the word using a relative pronoun rather than just giving a sentence. In line [311] the educator asked the learners what happened. This question helped SML2 to reformulate his sentence and use the relative pronoun “which” to better describe the word “Titanic”. Having done that, it was easier for the peers to understand the definition and eventually guess the word. Consequently, SFL3 was successful to find out the word give it to the class. The educator advised the learners to make the definitions more challenging and not too obvious so that more learners could have the chance to participate in the activity.

The second word was described by SML1. The guessing word was about the famous basketball player: “Michael Jordan”. The learner seemed not to know the player or maybe he forgot him. At the same time, SML1 asked the educator what he was supposed to do, line [312]. The learner seemed not to know what to do. The educator tried to refresh their memories as they had already come across that name in another context, but it did not help them much. Also he was assisting SML1 by asking him questions, for example if the word was about a person, what he was famous for so that the learner could make his sentence correctly. In this activity, only CML5 could remember the word that was described and he gave it to the peers.

Learners are learning to position themselves in a social practice where they are expected to show sensibility and cooperation in performing the activity. This one was characterised by the participation of all the members to guess the words described. Also, there was a strong presence of the educator who participated actively in managing the activity. Culturally speaking, there were some words that did not belong to the learners' background and the educator had either to explain them or omit them from the list.

Activity four: passive voice (Indiana Jones' clip)

The second activity of practicing the passive voice was related to watching a video and answering six questions, then compare them with another group. The group was composed of three Saudi learners. There were two Saudi Male Learners (SML1 and SML2) and one Saudi Female Learner (SFL3). Before starting the analysis, I would like to highlight that when the learners watched the clip of Indiana Jones, SML2 was not there yet. He came late and did not see the movie, so it was hard for him to find out the answers. Also, SFL3 was absent the day before and did not attend the lesson about the passive and active voice. Therefore, she did not know how to make the answers in the passive. The third learner, SML1, who watched the video from the start and attended the lesson was the most passive in this activity and was not involved in the activity. He stated that he did not see why they had to learn that lesson. He mentioned to the peers that he did not think he would use that form of sentences in the future. Some extracts from the discussion are presented below:

- [374] *E: so do you understand?*
- [375] *SFL3: yeah*
- [376] *E: so number two, what was Indiana's helper frightened by?*
- [377] *SML2: spear*
- [378] *E: spiders? Ok ... so I want you to answer with a full sentence ... with passive voice*
- [379] *SML1: spear?*
- [380] *E: spiders ... right?*
- [381] *SML1: spiders was*
- [382] *E: so how are you going to answer that?*
- [383] *SML2: spiders was Indian...*
- [384] *E: what was he frightened by?*
- [385] *SML2: spider.*
- [386] *E: ok. How are you going to answer that in a full sentence? You can use part of the question, right?*
- [387] *SFL3: spiders was frightened?*
- [388] *E: spiders were not frightened, right? His helper was frightened*
- [389] *E: if you want to make an active, you could say: "spiders frightened ..." do you know what*

- is frightened? Makes you afraid*
- [390] *Learners: yes*
- [391] *E: so spiders frightened Indiana's helper. That would be an active sentence. Now we need to change an active sentence into a passive sentence. So I have spiders ... frightened ... Indiana's ... helper (the educator pronounced each word separately and using his hands to show each word)*
- [392] *SFL3: Indian's helper was ... heuh*
- [393] *SML2: the helper? Helper (SML2 wanted to intervene, but the educator made a sign so as to let SFL2 finish her sentence)*
- [394] *SFL3: heuh ... Indiana ...*
- [395] *E: so ... Indiana's helper was ... what's the verb?*
- [396] *SFL3: frightened ... heu by spiders*
- [397] *E: excellent (he left just after that and went to see another group)*

- [398] *E: ok, you could say. If you want to say an active sentence, you could say: the trap had killed the scientist. The question is in the past perfect, so you have to answer in the past perfect. So you say the trap had killed the other scientist. Now change that into the passive. So the answer should be ... the trap had killed the other scientist. So take that and change it into the passive sentence.*
- [399] *SML2: the other scientist ... had happened*
- [400] *E: ok, so the verb is "had killed"*
- [401] *SML2: ok, had killed*
- [402] *E: had killed ... if I want to make it passive? Ok write it first. Write the active sentence first so you can see. So write: "the trap had killed the scientist", that's the active sentence. The trap had killed the other scientist. So that's happened before that's why they are using the past perfect
(The educator repeated the sentences many times so as to help learners write it correctly)*
- [403] *SML2: so could be like ... the scientist*
- [404] *E: yes*
- [405] *SML2: the other scientist kills had happened by the trap?*
- [406] *E: no, you have to use ... so look here (he was pointing at the active sentence on SML1's sheet) the trap had killed the other scientist, so we're going to change the order so we start with what?*
- [407] *SFL3: the other scientist ...*
- [408] *E: yes, the other scientist*
- [409] *SFL3: had killed?*
- [410] *E: you have to use the verb "be" ok? Had been (he was waiting for the learners to finish the sentence) ... you have to use be ... so the other scientist had been*
- [411] *SML2: killed?*
- [412] *E: yes*
- [413] *SML2: by the ... the*
- [414] *SML1: trap?*
- [415] *E: by the trap. Ok?*

- [416] *SML2: ok. Number three, please*
- [417] *SML1: number three, the other scientist had been killed by the trap*
- [418] *SML4: can you repeat, please*
- [419] *SML1: the other scientist had been killed by the trap*
- [420] *SML4: no*
- [421] *E: you do not like the answer? Or you have something different?*
- [422] *SML4: the skeleton had been scratched by the trap*
- [423] *SFL3: what?*
- [424] *SML4: the skeleton had been scratched by the trap*
- [425] *SFL3: yeah it's correct you can say the other scientist or the skeleton. It's correct*
- [426] *SML2: do you agree?*
- [427] *SML4: yeah sure*

From lines [374] to [388] the educator was present in the group and helped the learners to answer the questions in the passive form. He asked them questions in different ways in order to facilitate the task for them. Each learner was providing a word separately and according to their answers the educator tried to guide them accordingly. For example in line [376], he asked a question to SML2 then in line [378] he asked another question to SML1. The educator was aware of the difficulties this group was facing, and in line [389] he explained to them how to make an active sentence, then he carried on by pronouncing the sentence by separating each part of speech. For each word he used gestures as to show that it is one word from the sentence. The educator wanted the learners to recognise the parts of speech of the active sentence, which means that the sentence contained a subject, a verb and an object, lines [392] to [397]. In addition, the educator used different intonations to pronounce the words according to their parts of speech. This helped learners, especially SFL3, to recognise each part. Finally, in line [396], SFL3 completed the sentence in the passive correctly. She started by moving the object of the active sentence “Indiana’s helper” into the subject of the passive and she added the auxiliary to be in the past simple, then the educator asked her what the verb was. SFL3 completed her sentence correctly. Based on the educator’s explanation and showing them the changes from the active into the passive, SFL3 was able to make the sentence following the rule. The sentence she made was: *“Indiana’s helper was frightened by spiders”*.

From lines [398] to [415], the interaction took place between the educator, SML2 and SFL3. In lines [398] and [402] the educator used different strategies to help with the passive form. He wanted them to understand well how to make a sentence in the active and what changes may occur when changing it into the passive. SML2 and SFL3 were listening carefully to the educator and following his explanation. Each one was giving an answer to the educator’s questions in order to make the sentence. At the end, SFL3 was able to make the passive form of the sentence with the help of the peer. The final product was the following sentence: “the other scientist had been killed by the trap”.

Then, from lines [416] to [427] two groups having the same list of words were mixed and had to compare their answers. The interaction took place between SML2, SFL3 from the first group and only one learner, SML4, from the second group. In line [417], SML2 read the sentence that he had made with his group as follows: “the other scientist had been killed by the trap”, but SML4 did not agree at the beginning and he gave his sentence, line [422], “the skeleton had been scratched by the trap”. When reading these two examples, it is clear that here were two different subjects of the passive form. However, as SFL4 said that both sentences were correct that they could use either “the other scientist” or “the skeleton”. In fact, in the video clip learners could see the skeleton of the scientist who was looking for the idol. He was killed in his expedition and stuck in the trap. Therefore, either subject was considered correct.

In the activity related to Indiana Jones clip, learners needed a better of refresher on how to do the task. Therefore, the educator was present in all times to explain the rule and give them more hints to make the answers. Learners seemed to understand, but they were still struggling because it was the first time they had to deal with this grammar activity. The two main reasons of this difficulty was that one learner missed watching the video clip and other one did not attend for the lesson the day before. The educator was aware about this difficulty and he was present to help them. At the end, learners understood the rules and were aware of the different changes that occur in making the passive form. They progressively positioned themselves in a social practice where they showed sensibility and cooperation in performing the activity. They improved and could make their own sentence following the educator’s instructions. Overall the activity went well. The answers that learners came up with were correct and meaningful. This activity looked promising.

Activity five: grammar auction

The group was composed of three Saudi Male Learners; SML1, SML2 and SML3. Each learner started spotting the mistakes individually. They did not work together from the start than SML2 asked SML1 about the tense of one sentence, but SML1 did not say anything. Then, SML2

called the educator and asked him if he had to change the word as in line [428] below. The educator told him that sometimes he did not have to change, and then he asked the question to the other learners to make them participate and share their ideas. This strategy gives an opportunity to learners to express themselves and make them share and collaborate with the peers. The three learners started discussing about the sentence and tried to correct it altogether. The discussion between them is presented in the following transcript:

- [428] *SML2: since...since ... I am ...I am a child (nodding his head) ... Daryn? I can change the word...yeah?*
 [429] *E: you can, but sometimes you don't have to...you know...*
 [430] *SML2: there is no correct...like...because it's like...when I was a young child... better I say: I played soccer ...since I had a child...*
 [431] *E: what do you guys think?*
 [432] *SML1: I think...we don't change tense because may be he plays now.*
 [433] *E: yeah.*
 [434] *SML3: since...he child...heu a young child*
 [435] *SML1: he plays /al 2an/.../lakin lama tgoul/*
 [436] *E: (laugh)...explain in in English*
- [437] *SML1: ok, 'when' is something in the past..you know? You can't...heu you don't...heuu use it now (making gestures with his hands) it's /fil madhi...intaha/.../lama tgoul/ 'when' /hadi intahat wallah khalass?/ /ma hada beyssir yel3ab/*
 [438] *SML3: /ihh..bass/ 'since' /chaghala lalhin/*
 [439] *SML1: /ih/ 'since' /lalhin...mathalan...ana kount assoug sayara/ (he continues explaining the word in Arabic...couldn't get the meaning)*
 [440] *SML3: /ééh/.../ya3ni nkhalih/ I have play soccer.../bidoun/ 'ed' /sah?/*
 [441] *SML2: hein?*
 [442] *SML3: play...played? Played soccer /ya3ni/ played.../mou/ play*
 [443] *SML1: (nodding his head, meaning yes)*
 [444] *SML3: /2aywa/*

In line [435], SML1 translated the verb into Arabic and tried to explain to the peers that “he plays” means now, at the moment. The SML1 had the answer, but maybe he was not able to make himself understood. He started explaining in his mother tongue, but the educator told him to use English, and he tried to do that. However, as soon as the educator was far they started talking in Arabic.

The intervention of the educator was very beneficial. SML2 called the educator, but instead of answering the question the educator invited the peers to express themselves. SML1 had the answer, but maybe he was not able to make himself understood. He started explaining in his

mother tongue, but the educator told him to use English, and he tried to do that. However, as soon as the educator was far they started talking in Arabic. SML1 explained to the peers that using “when” refers to a finished action in the past. He added that the action is no longer done. His explanation was totally in Arabic, line [437]. Then, in line [438] SML3 added that using “since” means that the action is still happening. The peers agreed about the use on “since”. They could apply the rule into the sentence and correct it accordingly. It is clear that in this part of the activity, not only they participated together in finding the mistake, but they also shared their knowledge and worked on the sentence together.

The activity was composed of sentences that learners had to bet on, buy and correct if necessary. The vocabulary used in the sentences was related to some of the knowledge learners gained through the semester. There were some idioms, verb tenses and vocabulary words. It was a good change for the learners who showed a sense of competition and cooperation in performing the task. From a *subjectification* perspective, learners behavior was competitive as they were increasing the prices of the sentences. They were more involved and communicative with the peers. Over all, it went well, learners did well. They were motivated, especially when the environment is competitive in which money is used. Learners had a lot of fun. The educator was happy with the way the activity went on and he also had a good feedback after the class. Some learners came and they said that they enjoyed the activity.

b) Socio-cultural dimension

Activity one: vocabulary

When learners came across the word “injection” SFL2 seemed not to understand well the meaning of that noun. As it was mentioned earlier, under the “awareness” category CML1 was engaged in explaining the part of speech of the word and showing SFL2 the words on the dictionary and comparing it with the one on her sheet. However, SFL2 did not ask him the question about the meaning of the word. She looked at another female learner from another group, **Figure 4.8, picture 3** and she pointed at the word on her sheet. From a cultural

perspective, SFL2 might feel more comfortable to ask a female learner who shared the same culture rather than to ask a male learner who belonged to a different culture. This is one of the examples where the cultural dimension might be a barrier within the learning environment. Also, CML1 showed his engagement more than once and he explained to her the meaning of the word “injection” even if she did not ask him. Not only he used the words that he picked up from the dictionary and their definitions, but also used different other strategies like gestures and synonyms to make everything clear to her. For example, to explain the “injection” he used different words, like hospital, sick and he ended up by using gestures with his hand and arm showing the way an injection is given to a patient.

From lines [301] to [305] SFL2 gave her example about the wrong sentence as follows: “My ring is made of solve”. While she was dictating the sentence to CML1, he asked her to repeat the word “ring”. He seemed not to know what she was talking about. Then, she used gestures to explain that to him. She used her right thumb and index on her left ring finger as she pretended entering a ring into her finger. This explanation was not clear to the CML1. Culturally speaking this gesture probably did not mean anything to him. For that reason he asked her for the spelling, so she wrote the word for him. Then it was much easier for him to understand the word once he saw the spelling.

This activity was characterized by an interaction between two learners, a male and a female, from two different socio-cultural backgrounds. In terms of *subjectification*, the female learner was showing discomfort as per asking question to the male learner. In her culture, she does not mix with the opposite gender and she might feel uncomfortable working with a male learner, who is a stranger for her. Also, she might feel judged by other members of her community. The female learner was distant with the male peer. When she needed a help with the definition of the word ‘injection’, she asked another female learner who was in another group. Coming from a conservative community created a barrier to the female learner who was faced with a tension among herself, her cultural beliefs and the learning environment she was put in. yet, the male learner became aware of her difficulties and used different strategies to help her understand the

meaning of the words, for example, imitating sounds, using gestures and giving specific context. In fact, each learner was positioning him/herself according to the socio-cultural background he/she grew up in while performing the task.

Activity two: relative clause

This activity (**Figure 5.10**) was successful in terms of using the relative pronouns and guessing the words selected by the educator. However, from a cultural point of view most Saudi learners had difficulties with the vocabulary itself. For example, when SML1 described the word “Michael Jordan”, it was not easy for SFL3 to guess it. She stated that she had no information about basketball, line [319]. She probably either did not like sports in general or basket-ball in particular. Also, maybe this sport was not popular in her country, which is in fact true.

Culturally speaking there was a lack of knowledge in this field. What is more, when the word was related to music, SFL3 made the same comment. Indeed, when it came to guessing about the famous singer “Madonna”, the same female learner said that she does not listen to music. She added that her husband listens to some music, but she does not listen to music at all. In her culture listening to music is not good practice and better to avoid it; except for some specific styles. The educator’s presence in this part of the activity was very important to help learners describe the meaning of words. The choice of the vocabulary words might seem easier for the educator as most of them looked famous; however, most learners were not familiar with all of them. The educator was not aware of that, but believing that some singers or facts internationally known did not mean that everyone could know them.

Somehow through this kind of activity, learners were able to apply the relative pronouns. They learnt well to make a difference between a relative pronoun for place, or thing or person and use them appropriately. However, their challenge was to figure out the meaning of the vocabulary words still unknown to them. Consequently, the educator’s help during the activity was of its

utmost need. From a socio-cultural perspective, learners had a cultural barrier regarding some of the words provided by the educator, or simply the ignorance of the word in the target language, they ended up learning a new word through the activity and they were introduced to a new cultural scheme that was different from the pre-existing one.

Activity three: comic strip

Reminder: Learners had to imagine the story of the comic strip and fill up the left blanks of the strip. Then to compare the story with another group and come up with a final story. The details of this activity are available in sub-section 4.9.1

This activity was composed of two Saudi learners, one male learner and one female learner. Interactions between them were very slow and each one was looking at the picture and did not know what to do. Indeed, it was the last group to finish the comic strip as compared to the rest of the class. Interaction was poor and learners did not share much probably because, as the educator mentioned later, the group was composed of a weakest learner (SML1) and a stronger but shy learner (SFL2). At the end, it was SFL2 who did most of the work and made all the decisions. The activity took too long; I seemed that learners got bored at the end. The comic strip with the learners' story is presented in **Figure 5.11** below:

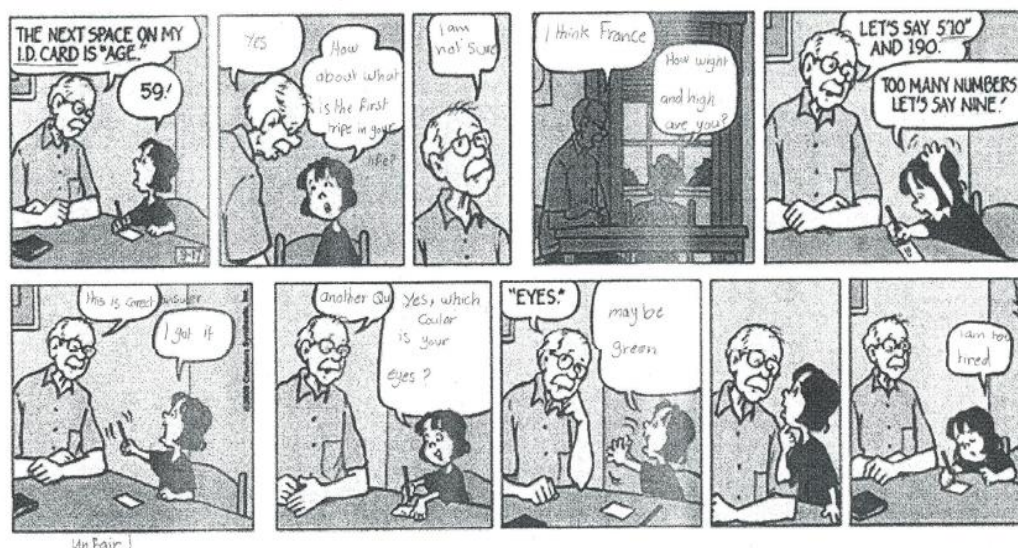


Figure 5.11: The Comic Strip Activity (Woodward, 1997)

This activity was very hard for the learners in general, and for the focus group in particular. On the one hand, the group was gender mixed, which could be a barrier to interact between each other. Being asked to work in an unusual learning environment and share ideas might be difficult for learners. On the one hand, both learners were not familiar with the key words given in the comic strip. To explain more, in the first picture there was an old man with a little girl talking together, and the man said: “The next space on my ID is age”. The word “ID” did not mean anything to both learners. They did not know what it really represented, where it could be found and what kind of information it should contain. The discussion between them is transcribed below:

- [444] *SFL2: heuuu ... in this paper, we have to ... we should say the story?*
 [445] *SML1: yeah ...*
(Silence for a few minutes and each one is looking at his paper)
 [446] *SFL2: heu.. this old man ... heuh ... the girl ... the small girl is speaking... I don't know ... heuhh*
 [447] *SML1: yes to the old man ... but 59? It is number? Heuh?*
 [448] *SFL2: yes, I think it is ... heuh ... she is telling him about the age.*
 [449] *SML1: ahhh yeah ... you're right... heuh ... but ID, is like passport?*
 [450] *SFL2: I don't know ...*
 [451] *E: so how is it going? Is it ok?*
 [452] *SFL2: heuuh ...*
 [453] *SML1: ID what is?*
 [454] *E: an ID ... heuuu ... I am sure you have an ID ... it's like ... heuu ... it's like to prove you identity ... you see what I mean? actually, for you as an international student ... heuh... when you came the first time and you has your orientation week ... you remember that? ... you went to the bank ... and opened an account ... heun... in the bank... they asked you for your ID ...right? so what was that? Do you remember that?*
 [455] *SML1: heuhh ... to go ... the bank? Heuh... for money?*
 [456] *SFL2 to SML1: no no ...to open account /rassid ya3ni/ (bank account)*

In line [447], SML1 was asking if “59” was a number, but SFL2 said it was age. Then he asked if the “ID” was similar to a passport, but she did not know. Seeing that they did not progress much, the educator’s intervention was needed. He came and asked them if everything was good for them and SML1 asked him what “ID” meant. The educator tried to give some hints so as to help them guess the information that could be found in an “ID”. However, learner were not successful that much and were thinking of other documents such as passport or student ID.

In terms of cultural knowledge, learners in general did not have an idea what an ID could be and what information it could contain. However, with the help and guidance of the educator they

ended up by learning something new from the activity. Indeed, the educator might think that learners were familiar with such identification document and the only challenge would be to come up with the discussion between that old man and the little girl which was, basically, based on their imagination. Yet, he understood throughout the activity that learners were not aware about it as they might not have a similar identification document in their home country. This would probably explain the length of time it took them to do the activity.

To conclude with this activity, based on the educator's assumption that learners were familiar with the information an ID contains, he was targeting one specific goal in the activity, which was mainly based on learners' imagination and collaboration as there was no good or bad story of the comic strip. However, based on their socio-cultural background, learners were not familiar with the keyword concept that would help perform the activity as expected by the educator.

Interaction was very poor and learners were passive. At the beginning, it seemed that the absence of interaction was due to a gender mixed group. As mentioned in this research, Saudi people do not mix in their daily life with the opposite gender. Culturally speaking, they are conservative and their behavior with female learners from the same community is very distant. Also, the lack of communication between the peers was due to the words provided in the comic strip. Those concepts did not refer to anything related to their cultural knowledge. In fact, through this activity the educator became aware of the learners' difficulty to understand a concept that they ignored its meaning and which became culturally understandable by the end of the activity. The comic strip was a starting point to explore an idea or a concept which might not be planned by the educator. The educator and learners' collaboration not only ended up by producing the story, but also to learn a new concept. Consequently, learners acquired a reality through performing the activity and this helped them get an insight into the culture of the target language.

c) Engagement/disengagement

Under this category I will be dealing with the activities where learners became progressively aware about the difficulties the peers were facing and they become more active. Engagement in the activity means being there for the peers and show responsibility towards them in sharing knowledge and contributing to the learning of others. Disengagement is when learners do not show any consideration or help to the peers. Two activities were selected to illustrate these two dimensions:

Activity one: passive voice (at the restaurant)

From lines [216] to [218] SFL2 was engaged in the activity from the start and she suggested that they start writing active sentences first and then turning them into passive. Even if she did not finish all her sentence, the other learners understood her message and they agreed with her. However, after that suggestion she was not engaged further in the activity. SFL2 became less active in the activity and communicated less with the other peers. Later when the educator came interaction took place among them. This part was analyzed in the sub-section related to interaction.

Then progressively, from lines [238] to [243] SFL2 was totally engaged in the activity. **Figure 5.7** shows her engagement in the activity, only with SFL1. She did not talk to the male learner and she not even looked at him. Also, the male learner did not interrupt them or asked them anything. However, when the educator came to the group, SML3 asked him a question, line [244]. At this moment, SFL2 became disengaged with the female learner. She did not say anything. It was SFL1 who became engaged and she exchanged some words with the educator who explained to them the rule of the passive voice and the changes that may occur when using the present perfect tense, line [249].

Activity two: vocabulary

CML1 was engaged in the activity. Even if he did not start doing the activity with SFL2 from the beginning, he became active and engaged when the educator was there. In addition, when CML1 recognized that the educator was looking up a different word, he took the initiative to turn the dictionary, and look up the word himself, and then he showed them the word “injection” on the dictionary. After that the educator left them work on their list.

Next SFL2 was looking up the word “trigger” on the dictionary, but she was not able to understand the meaning of the word. She read the definition from the dictionary and could not understand it. So, she turned the dictionary on the peer’s side and showed him the word without asking the question. CML1 looked at the word, and then he took back his cell phone and checked the meaning on his electronic dictionary, line [293] and he asked her if she knew the word “gun”. He used his hand to make gestures that illustrate the word “gun” in order to explain to her the word “trigger”, lines [295] to [300]. Also in line [299], CML1 gave her another example where a person might use a gun. In fact, CML1 was engaged in explaining the word to SFL2 and was using different learning strategies to facilitate communication and make learning easier to the peer.

This activity showed that CML1 was knowledgeable in terms of word meaning. He was using his electronic dictionary to find out the meaning of the words in all time, but he was successful in picking up the right meaning and explaining it to SFL2, who had difficulties understanding most of the words. In fact, CML1 showed a certain responsibility towards the peer in explaining at his best the meaning of the word, using different strategies.

The last part of this activity consisted of mixing the groups together (**Figure 5.8, picture 5**). The educator invited the two groups to mix and to work on their sentences. At this level of the activity the two female learners; SFL2 and SFL3 kept the sheet of paper in front of them and

started immediately talking to each other, while the other members did not join the group. When the entire group was sitting together only SFL2 and SFL3 were discussing about the sentences. They were checking the sentences and the definitions without showing to the rest of the class. The other members did not see the sheet and did not participate with them. It was only when SFL2 was not able to read CML1's handwriting that she asked him about it. CML1 read the word for them and he explained it to make sure they understood it well. The other learners were just looking at him nodding their heads meaning they had understood.

In this part of the activity, both female learners were very active. Interaction between them was continuous, but they did not interact with the others. It was only when they did not understand a word that they asked CML1 to explain it. However, the two other male members of the group did not share anything with them. Also, no one asked them to explain as the two SFLs were keeping the sheet of paper with them, but when they had difficulties to understand a word, the two SMLs intervened. One of them explained that the word was a noun and gave its synonym in Arabic:

When learners had to decide about the definition of each word, one of the SMLs was more engaged in this part than the previous one. He just took the sheet of paper and started dictating to one of the SFLs the sentences. This male learner became aware at a certain time that he had a role to play in working with others and participate with them. He became more active, while CML1 was not participating in producing the final list of sentences. In fact CML1 was listening to them and when SML5 did not know the way to pronounce the word "cause", CML1 took his dictionary and gave the pronunciation, but the educator was present and answered the call. SML5 repeated it and gave the meaning in Arabic to SFL3. The educator was there to correct them for pronunciation.

Under the socio-cultural dimension of learners' behavior there was a strong engagement of the Chinese learner in performing the activity. He progressively developed awareness towards the female learner's difficulties. He showed a strong responsibility in explaining the words even if she did not question him much. The female learner was not interacting much and her

disengagement in the activity lead the male learner to work on his side. In the next step of the activity, groups were mixed. The female learner positioned herself in a different way. She behaved differently. She became more active and strongly engaged in the activity with the other female learner. She seemed more comfortable working with a female learner than a male learner. As part of her socio-cultural background, it was clear that being in a mixed group created a barrier to her learning process.

- d) **Gender:** In phase II we had three groups where mixed genders were present. The activities were as follows:

Activity one: passive voice (at the restaurant)

In this activity, I would like to highlight that SFL2 was one of the females who always refused to be in a mixed group or even to change place and move to another group. The educator had always difficulties to set the groups especially when she was the only female learner present among males. Having said that, in **Figure 5.6**, the same female learner, who used to complain about working in mixed groups, was much at ease in working with this group.

SFL2 was an active participant with the two other learners from the start. Having another female learner in the group might be one of many reasons to explain her engagement in the activity. Another reason might be because she did not have to change the seat and felt secure at her place that she chose from the start. Generally, female learners used to sit at the right corner of the classroom and did not want to mix with male learners who used to sit on the other side of the classroom. One other explanation could be that the activity of passive voice sentences was done at the end of the semester, which means that learners got to know each other better and spent more time in class.

To conclude, female learners from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia find difficulties to work with the opposite gender in the classroom. They are not used to learn with male learners and sit at the

same table. Culturally speaking those men are strangers to them and they cannot exchange with them any thoughts. However, there was an observable improvement from the female learner who used to refuse moving her seat or working with male learners. At the end of the semester she seemed to accept more that in her new learning environment, the classroom is a mixed place where male and female learners work together.

Activity two: vocabulary

This activity started with the participation of a group of two learners; CML1 and SFL2. They started working individually, then CML1 became more engaged in the activity than SFL2. He was the one who did most of the definitions of the vocabulary word and the example to explain them. However, he invited her to provide the wrong sentence so as to participate with him in the task. When the groups were mixed, they became five learners, **Figure 5.8, pictures 5 and 6**. From the picture both female learners were working together. In fact, just after mixing the two groups, the two females sat beside each other, took the sheet of paper and started talking. SFL2 became more active when she had another female learner than when she was with CML1. The other learners did not say anything and were more passive.

Culturally speaking, the two females, especially SFL2, felt much comfortable to work with the same gender than to the males. I have mentioned earlier that in Saudi culture, learners do not mix in classes. This might be one of the reasons why SFL2 felt more comfortable and became more active when another female learner joined the group.

Activity three: Relative clause

For this activity (**Figure 5.9**) there were two female learners and three male learners. Again, the setting was identical to all those I have observed in this research. In other word, female learners were always sitting one beside the other, but there was always a distance with the male learners. Interaction is much easier with the same gender and takes time to happen with the opposite one.

From the three examples listed above, it is clear that the socio-cultural dimension of female learners is always present in their learning environment. They still have difficulties to mix with the opposite gender and they never sit beside them or share their space.

- e) **Power:** refers to the authority that learners see in the educator's role in the classroom. In fact, it is a cultural behavior, a form of respect towards the educator as shown in the following activity:

Activity one: vocabulary

In line [255], the educator intervened in the focus group because he noticed that the two learners were not working together. Each learner was looking up the word on his/her own. CML1 was using his electronic dictionary and SFL2 was using a hard copy dictionary. They were both passive. However, when the educator came to the group and tried to help SFL2, CML1 put aside his dictionary and was listening carefully to what the educator was saying to SFL2 (**Figure 5.8**, picture 1). This situation is similar to what Hegel calls the master-slave relationship in which the educator represents the master in the classroom.

In fact, CML1 moved from being passive to being active and then passive. Earlier he was explaining the words to SFL2 (injection), and monopolizing the activity then he came back to write the examples. However, when the educator came to their group, CML1 stopped writing and was listening carefully to the educator. Culturally speaking, the process of *subjectification* was he was characterized by a form of respect on regards of the educator who holds a powerful position in the classroom. There was a form of consciousness from the learner's part that the educator was there to deliver knowledge and CML1 was listening carefully without interrupting him.

5.3 Interpretation of Results

The tables below summarize the knowing and becoming dimensions in both phases.

	Phase I	Phase II
	Knowing	
Passive voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Learners worked mainly alone -SML2 became progressively aware of the difficulties SML1 was facing, but did not care much. -SML1 gave the sentence “<i>The order are being taken</i>”, but was not able to explain it to SML2. -SML1 learned that in the passive sentence provided by SML2, the past participle is taken and not taking. -The educator’s presence was important to answer SML 2 questions. -SML2 used another strategy to make the passive form. -SML1 was aware that it was not possible to make a question in the passive using an adjective, but was not able to explain it to the peer. -The process was long. -Male learner was monopolizing the activity than the female learner who became progressively involved. -Learners could apply the rules of the passive successfully. They clearly showed it in the example of the frame. They came up with a sentence that did not have a correct meaning, and they corrected it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Learners work more in groups. -The educator was present all the time to help them find the correct form of verbs. -Learners learned two new forms of verbs; “fed” and “poured”. -More engagement of the male learner from the beginning. -Participation of the female learners when the educator asked them questions. -
Grammar auction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Learners were more motivated by betting on the sentence rather than choosing the sentences and correct them. -Learners shared some rules, but did not succeed in applying them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This activity seemed more motivating for the learners. As the educator mentioned when it is competitive, learners are more involved. - Learners actualized their previous knowledge through the mediated activity. They shared their knowledge and

		showed a sense of responsibility towards the others. This activity was a success to them.
Vocabulary	-Learners used the definitions and example from the dictionary to provide the meaning of words. Among the list they had “identify” and “critic”. Those words seemed difficult for them to conceptualize.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Learners made the definitions and the three examples together. -The activity allowed them to learn new words, to share and explain them to the peers. -The design of the activity made learners produce a more elaborated work and share it with the peers. -Learners enjoyed the fact of giving their opinion on the peers’ work. -Two words seemed hard for them to understand: “trigger” and “investigate”
Relative clause		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Learners were able to use the relative pronouns properly. -They used Arabic to say the words as they did not know them in English. -They learned that “whale” is a mammal and not fish.

Table 5.6: Knowing in Phase I and Phase II

	Phase I	Phase II
	Becoming	
Passive voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -SFL4 had difficulties to accept the example using the word “wine”, but she did not say anything. -SFL4’s way of sitting was less comfortable than the SML3. -The clip Indiana Jones was not much inspiring to the learners. They did not know the character nor the movie star playing the role. This movie did not belong to their culture. -Learners learned the new vocabulary words (idol, whip) provided to them, and could make some correct sentences in the passive. -Learners were engaged in the activity and interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Interaction was socially organized. -Learners were involved in the activity. -The educator was present in the group. -SML3 was more active, and then the female learners participated. -The educator started by explaining the whole vocabulary words. He made adjustments based on the experiences he had in Phase I. -Learners did not like much the video clip.

	<p>took place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The activity seemed boring to the learners. -The educator had some difficulties to explain the word “whip”. Culturally speaking, learners were offended. 	
Grammar auction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Learners worked in groups to spot the sentences they thought they could correct. -Males were monopolizing the activity, but they did not reach the objectives of the activity. 	
Conditional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -SFL4 was monopolizing the activity and explaining the rule of second conditional to the learners. -The example “if I were a model, I would eat out with handsome man” was a very sensitive example. Learners had difficulties to accept because it was not part of their culture and coming from a female was hardly accepted. -SFL4’ example was grammatically correct, but culturally not accepted from the learners of her community. 	
Relative clause	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Learners progressively learned new vocabulary words that they had to describe using relative pronouns. However, they did not know some words that the educator thought they were famous, for example The Beatles, Madonna, Titanic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The educator adapted the list of words based on Phase I. -Learners learned the words by applying the relative clause according to the subject.
Comic strip		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Learners could learn the information found in an ID. -Interaction was very poor and the activity took too long. -Learners were not knowledgeable enough to fill in the comic strip.

Table 5.7: Becoming in Phase I and Phase II

From the different observations and analyses made in Phase I and Phase II, it is clear that learning happens in both phases. However, the learners' processes were different according to many factors. Through the application of the theory of *objectification* and the design of activities different learning environment were created to learners. They were more encouraged to work in groups, to develop awareness towards the others and show responsibility in sharing their knowledge and contributing to the learning of others. Also, the socio-historico-cultural dimension was considered a lot in Phase II. This part could show examples of *subjectification* in the learners' cultural behavior, especially with Saudi female learners. This behavior was clearly seen when male learners did not accept some words because of their culture. For example, when a female learner said: "If I looked like a model, I would eat out with handsome man", male learners were judgmental towards her. Even if the activity meant to use the correct form of the second conditional, in which she did well. Yet, male learners had difficulties to accept the sentence and above all these they judged her. They were not able to dissociate the example from the person who gave it. Culturally speaking, for Saudi people, being a model is not acceptable nor is it to eat out with a stranger.

I will present some of the limits of this research in a form of points as follows:

- When learners were given the choice to work in groups or alone, they ended up working alone. Most of the time it took a few minutes for learners to get involved in the activities, unless the educator came to the group and asked them to share their knowledge.
- Learners did not take time to guess the meaning of words from their context. Usually, they used their bilingual electronic dictionaries. However, most of the time they did not know which word fitted with the context. The educator encouraged them to use English-English dictionaries, but it was still hard for them.
- Learners had difficulties to understand some vocabulary words that the educator thought were famous. Culturally speaking, it was difficult to know the general cultural knowledge of learners. The sample of this research was basically composed of learners from Saudi Arabia and they were faced with a lot of new vocabulary that either did not belong to

their knowledge or were not accepted culturally. In some other cases, learners knew the words in their mother tongue, but did not have it in the target language.

- Learners used their mother tongue a lot to explain to the peers. This strategy was observed a lot in class. They use it to give a synonym, to explain a word or to give examples.
- The educator has to repeat the purpose of the activity more than once. Learners, sometimes, are more motivated by expressing themselves rather than following the instructions on the activity. For example, when they were asked to make relative clause, they wanted more to give the definition and did not pay much attention to the relative pronoun. The educator had to remind them all the time.

5.4 Conclusion

Through the application of the theory of *objectification*, I saw that learners were encouraged to combined different learning strategies and adopted them according to certain contexts. Through the refined activities and the presence of the educator in most groups, learners were more involved and engaged in performing the tasks. Also, they became progressively aware that they have a responsibility towards the others in co-producing and sharing knowledge. They became conscious that learning of other members is a common responsibility. Through the application of the theory of objectification, learners became aware that *Being*, same as *Knowledge*, evolve culturally and historically. Through the processes of *subjectification*, we are always unfinished and evolving beings, ruled tremendously by our emotions in everything we do.

As a practical conclusion, let me suggest that instructors in the classrooms should create conditions that encourage learners to show their communal ethics of responsibility, care, and commitment through their openness towards others, solidarity, and critical awareness. To create critical thinkers, ones capable of understanding and changing the world is crucial aspect of the processes of *subjectification* and *objectification*.

CHAPTER 6

General Conclusion

The aim of this chapter is to provide a summary of this research, some concluding remarks and to highlight some limitations of this research.

6.1. Research Summary

Teaching English for Specific Purposes, including EAP, is a challenging task for the educators where *i)* learners are coming from different historico-socio-cultural backgrounds, *ii)* they have heterogeneous skills, abilities and interest, *iii)* there is a lack of knowledge of the subject-matter; *iv)* lack of experience in the teaching field; *v)* the absence of collaboration with the subject specialists; and *vi)* unavailability of specialised materials. Generally, educators are not aware and familiar with the learners' culture. Moreover, learners are also required to be open to the culture within which the language has been developed. In this research, learners come from a culture which is different from the educator' culture and language. In the coming paragraphs I will provide a summary of the content of each chapter of this thesis.

In chapter 1, I discussed the socio-cultural impact on teaching and learning ESP/EAP. I gave an overview of the ESP/EAP and its application in different fields and disciplines. The literature

review reveals that the teaching methods of ESP/EAP do not take, explicitly, into consideration the cultural and social dimensions of learners. Also, it shows that learners are less engaged in learning and sharing knowledge amongst the learning community.

The aim of chapter 2 was to highlight the complexity and the challenges related to teaching EAP where the learners' personal or professional needs are constantly evolving. The complexity of teaching EAP is motivated by the fact that learners' background is varied and they are coming from different disciplines. The literature review reveals that several approaches have been applied for teaching EAP to international studies with different historico-socio-cultural backgrounds. The most popular one and well known is the communicative approach. Through this approach, EAP learners not only exchange thoughts through the target language, they also share their experiences and use different strategies in learning from each other. However, this approach does not raise the awareness of learners' responsibility and answerability. This has motivated the idea of exploring more the socio-cultural dimension in learning within a specific learning community where the learners play an active role and the educator is more involved. The *objectification* theory framework considers the learners as a community exercising some social roles and activities rooted into their past socio-historical background. In other words, learners can be seen as social individuals having their cultural heritage and knowledge that they share with the peers and learn with them and from them. The learning occurs through an exchange of knowledge among the learners and their awareness of the common responsibility in acquiring knowledge within their proper learning community.

In chapter 3, I provided a framework of the theory of *objectification*. This theory was illustrated through the “*Communitarian Self*” concept that has been applied in the teaching and learning of EAP. The learning was presented as an aggregation of subjectivities that promote different forms of ethical conducts based on socio-historical interactions and value systems. This process was seen as an act of being which takes place through interaction, exchange and sharing the peers according to their learning contexts. Basically, the theory of *objectification* refers to thoughts based on the learner's ideas, gestures, signs, artefacts and way of understanding concepts within their learning environment. The thought can be seen as a built of these elements and the social

practice where the learners can go beyond their thoughts in acquiring knowledge and learning. Learners are expected to get more involved and responsible in performing the tasks through the various activities performed in class. Moreover, it is expected that the educator must be aware of the socio-cultural dimension of the learning community. Both, learners and educator are engaged as social beings within the same learning community.

The methodological approach utilized to conduct this research was penciled in chapter 4 where I described the different steps and the way the research was conducted. I started by getting the ethical approval from the Office of Research at Laurentian University. The observations were conducted into two phases. First, I recorded the meetings where the educator used the traditional approach for teaching EAP learners. Second, I recorded the meetings where the cultural historical approach targeted by the theory of *objectification* was utilized to deliver the same material to the EAP learners. In this phase, the educator has modified the activities in his teaching in a way to meet the requirements of the *objectification* theory. In fact, the research methodology in this thesis was directed towards the need to investigate the processes of learning and understanding modes of social collaboration.

In chapter 5, I have highlighted the fact that during this research experiment the learning took place in both phases through different ways. The EAP activities were designed differently and the teaching approaches were not similar in the traditional and the sociocultural one. I noticed that through the theory of *objectification*, learners were learning and behaving within a learning community and they were more involved and engaged in performing their tasks. They were also aware that the learning of other members is a common responsibility. Members of the learning community have developed their own learning strategies and they became aware that knowing and being are constitutive parts of the learning process. This process is mediated by their historico-socio-cultural backgrounds. Moreover, being and knowing evolves culturally and historically. I noticed also that in the traditional approach of teaching EAP, the learners' interactions with the educator and among themselves were limited. In addition to the fact that the learning activities were not focused on the socio-cultural and historical background of the learners. The educator has a crucial role within the learning community in creating learning

conditions that encourage the learner to exercise their communal ethics of responsibility, care, and commitment towards other members of the learning community. These elements are the core of *subjectification* and *objectification* processes. In this chapter I have examined how knowing and becoming are linked and the learning occurs through both of them simultaneously.

6.2. Concluding Remarks

The aim of this research was to study how learning occurs in teaching ESP/EAP through two different approaches. The traditional approach where the learning activities were designed without taking explicitly into account the learners' historico-socio-cultural background. However, the learning activities in the new approach were designed by the educator based on the cultural historical approach targeted by the theory of *objectification*. In both approaches we focused on how the knowing, through *objectification*, happens by looking to the way that ESP/EAP learners became aware, conscious and acquire knowledge related to English vocabulary, grammar and literacy practices. In this process, I looked also to how learners have applied and utilized different learning strategies such as the mother tongue, gestures and using personal ideas. As regards, the becoming happened through *subjectification* by observing the role of gender within the learning community, engagement of learners and their responsibility towards the peers by making the learning of each member of the learning community a common responsibility.

Through both approaches I noticed that teaching a language requires an understanding and an awareness of the learners' historico-socio-cultural background. These two elements are linked and embedded together. The acquisition of a language is an evolving process that requires familiarization with its culture and the knowing process cannot take place outside the cultural framework of that language. Moreover, teaching EAP to international students requires from the educators an understanding and awareness of the learners' culture. The subjects that I observed come from different historico-socio-cultural backgrounds as compared to the educator.

In some activities, I noticed that learners were not aware and familiar with some issues related to the North American culture and style of living. For example, in the activity of “Comic Strip”, learners were not familiar with the concept of an ID and its content. In this activity, detailed in sub-section 4.9.1 and illustrated in figure 5.11, each group of learners was asked to produce a story of the Comic Strip and fill up the left blanks of the strip. In observing the groups, I noticed that learners were not familiar with the concept of ID. They were not aware that this document includes personnel information. They spent some time asking about the purpose of the ID than producing a story about the Comic Strip. The aim and the scope of the activity was not about making learners aware of the information that can be included in an ID, but it was to come up with a story and filling the blanks. The educator’s expectations through this activity were to stimulate the learners’ imagination and collaboration in producing a story of the Comic Strip. However, to perform this activity it was necessary to explain to the learners the purpose of an ID. In such context, the role of the educator is very important in reducing the cultural gap and waiving some learning constraint. Initially, the educator was not aware that referring to an ID can be an obstacle in learning and performing an activity.

The role of the educator has changed from the traditional approach to the new approach. In the traditional, he was less aware of the socio-cultural background of the learners and he was less interacting with them. Basically, his role was more lecturing the learning community than interacting with them. His interactions with the learners were limited to some sporadic actions. However, in Phase II, he has been asked to play an active role in the discussions among the learners and identify cases where the socio-cultural dimension can be a constraint for the learning process. He started by modifying the design of the activities where he took into consideration the cultural dimension. His involvement within the learning community helped learners to develop and, sometimes, revise their learning strategies. I noticed that the presence of the educator made the learners more engaged in the learning activities (see Figure 5.8, picture 1). The presence of the educator in some activities was illustrating the concept of master-slave introduced by the philosopher Hegel where the learner is more confident and motivated to learn from the educator than his peers within the same learning community. In some cases, the educator was learning also and he became aware about some cultural issues that can offence the

learners. This issue was well illustrated through the activity of Indiana Jones and the use of the whip. Some of these culture related activities have contributed to the awareness and consciousness of the educator to the importance of the historico-socio-cultural dimension in teaching EAP to international learners.

Moreover, in this thesis I have discussed how it is important to stimulate the role of the learners in the classroom and to encourage them to play an active role by adopting learning strategies that comply with their socio-cultural background. It seems that in the traditional approach of teaching EAP, learners do not play an active role in the classroom. They are not given many opportunities to share their knowledge with the peers and have that responsibility of explaining to other learners. The literature review reveals the absence of the explicit integration of the EAP learners' socio-cultural background within the learning community. I have to insist on the fact that in both approaches the learning took place, but in different ways. My analysis shows that teaching EAP through *objectification/subjectification* theories made learners more aware, engaged and responsible in the learning process. They used different learning strategies. Both knowing and becoming are socially and culturally organized and the learning process requires awareness of the culture of the language and the learner's cultural background.

6.3. Limitations of the Research

This research has some limitations related the diversification of the cultural background, the origins, and the gender of the learners. The sample that I studied in this research was formed by a majority of learners from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and males. Among those accepted to be observed was a Chinese learner. In order to validate this model and findings we need to observe a learning community of a larger size and more culturally diversified learners. Moreover, the gender of the educator can be diversified by considering a female instructor where the interaction with learners will be different and it could enrich the study. As future research axes, I am recommending to extend this research to other EAP levels where I can study how learners are evolving through this learning process motivated by the theories of *objectification* and

subjectification. Also, to conduct a similar study with different socio-cultural backgrounds such as learners from China, South America and Europe. A comparative study will clarify the role of the socio-cultural dimension in learning EAP and the way that the being and knowing take place within the learning community.

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Appendix A

Grammar Auction Sentences

1. I was going to married, but I changed my mind.
2. Joe saves a lot of money, so he is always in the red.
3. I live in a rural area, where there are many tall buildings, a subway and a lot of entertainments.
4. When the King visited my city, the white carpet was rolled out.
5. I have played soccer since I was a young child.
6. They told her get her visa from the immigration department.
7. When were you studying?
8. Have you ever rode a motorcycle?
9. Tomorrow, we go to the store buy some groceries.
10. I have worked here for many years, but I am thinking about quitting my job.
11. My best friend gave me some great advice yesterday.
12. Your report was very clear, in black or white.
13. If you want improve your English, you must to study hard!
14. Daryn buy coffees from Tim Horton's everyday.

Appendix B

6. injection

Definition: to force into something.

Sentence: 1. This Vitamin is sometimes given by injection.

2. ~~The invalid insulin~~ injections are necessary for ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~Penicillin~~ ^{Penicillin} invalid.

3. When we had a party my friend brought injection for the people.

7. trigger

Definition: to initiate or start by something.

Sentence: 1. Some people find that foods trigger their headaches.

2. I used the trigger to play with my children.

3. It's not clear who pulled the trigger.

~~I think that he is who pulled the trigger.~~

8. respiratory

Definition: an act or the process of breathing.

Sentence: 1. Smoking can cause respiratory diseases.

2. Respiratory is the most important for human.

3. A healthy person must has a healthy respiratory system.

9. solve

Definition: to find the answer.

Sentence: 1. I am still no nearer to solving this case.

2. I think that shouting won't solve anything.

3. My ring is made of solve.

10. investigate

Definition: to study by close examination.

Sentence: 1. We are investigating how the error ~~to~~ ^{had} happened.

2. Police ~~was~~ ^{are} investigating for this crime.

3. Please find the investigate for this things.

Keep going



Appendix C

6. injection

Definition: A doctor or nurse puts an Medicine.

- Sentence: 1. This Vitamin is sometime given by injection
2. Some people use an injection for diabetes.
3. I like to drink my coffee with two injection.

7. trigger

Definition: Small thing in the gun you push it to shoot fire.

- Sentence: 1. when I saw the bird, I pulled the trigger to kill it.
2. The events in Tunisia triggered riots in Egypt.
3. I used the trigger to play with my children.

8. respiratory

Definition: Means relating to breathing.

- Sentence: 1. Smoking can cause respiratory diseases.
2. Smokers have problems in respiratory system.
3. If you drink water you will have problem in respiratory.

9. solve

Definition: To find the answer or solution

- Sentence: 1. All mothers usually solve the problems in the family.
2. The students used the equation to solve the matter in math.
3. My ring is made of solve.

10. investigate

Definition: Try to track, investigate.

- Sentence: 1. We are investigating how the error has happened.
2. The police investigate how the accident happened.
3. Please find the investment for the savings.