

8-1-2014

SAUDI L2 LEARNERS' KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC ENGLISH SLANG

Anood Sarai Albalawi

Southern Illinois University Carbondale, lordena@siu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/theses>

Recommended Citation

Albalawi, Anood Sarai, "SAUDI L2 LEARNERS' KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC ENGLISH SLANG" (2014). *Theses*. Paper 1442.

This Open Access Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at OpenSIUC. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses by an authorized administrator of OpenSIUC. For more information, please contact opensiuc@lib.siu.edu.

SAUDI L2 LEARNERS' KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC ENGLISH
SLANG

by

Anood S. Albalawi

BA, Tabuk University, 2005

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Arts Degree

Department of Linguistics
in the Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
May 2014

THESIS APPROVAL

SAUDI L2 LEARNERS' KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC ENGLISH
SLANG

By

Anood S. Albalawi

A Thesis Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Arts
in the field of Applied Linguistics

Approved by:

Krassimira Charkova, Chair

Dongmei Cheng

Karen Baertsch

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
May 2014

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

ANOOD S. ALBALAWI, for the Master of Arts degree in APPLIED LINGUISTICS, presented on MAY 1, 2014, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: SAUDI L2 LEARNERS' KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC ENGLISH SLANG

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Krassimira Charkova

This study investigated the extent to which Saudi students were interested in American academic slang terms and expressions. The goal of this study was to examine their knowledge and perceptions of academic slang as L2 learners living in the US. In this study, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were employed. The data were retrieved via an online survey. A written questionnaire was completed by 50 undergraduate SIUC students from Saudi Arabia. The vocabulary task results showed that Saudi L2 learners do not have sufficient knowledge of American academic slang. Saudi students, especially females, revealed a positive attitude towards learning American academic slang in order to communicate successfully in American universities. This research highlights the importance of presenting international students with academic slang as an important register frequently used in academic life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
ABSTRACT	i
LIST OF TABLES	iii
LIST OF FIGURES	iv
CHAPTERS	
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2 THE LITERATURE REVIEW.....	5
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY	13
CHAPTER 4 RESULTS.....	16
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION	29
REFERENCES	38
APPENDICES	
Appendix A.....	39
VITA	45

LIST OF TABLES

<u>TABLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Table 1.....	17
Table 2.....	19
Table 3.....	22
Table 4.....	23
Table 5.....	24
Table 6.....	26
Table 7.....	27

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>FIGURE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Figure 1.....	18
Figure 2.....	20
Figure 3.....	21
Figure 4	25

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Slang exists in every language in the world. For international students who come to the United States to study, slang may create obstacles in communication. Usually, such students are familiar in using the Standard English taught in schools. This standard language qualifies them for acceptance into universities. They will hear it during lecturer and find it in books. However, inside or outside of classes, their native English-speaking peers usually use less formal English. These peers use academic slang terms and expressions, which differ from instructional and textbook language.

Although slang language is used everywhere, academic American slang has an important role in the life of the international students. Academic slang language belongs to “young people and youth culture” (Thorne, 2004). These young people form slang terms and expressions to communicate and express themselves in their academic life. While most native speakers use slang during casual speech, international students know little, if any, of this academic slang language. This may lead them to feel isolated from their native-English-speaking peers. Recognizing academic slang as a register for casual conversations would help prevent students using it in academic speech and writing.

Most previous studies (kim 2004; Burdová 2009; Gonzalez 1994) focused on slang in everyday use and compared slang use between native speakers and non-native speakers of English. To the best of my knowledge, few studies explored academic slang language or its role in the academic life of international students. Attitudes toward academic slang and familiarity with slang terms may differ from one student to another. Some non-native speakers of English

may show interest in learning the academic slang while others may not. Some students may not pick up slang when they hear it; this may be why they do not recognize that it exists.

Exploring all of the different conditions of slang use will help to decide the need of learning academic slang by international students in order to communicate successfully. While previous studies examined the use and knowledge of academic American slang among different non-native speakers of English, I was unable to find any that included Saudi ESL students. Accordingly, there seems to be a need to address the use of English slang within this group.

In this study, I considered the variable of gender by comparing the results of Saudi females with those of Saudi males. Several past studies have investigated the differences between the attitudes of native and non-native speakers toward English slang. However, few studies considered gender differences among nonnative speakers of English. Regarding Saudi non-native speakers of English, the comparison between the Saudi males and females will be interesting because of Saudi society imposes some restraints on women regarding their appearance in public places and contact with men, and as such, Saudi females are not usually exposed to the everyday life of American society. For them, the chances of hearing and using English slang are not equal to those of Saudi males. Therefore, Saudi females' use of English slang will be an interesting theme to investigate.

Definitions of Slang

It is important to distinguish slang from other types of nonstandard language. Slang does not include every new catchphrase, abbreviation, or even dialect. This idea can be shortened by simply stating that "all slang, therefore, is informal, but not all that is informal is slang" (Lighter, 1994). Dalzell (2005) described slang's unique linguistic status within the English language and stated that slang should not be confused with the other aspects of standard language. He declared

that slang is “cleverer” (Dalzell, 2005) than standard language. It allows people to speak about topics they love, such as sports, using many variations of words and descriptions. As Dalzell (2005) mentioned, these factors that characterize slang are the reasons young people have a very significant role in the creation of slang language. He indicated that more than any other thing, slang defines the identity of a generation. Another definition pointing out the social identity of slang language is that by Eble (1996), who defines it as “an ever changing set of colloquial words and phrases that speakers use to establish or reinforce social identity or cohesiveness within a group or with a trend or fashion in society at large” (p. 11). She described slang as a type of language, not as a social phenomenon that could be good or bad. Eble (1996) also pointed out its role in creating certain identities for the speakers, mentioning that the terms used by college students represent “the ephemeral and innovative character of slang” (p.13). As my study is limited to the academic American slang, I followed the definition of Arua & Modupe (2008): Academic slangs is "the informal and highly expressive products of students' creativity which are used to describe their cultural, academic or social lives" (p. 39). This specific definition shows the main characteristic of academic slang as being created by students representing the culture of their college life.

The Purpose of the Study

Since 1951 American universities and colleges have been the goal for hundreds of Saudi students (both males and females) who came to seek the best educational opportunities. Each year, the number of Saudi students who come to study in the U.S. is increasing. According to the Outreach Newsletter of the Cultural Mission published in 2006, the Saudi ambassador Turki Al-Faisal acknowledged that “King Abdullah and President Bush agreed in a joint statement to increase the number of Saudi students who come to this country” (Saudi Arabian Culture

Mission [SACM], 2006). Speaking of the number of students who attended American educational institutions, he announced, “This year alone, we have increased our scholarships to students coming to the United States by 3000 and in the next five years it will reach in the region of 15,000 students” (SACM, 2006). In order to be qualified to attend a university, these students attend a language institution, which focuses on the main linguistic skills that enable them to attend a university. They learn how to read, speak, and write, using perfect standard grammar rules.

Students need to be aware of the basic rules of the English language in order to be academically ready. However, the English they learn in the language centers does not help them significantly in everyday life. In a real life situation, they usually find themselves lost between the strict grammar rules that they should use, and the language they hear from native English speakers. Feeling unable to communicate with native-English-speaking students, a student can feel isolated, which may result in miscommunication between the two groups. This deprives the student from gaining new vocabulary knowledge and from cultural exchange. They need to acquire the academic terms and expressions used by their American fellows. This will provide them with the confidence needed to communicate with their colleagues without feeling lost.

Given these needs of using language for peer communication, the aim of this study was to investigate Saudi L2 learners’ familiarity with academic American slang expressions, and their views toward learning academic American slangs and teaching them in schools. I also investigated the gender differences for the familiarity and attitude variables in the study. The results could be useful to inform whether Saudi L2 learners use academic slang and need to learn it in schools.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies have investigated the use and knowledge of English slang as a prominent language variety. These studies either focused on native speakers of English or compared native speakers of English with non-native speakers of English. This review focuses on three major themes that appear frequently in the related literature. The first theme is the role of slang among American students, and its nature as a recognizable speech register. The second is the attitude of L2 learners toward slang. The third is the gender difference on L2 learners' knowledge and perception of English slang.

In a study investigating the creation of slang by English native speaker students, Arua & Modupe (2009) distributed a questionnaire to 163 third- and fourth-year students at the University of Botswana. Among the 153 slang expressions collected from these students, results showed that the main creation processes included semantic extension (e.g. *drivers*-those who cheat), compounding (e.g. *binary marks*-average grade), conversion (e.g. *retakes*-difficult courses and teachers), derivation (e.g. *steppers*-excellent students), acronyms (e.g. *wost* – wasters of students' time), and duplication (e.g. *year year* – people who have stayed long on a course or in a program). The two most common methods of slang creation were semantic extension and compounding. This result was inferred by the researcher, utilizing the assumption of Eble (1996) and Thorne (2004), which stated that students use existing English lexical items in order to create their slang terms.

Arua & Modupe's (2009) showed the creativity of the students in forming new slang expressions, which represented different aspects of their academic life including grades, the

relationships between teachers and students, the courses, and the lecturers. The slang terms were related to their relationships with the lecturer and their friends, the exams, the grades, and their performance in classes. This pointed out the main role of slang in the academic life of college students. Due to the complicated nature of these expressions, if non-native speakers of English are unable to understand these academic slang terms, they will find difficulty in getting along better with native speakers. It is likely that they will also be deprived of the chances to develop their English skills and to become familiar with the culture of their native-English-speaking friends.

Non-native speakers of English need to know how to use the different academic slang terms, but they also need to know where and when the use of slang terms is appropriate. To obtain a clear idea of the degree to which slang language is accepted by native speakers of English, Cooper (2001) conducted a study to investigate students' opinions of their own and others' use of slang. The survey involved four groups of both male and female participants, with ages ranging from 14 to 41. The participants are divided into two groups based on their educational background: The first group included participants who had graduated from high school, and the other group included those who had attended a four-year university. They were asked to rate various slang terms on a three-point scale, developed by Ensz (1985, 1986): “ ‘1’ indicated that the expression is offensive and is not socially acceptable; ‘2,’ that the expression is probably socially inappropriate and should not be freely used in most social situations; and ‘3,’ that the expression is not objectionable in any way and can be freely used in any social situation” (as cited in Cooper, 2001, p. 67). In addition, they were asked to underline the terms they considered to be slang and explain why

The results of the study showed that acceptance of slang use was not high, except among the four-year college/university group. This research showed that although people from different ages and different aspects of life use slang, college students represent the largest population using this language. The results indicated that not knowing academic slang could create obstacles for international students when communicating with their peers in colleges. The author emphasized the idea of teaching slang expressions in schools because “while comprehending slang expressions is essential for the learner, using them requires caution.” (Cooper, 2001, p.77) This indicates that the context of the slang is quite important to teach. According to the researcher, an academic approach that both simplifies and teaches academic slang terms is needed for non-native speakers of English. He indicated that this approach could be developed through “situational analysis” (Cooper, 2001, p. 77); a systematic process of analyzing the different factors that control the educational situation of the students. Based on the results of a completed analysis, an effective curriculum would be developed.

Hummon (1994) investigated the use of slang among American students attending the Higher Institute of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry (I.S.A.E). He examined why and how the students use slang. The data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire, focus-group interviews, and participant observations. Results showed that the slang used by the students was the result of different morphological processes such as coinage (the invention of a new word), borrowing (a word from a language adopted for use from another), clipping (the reduction of a word to one of its parts), compounding and acronyms. He also found that students use slang terms for fun, secrecy, humor; or they may use slang terms to show that they belong to a certain group. According to the study, students often use slang terms to hide secrets and transmit messages. The students in the study indicated, “When we use slang, we are creating a

sort of group communication” (Hummon, 1994, p.54). The results also revealed that the students in I.S.A.E frequently use slang with their friends and peers, do not usually use it with their parents or strangers, and never use it with the lecturers in class. This study stressed the important role of slang in the life of American students.

On campus, young speakers of English bring slang language to life by continuing to form and widely use new slang terms and expressions. Thorne (2004) mentioned that young people have their own “small-culture codes” (para, 11), which represent their ideas and their interests in the different cultural and social issues in their academic life as students. He indicated that the younger generations are masters of their own cultural and social identity. Slang, as a form of language created by adolescents, mainly belongs to them and to their culture. According to Thorne (2004), no matter whether people are interested in slang language, teaching it to non-native speakers of English is an urgent need. Doing so would introduce them to the culture of the young generation in the target culture. The author declared that teachers were not required to be experts in slang language. They could use different references and guidance to help them teach slang to non-native speakers of English.

The previous studies in this literature review pointed out the frequent use and acceptability of slang terms among college and university English L1 students. They also indicated that using academic slang expressions requires certain awareness and caution.

In a linguistic study, Biber (2012) indicated the importance of academic register at the lexical level, the grammatical level, and the lexico-grammatical level. He argued that English reference grammar books and dictionaries have an important role in teaching English grammar and vocabulary. Most of these references, however, do not provide the register differences of the language. He emphasized the idea that the lexical and grammatical patterns of English should not

be taught in a “global term” (Biber, 2012, p.9). The patterns used in academic writing are different from the pattern used in speech. Analysis and comparison between conversation and academic writing for each of the three register levels showed that each of the registers has characteristics that are not interchangeable with the other registers. This study indicated that there is a particular register that is applicable to each type of language. The way a speaker should write an academic piece of work linguistically differs from the way used to speak to a professor or a friend. Academic writing requires using high-level vocabulary, a register that is not typically used in formal speech. Biber (2012) stated that there are two types of registers that differ from the academic American slang used among friends, all three of which L2 learners should be cognizant. If students adopt a negative attitude towards the use of academic slang, they should be made aware that the English language has different registers. As the results of the analysis in this study showed, the English language employs grammar and lexicon on different levels of register according to the written or spoken situation.

There has always been a belief that slang is language that is used mostly by men, while women tend to avoid using it. According to Flexner and Wentworth (1975), “most American slang is created and used by males. Many types of slang words . . . refer primarily to male endeavor and interest (p. xii).” This is because of the perception of slang as a language of “masculinity” (Lakoff, 1973, p.53). According to her theory of politeness principles, Lakoff (1973) points out that women usually use polite forms in speaking, and they tend to avoid certain terms and words which imply impoliteness and masculinity. For many women, using slang terms and words may indicate impoliteness and a lack of class because they feel they should act in a ladylike manner. Moreover, According to Jay (1992), slang terms are often vulgar, and they are usually less offensive to men than they are to women. Men are more used to hearing and using

vulgar words than women are. There is always a perception that males have larger slang vocabularies than females. Because of the nature of slang language as “a male domain” (Grossman & Tucker, 1997, p.45), gender is an important variable in the investigation of slang language.

Kim investigated gender by comparing the results for males and females among both native and international subjects. She designed a study to compare the use of slang by native speakers to that of Chinese non-native speakers of English. The results of the study showed that females preferred to use slang words with positive meanings rather than those with negative meanings. Regarding the American students’ use of slang terms, there was no significant difference between males and females. In general, the results of the study showed that the desire of international students to learn slang was strong and that they showed good comprehension of a number of the slang terms presented to them. Among the international students, female students showed a lower percentage of slang use than male students did. Female students tended to be more concerned with acceptability issues and contextual perspective than male students were. For females, the percentage of use dropped drastically for terms that have offensive implications, such as *suck* and *hot*.

As the former studies have shown, slang language has an important role in the life of students. There have been valuable studies on slang language among native and nonnative speakers of English. However, little has been written on academic American slang, in particular, among international students. Today, there are large numbers of Saudi students who come to United States to study. There were no available studies that investigated academic American slang among Saudi 2L learners. This study will address this gap in research by examining the attitudes of Saudi students toward academic American slang.

Research questions

This study explores the familiarity and perceptions of academic American slang among ESL students. In order to answer the two main questions of the study, I investigated the familiarity of Saudi L2 learners of academic American slang, and I explored their opinions on the importance of learning academic American slang, as well as their beliefs on whether or not it should be taught in schools. I also compared the results of Saudi male students to those of Saudi female students. The questions of the study were the following:

Research Question 1

Are Saudi L2 learners (male and female) familiar with academic American slang?

1.1. Does gender (male vs. female) have a significant effect on their familiarity?

Research Question 2

Should academic American slang be taught in language classes?

2.1. To what extent do Saudi L2 learners (males and females) think that knowing academic American slang is important?

2.2. Do Saudi L2 learners (males and females) think that it is necessary to learn academic American slang in their classes?

2.3. Does gender (male vs. female) have a significant effect on learners' attitudes on learning academic American slang?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The sample of this study included 50 Saudi students (26 males/24 females), recruited from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois. They ranged in age from 21 to 30, and had spent at least one year in the US. This period presumably allowed them to have sufficient verbal contact with native speakers of English in order to acquire the academic American slang terms. The demographic information section helped me in categorizing the participants according to gender, allowing comparisons to be made during the data analysis. It also helped to exclude any participant who did not fit into the main conditions, such as age or the time spent in U.S. Among the participants, there was a female from Kuwait and another from Libya who were excluded to ensure that all the participants were Saudi. In addition, four students were still studying in the Center for English as a Second Language (CESL). These students were excluded due to the lack of contact with native speakers of English in the CESL classes.

Research Instruments

The data for this study was collected through a survey. The survey (See Appendix A) was divided into a production section and a demographic information section. The first part of the production section contained multiple-choice questions on a list of 13 slang terms commonly used by college students words selection was based on the article: “Communication Strategies for the Classroom: Student Slang” (“Communication Strategies,” n.d.). I also developed the instruments by speaking to native speakers of English and asking them about the most common academic terms they use. The list contained slang terms and expressions used by native speakers

of English in the different aspects of their academic life. It did not include any vulgar words. In this study, what was counted as slang language was any lexical term including single words or multi-words, like phrases, with single references. Each term was represented in a sentence, which was then followed by four options. While one option contained the correct definition of the slang term, the other three served as distractions.

The second part of the production section elicited information about the participants' opinions toward the utility of learning academic American slang. It also investigated their point of view toward teaching academic American slang in schools. It contained two Yes/No questions. After choosing the proper answer, the participants explained their choice briefly in either Arabic or English. The demographic information section provided the basis for selecting participants. It included questions about gender, age, and the length of time spent in the US. The questions in this section controlled for unsystematic variability, which is the individual differences found among participants, by providing information that guaranteed the groups' homogeneity.

Procedure

In order to conduct the survey, I distributed the questionnaire to a group of participants who were recruited through friends' networks. Seven of the surveys (four females and three males) took place in a reserved room at Morris Library. Before distributing the survey to the participants, a brief presentation was given about the purpose and the importance of this research. The participants were then given 20 minutes to answer the questions, and they were not allowed to use any written or electronic material during this time. The seven participants were given detailed instructions, similar to the instructions given above, on completing their surveys, but were allowed to take it without the researcher presence.

Data Analysis

This study included two types of research questions, quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative questions were statistically analyzed by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 21. The analysis included descriptive and inferential statistics, while the qualitative analysis included content analysis. The survey was examined using both of these methods. As the distribution of scores among each group in each task met the assumption of normality, an independent t-task was used to examine the effect of the independent variable group on the dependent variables in each task. The independent variable in this study is gender (males vs. females); the dependent variables are knowledge of academic slang terms and attitude toward the importance of academic American slang and teaching it in schools. The level of significance for the task was set at .05.

In this study, there were two main constructs: familiarity and attitude towards learning and using academic American slang. Accordingly, the questionnaire was intended to measure these two themes. The first section of the questionnaire was set to measure Saudi L2 learners' familiarity of academic slang. It had the additional goal of answering the quantitative research question: "Does gender (male vs. female) have a significant effect on Saudi 2L learners' familiarity of academic American slang?" For this purpose, a vocabulary task was developed to examine participants' familiarity of slang. In this task, a participant had to choose the correct meaning for each slang word. First, to answer the first research sub-question, the percentage correct answers for each word was calculated using Excel to obtain the frequency distribution of each vocabulary word among all participants (males and females). Second, to answer the second sub-question, the percentage of correct answers for each term was calculated for each group (males vs. females). Then to score the task, each correct answer was given 1 point, and 0 points

were awarded for choosing any of the other possibilities. The quantitative data from this task was statistically analyzed and entered into the SPSS program, version 21. I then performed an independent t-test to compare the results for the two groups (males and females), in which the independent variable was gender and the dependent variable was the vocabulary task score.

The second section of the questionnaire was intended to address the following research questions: “To what extent do Saudi 2L learners (males and females) think that knowing academic American slang is important?” and “Do Saudi 2L learners (male and female) think that academic American slang should be taught in schools?” The second section revealed their opinions toward both learning and teaching academic American slang in schools. To obtain numerical data for the purpose of analysis, responses to the first question were coded as follows: 1 = Yes, 2 = Somewhat, 3 = No. Responses to the second question were coded as follows: 1 = Yes, 2 = No. This section was analyzed through Excel program to get the percentage of each choice among each group.

In each question, the response explaining the choice was the narrative data. The participants had the choice to answer in Arabic. This was done so they would not be concerned about making mistakes, which may have prevented them from answering the question. Among the participants, six males answered in Arabic, while all the females (24) answered in English. In the first question, the responses were divided into three parts according to their former choices: yes, somewhat, and no. In the second question, the responses were divided into two parts according to their former choices: yes and no. Then, the data was analyzed through Excel to obtain the use percentage of each response.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the analysis of the data, followed by a discussion of the research findings. The data were collected and analyzed to explore Saudi L2 male and female learners' knowledge of American academic slang and to identify the difference between the attitudes of Saudi L2 male and female learners toward American academic slang. Data were obtained from 26 male Saudi students and 24 female Saudi students at SIUC. The two groups of participants were asked to complete a vocabulary task for common English academic slang terms. The task had a maximum possible score of 13 and a minimum possible score of 0. A total of 56 questionnaires were received. However, only 50 questionnaires were usable for this study (26 males and 24 females) and met the required inclusion criteria, as discussed in the previous chapter. The data analysis included calculating the frequency distribution of vocabulary words among participants, creating descriptive statistics, and performing a *t-test* for independent samples. It also included content analysis of the open-ended questions. The level of statistical significance of the relationships among the selected variables was set at 0.05.

Quantitative Analysis

Familiarity with American academic slang

The data were analyzed to determine the percentage of correct responses for each vocabulary word. All responses of the two groups were examined for each term. The number of correct answers and the percentages were calculated to show the participants' familiarity with each term.

Table 1

The percentage of correct responses for each vocabulary word

Vocabulary	Number of Students	Percentage
A pop quiz	42	84%
A makeup exam	41	82%
Nailed the test	35	70%
Pull an all-nighter	35	70%
A Blow-off course	28	56%
Crash	28	56%
Spaced out	27	54%
Crammed	26	52%
Bombed	26	52%
Aced the final	25	50%
Bummed out	23	46%
Swamped	21	42%
Sucked up to the teacher	12	24%

As Table 1 shows, some vocabulary words showed high percentages of correct responses among students, while others showed low percentages of correct responses. The highest percentage of correct responses among the participants were for the two slang terms “a pop quiz” and “a makeup exam.” In addition, the two vocabulary words “nailed the test” and “pull an all-nighter” showed 70% correct response rates. On the other hand, slightly more than half of the students correctly defined the terms “blow-off course,” “crash,” “spaced out,” “crammed,” and

“bombed.” Only twelve students (24%) recognized the correct meaning of the phrase “sucked up to the teacher.”

Familiarity of American academic slang and the gender variable

The data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, including group means, medians, SDs, skewness, and box plots. Examining the distribution of scores within each group, it was found that all five distributions met the assumption of normality. The scores were distributed normally and within the appropriate limits for skewness, with no extreme scores (See Figure 1 of box plots).

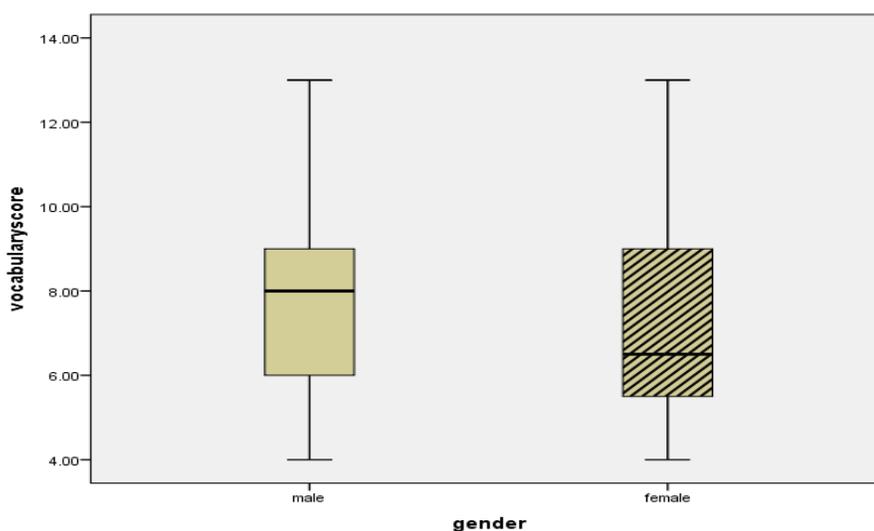


Figure 1: Box plots for vocabulary scores

To compare the two groups’ familiarity with American academic slang, a t-test was performed. Prior to the t-test, Levene’s test showed that the assumption of homogeneity of variances between the two groups was observed: $F(50) = .648, p = .425$. This allowed the *t-test* to be interpreted under the equal variance assumption. The results (See Table 2) showed no significant differences between male and female knowledge of American academic slang: $t(50) = 1.177, p = 0.245, d = 0.136$. The results also showed that the male group had a slightly higher

mean score (7.73) on the slang task than the female group (mean = 7.00). The effect size, $d = 0.136$, indicated that the effect of the gender variable was not significant, with 59% correct for the male group and 53% correct for the female group.

Examining the patterns of the data, the following trends were observed (See Table 2). The male group showed a knowledge rate of 59%. This means that on average, the subjects managed to choose the correct meanings of more than half of the academic slang terms. On the other hand, the female group demonstrated a slightly lower knowledge rate of 53%. The data from this descriptive statistical analysis suggest that Saudi L2 learners' knowledge of American academic slang terms is average.

Table 2

Independent t-test results for the effect of the gender variable on L2 Saudi learners' knowledge of American academic slang

Vocabulary score	N	Mean	SD	% knowledge	95% Confidence Interval		t	df	Sig. two-tailed	Effect size d
					Lower	Upper				
Male	26	7.73	1.99	59.46%	6.92	8.53	1.177	48	.245	0.136
Female	24	7.00	2.39	53.84%	5.98	8.01	1.58			

Note: % success was calculated by dividing the group means by the maximum score of 13.

To examine the effect of gender on the familiarity of academic American slang, the responses for each term were analyzed and grouped according to gender (males vs. females). There were some similarities between the responses of males and females for most of the terms. However, some terms showed a large difference between males and females. For example, the term “spaced out” was answered correctly by males more often than females (56% of males vs. 41% of females). The phrase “sucked up to the teacher” showed a very low correct response rate

among females (9%) but a slightly higher correct response rate among males (30%) (See Figure 2).

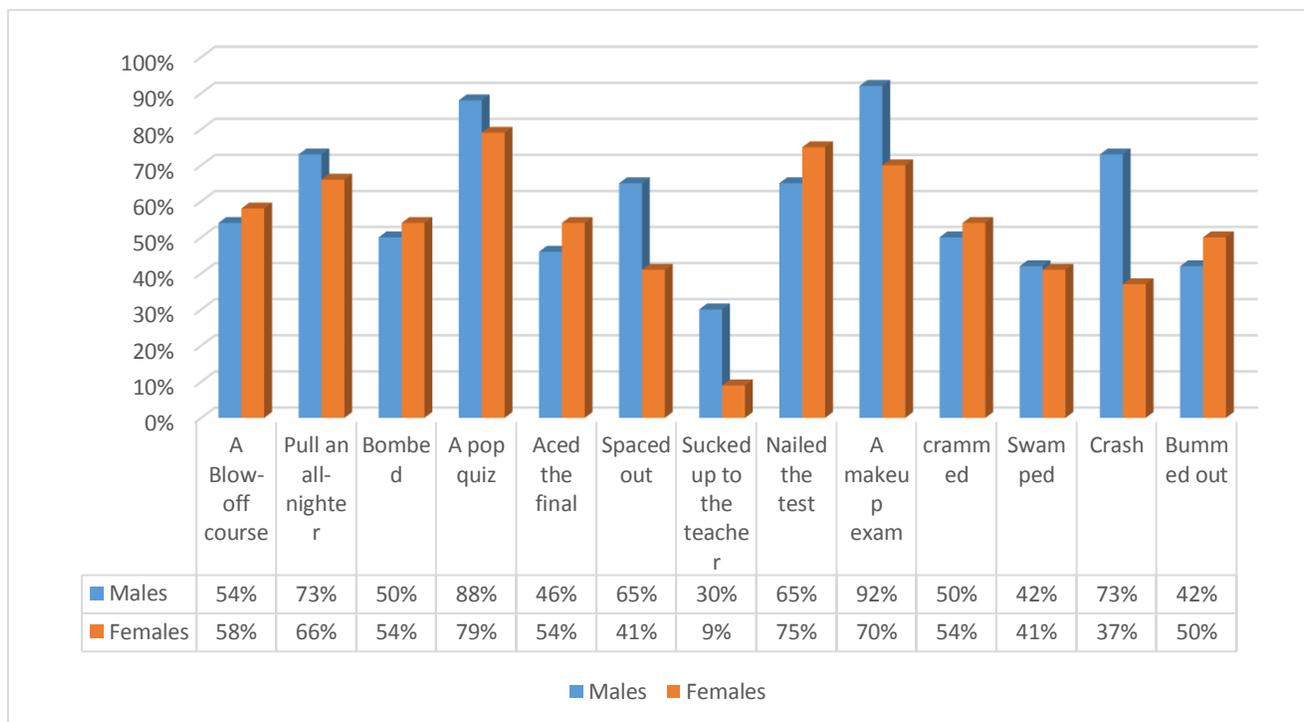


Figure 2: The responses of males and females for each vocabulary word.

Qualitative Analysis

Attitude towards the importance of American academic slang

In the second part of the questionnaire, there were two sub-questions in which the participants had to choose between certain responses. The two sub-questions were designed to examine the attitudes of the participants towards American academic slang. For the first question, the participants had to choose between “yes,” “no,” and “somewhat” to answer the question “Do you think that knowing American academic slang is useful?” Examining the distribution of the “yes,” “somewhat,” and “no” responses within each group, it was found that

slightly more than half of the male participants responded with “yes” (57.14%), a few responded with “somewhat” (28.67%), and fewer responded with “no” (14.38%). Among the female participants, most of them responded with “yes”, a smaller number of them responded with “somewhat”, and a similarly small number responded with “somewhat”. Figure 3 shows the distribution of the two genders (male vs. female) for each response.

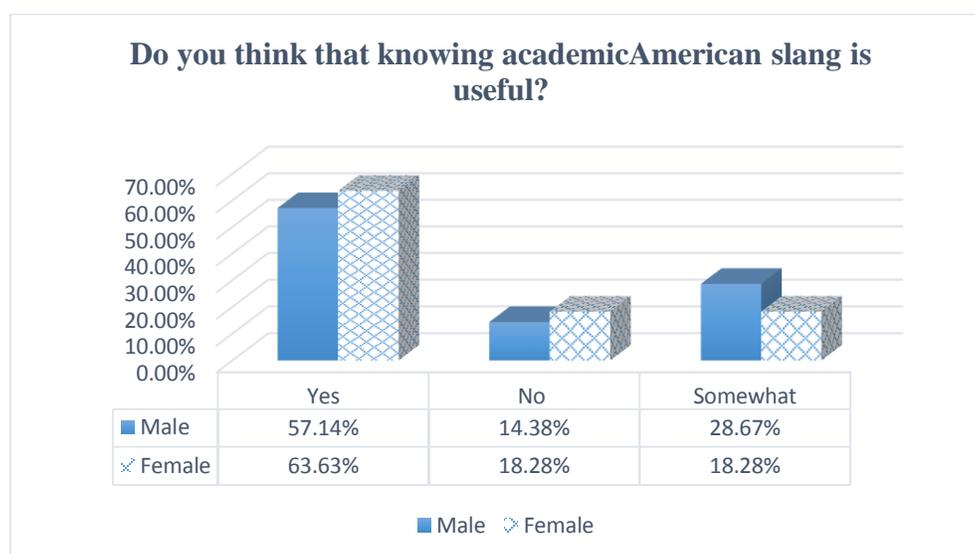


Figure 3: Charts for distribution of “yes”, “no” and “somewhat” responses among the male and female groups

Participants were also asked to explain their answers in their own words. Almost all of the participants provided explanations for their answers, with the exception of three female participants and one male participant. The explanations for each group were analyzed via content analysis. Accordingly, they were grouped into the following categories: reasons given to explain a “yes” response, reasons given to explain a “no” response, and reasons given to explain the “somewhat” response. Table 3 summarizes the main themes for the “yes” response and the percentages for each group. Table 4 summarizes the themes for the “somewhat” response, and Table 5 summarizes the themes for the “No” response.

Table 3

The reasons given to explain a “yes” response

The main themes	Males		Females	
	Number of students	% out of 15 participants	Number of students	% out of 15 participants
1. To understand people in academic situations	2	13.33%	9	64.28%
2. To communicate successfully	12	80%	5	35.71%
3. To expand my vocabulary	2	13.33%	1	7.41%
4. To gain confidence	1	6.66%	0	0%
5. No answer	1	6.66%	2	14.28%

As seen from Table 3, the most commonly provided explanation for the importance of knowing American academic slang among males was to “communicate successfully.” Specifically, 80% of the male participants who showed a positive attitude towards knowing American academic slang by choosing “Yes” mentioned that knowing American academic slang terms would help them to fit in socially in American society and communicate successfully. While some female participants mentioned the same reason, they amounted to a lower percentage of 35.71%. The most common reason given by the female participants to explain the importance of knowing American academic slang was that it would help them to understand their colleagues in an academic environment. This was mentioned by 64.28% of the female participants. A few male participants mentioned the same reason, but they amounted to a lower percentage of 13.33%. Another reason, which was only mentioned by two male participants and one female participant, was “to expand my vocabulary.” This reason was mentioned by students

who declared that knowing new slang terms might expand the number of vocabulary words they know. Only one participant mentioned gaining confidence through learning slang terms.

Table 4

The reasons given to explain a “somewhat” response

The main themes	Males		Females	
	Number of students	% out of 7 participants	Number of students	% out of 5 participants
1. It is useful to communicate with students, but not for reading and writing	3	42.85%	3	75%
2. It is only useful in learning new English terms	1	14.28%	1	25%
3. It is limited in certain situations, but not useful at work	1	14.28%	0	0%
4. I can be understood anyway	2	28%	1	25%
5. It may lead to confusion between slang and standard English	1	14.28%	0	0%

As seen in Table 4, among male participants, the most commonly mentioned reason for showing a neutral attitude towards the importance of knowing American academic slang was that “it is useful only to communicate with students, but not for reading or writing.” According to these participants, academic slang should not be used in academic reading and writing, which means that it is of no great importance. Others who answered “somewhat” believed that “they can be understood anyway, even if they do not use it” or that it might lead to “confusion when using both Standard English and American academic slang.” Among the five female participants, the same theme of “being important in communication, but not in studying” was selected by three of them. The other two participants explained that academic slang could be useful in helping them learn new words and enrich their English language vocabularies. Even if they did

not use academic slang in speech, according to them, native speakers of English still understood them.

Table 5

The reasons given to explain a “no” response

The main themes	Males		Females	
	Number of students	% out of 4 participants	Number of students	% out of 4 participants
1. I will not use it in my academic study	4	100%	2	50%
2. It confuses the L2 speaker	0	0%	1	25%
3. No answer	0	0%	1	25%

As seen in Table 4, there were equal number of males and females who showed negative attitudes towards the importance of knowing American academic slang by choosing the “no” answer. The only theme that was mentioned by the male participants was “I will not use it in academic study or in reading or in writing research.” Two female participants agreed and chose the same theme, with one participant stating that the use of academic American slang might lead to confusion.

Attitude towards teaching American academic slang in schools

In the second question, the participants had to answer with “yes” or “no” to the question “Should academic American slang be taught in schools?” Responses from males and females to this question were similar. Figure 4 showed that roughly half of the students in both groups thought that American academic slang should be taught in language classes. However, more females than males thought that American academic slang should be taught in schools. The number of male participants who preferred that academic American slang not be taught in

schools was slightly over half (57.70%), while the number of female participants who showed the same negative attitude towards teaching slang in school was slightly less than half (45.45%).

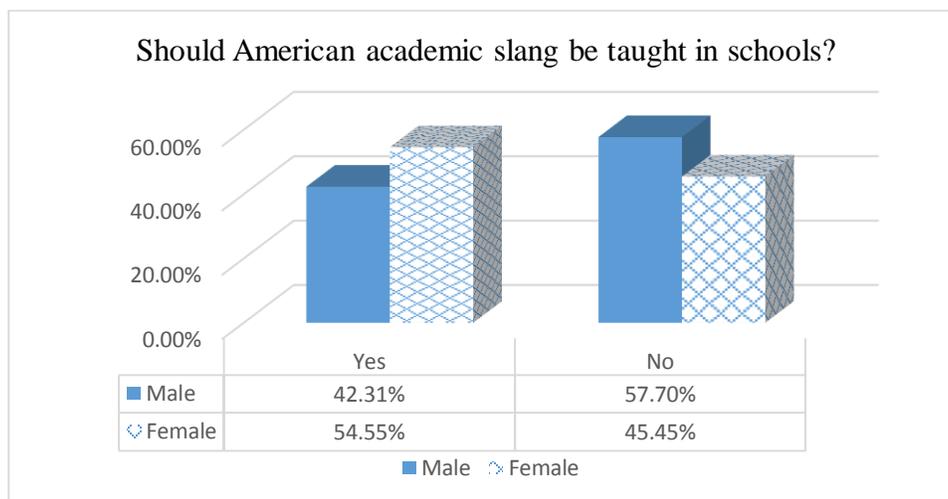


Figure 4: Charts for distribution of “yes” and “no” responses among males and females

Because the participants were asked to explain their answers in their own words, all but a few participants provided explanations for their answers. Only two females did not provide explanations in the “yes” category, and one male did not explain his answer in both the “yes” and the “no” categories. The qualitative data for this question were analyzed carefully via content analysis. Accordingly, they were grouped into the following categories: reasons given to explain a “yes” response and reasons given to explain a “no” response. Tables 5 and 6 summarize the main themes for the “yes” and “no” responses and the percentages from each group.

Table 6

The reasons given to explain a “yes” response

Themes	Males		Females	
	Number of students	% out of 11 participants	Number of students	% out of 12 participants
1. To learn the different aspects and meanings of English terms	3	27.27%	3	25%
2. There is no place to learn it outside of school	0	0%	1	8.3%
3. To communicate successfully in college	6	54.54%	9	75%
4. No answer	2	18.18%	1	8.3%

As seen in Table 6, the most common reason among the eleven male participants who agreed with the importance of teaching academic English in schools was that it should be taught so that students could “communicate successfully with native speakers of English in class.” Three of them indicated the importance of teaching academic American slang because it leads to “gaining more English vocabulary.” Among the female participants, the same theme of “communication” was mentioned by nine of them (75%). Three female participants emphasized the role of academic slang in expanding their vocabulary knowledge. Only one female participant mentioned a significant reason for teaching American academic slang in schools by saying that “there is no other place to learn it but in schools.”

Table 7

The reasons given to explain a “no” response

Themes	Males		Females	
	Number of students	% out of 15 participants	Number of students	% out of 9 participants
1. Schools are not the place for teaching slang	2	13.33%	1	11.11%
2. It does not have fixed grammar, which may lead to confusion	6	40%	1	11.11%
3. It is not useful in academic life	4	26.66%	4	44.44%
4. I can learn it through contact with friends	2	13.33%	2	22.22%
5. It is not universal or used by everyone	3	20%	2	22.22%
6. No answer	0	0%	1	11.11%

As seen in Table 7, the themes concerning negative attitudes towards teaching American academic slang in schools were grouped into six main categories based on the answers provided by both males and females. The most common reason among males (40%) for disapproving of teaching academic slang in schools was that “it does not have fixed grammar, which may lead to confusion between Standard English and academic slang.” The next most common reason was that “it is not used in academic situations,” with a percentage of 26%. Although the latter reason seems to be illogical because American academic slang is mostly used in academic situations, it may reflect the participants’ misunderstanding of American academic slang. This was also the most common explanation provided by females (44.44%). An equal number of males and females (two males vs. two females) admitted that they could learn it via “contact with students in colleges.” Another reason mentioned by both groups was that it is not “universal.”

In summary, the vocabulary task showed that both groups of participants did not have sufficient knowledge of American academic slang. The scores also showed no significant

differences between the performances of the male and female participants on the vocabulary test.

The results of the qualitative data showed that both males and females have a positive attitude towards the importance of knowing American academic slang. Roughly half of each group agreed on the importance of teaching American academic slang in schools.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The previous chapter showed interesting results regarding Saudi L2 learners' knowledge of American academic slang and their attitudes toward it. The performance of both groups on the vocabulary task indicated that they did not have an adequate knowledge of academic American slang. Regarding the gender variables, there was no significant difference between Saudi males and females in terms of their task scores. Both males and females showed a positive attitude in recognizing the importance of American academic slang. In this chapter, the results of the study and the interpretation of the participants' task performance and responses will be discussed.

Discussion

Participants' knowledge of American academic slang

The vocabulary task results showed that Saudi L2 learners do not have strong knowledge of American academic slang. The means, with male participants at 7.00 and female participants at 7.33 out of 13, showed that there was some grasp of slang, but not a strong command overall. The terms in the vocabulary task were common slang terms often used by university students. As the analysis of the participants' responses showed, there were high rates of correct answers for some terms, such as "pop quiz" and "make-up exam." These terms are used very commonly in the academic environment. They are also used in classes and by lecturers and can be seen in some syllabi. This may explain why students showed high degrees of familiarity with those two terms. There were also high percentages of correct responses for the terms "nailed the test" and "pull an all-nighter." This showed that students could grasp some terms via face-to-face interaction, a process that helps students to gain new terms and acquire academic information. However, according to Biber (2002), in order to accomplish this kind of language interaction and

be able to communicate successfully with others in class, a student needs to develop the academic listening skill (p.10). On the other hand, the rest of the terms were either slightly higher than the average (50%) or below the average. For example, half of the students (50%) were familiar with the term “aced the final,” while 52% of the students acknowledged the terms “crammed” and “bombed.” Much of what were once classified as slang terms are frequently used by lecturers and can be found on syllabi. Being aware of such terms helps students to better communicate with their peers, as well as with their lecturers.

Some participants indicated that there is no need for slang to be taught in schools simply because they can learn it via contact with friends. It is true that contact with native speakers of English can engender knowledge of academic slang terms. However, some slang expressions used by students are not suitable for public use and are not sociably acceptable, even to other native speakers of English. Some academic slang terms include offensive terms or satirical remarks. This emphasizes the urgent need for guidance for non-native speakers of English in order to help them understand what may and may not be used in a particular situation. This notion has been emphasized by Cooper (2001), who emphasized the urgent need for presenting academic knowledge to students in class through appropriate activities. Slang terms should not be used in certain situations, such as in academic writing or when speaking with a lecturer. Students need to be aware of the different usages of slang terms and be aware of the appropriate times to use them. In his study, Cooper (2001) concluded that “A certain awareness of and sensitivity to the appropriateness of slang use, however, can be developed in the classroom through carefully designed activities focusing on situational analyses. A nonnative speaker does not possess the native speaker’s intuitive knowledge of the when-and-where suitability of slang” (p.77). The results of this study showed that a large number of students indicated that using

academic slang would help them to communicate with American students. Such students need to have an awareness of the different meanings and implications of the slang terms. This awareness could potentially save them from experiencing unpleasant situations with native speakers of English. Therefore, a well-prepared syllabus is needed to serve as a full guide for students using American academic slang.

Comparing the results for Saudi male participants with those for Saudi females, there was not a significant difference between the performances of the two groups on the vocabulary test. Male speakers did not perform significantly better than females on the vocabulary test. This finding is contradictory to Kim's study (2009), which suggested that Chinese males were more familiar with slang language than Chinese females. Jay (1992) suggested that men use and hear slang terms more often than women do, but as the results showed, there was no significance difference between the performances of males and females in this study. There was only a slight difference between them in terms of recognizing the phrase "sucked up the teacher." More males recognized the term than females (30% of males vs. 9% of females). However, the number of male participants who were familiar with the term was not a large number (8 out of 26). This may be explained by the nature of the term, which indicates that it should be used with caution, and the fact that participants may not have heard that term much.

I was expecting a stronger performance in the vocabulary task from males than females. My expectation was based on the cultural structure of Saudi society. While Saudi males are free to contact others, Saudi females are typically only allowed to communicate with females or male members of their immediate families. The wide gap between the lifestyles of female native speakers of English and Saudi females may create obstacles in creating friendships or communicating successfully. This difference gives men more opportunity to interact with

friends, either on or off campus, and learn different vocabulary words. However, overall, the gap between the two genders concerning the knowledge of slang was minimal. This study supports the findings of de Klerk (1992), who concluded that males are not the primary slang users anymore. He indicated that the “stereotype” (de Klerk, 1992, p.77) that men are slang users and women do not use slang terms is not accurate anymore. According to his study, different social and cultural factors caused this change, and these factors require further study.

The attitude of the participants towards the importance of American academic slang

Despite their moderate performance on the vocabulary test, the majority of Saudi students stressed the importance of knowing American academic slang. Several participants indicated that American academic slang is important because “it helps students to fit in socially in college” and it “helps students to gain confidence.” Regardless of their gender, many participants indicated that knowing American academic slang would expand their vocabulary knowledge. Female participants showed a slightly more positive attitude toward the importance of knowing American academic slang than the males did. Generally speaking, the majority of Saudi males and females showed positive attitudes towards knowing American academic slang. The students’ general agreement that slang should be taught in schools reveals a shared focus on gaining more lexical knowledge. Most who indicated that knowing American academic slang was not important explained, “We can be understood by native speakers of English anyway, even without using American academic slang” (44% of 26 males vs. 55% of 22 females). This seems to be a reasonable explanation; native speakers of English will not encounter difficulty understanding non-native speakers of English when they speak Standard English. However, non-native speakers of English will often find it difficult to understand Americans when the native speakers use American academic slang.

Using the academic written register, with its high-level vocabulary, when a casual register is expected could result in either “offense being taken” or “a comic response” (Eaton, 2012). Linguists argue that there is an appropriate register for each linguistic situation. This register will vary according to the topic of discourse and the formality of the situation. It is important to be aware of the appropriate register for each situation. Even if a student chooses not to use or be familiar with American academic slang, the use of the academic written register in formal speech will likely result in an awkward conversation. According to Biber, Conrad, Rebben, Byrd, and Helt (2002), “Students must deal not only with informationally dense prose but also with interactive and involved spoken registers.” (p. 40) Non-native speakers of English may find it difficult to recognize and acquire all the different registers of speech. However, to fit in socially, be accepted by other groups, and avoid miscommunication, it is necessary to become familiar with the difference between the language used in academic texts and the language used in informal speech. American academic slang contributes to part of the language that is used in informal speech.

The attitude of the participants towards teaching American academic slang in schools

The reasons for the disapproval of teaching American academic slang in schools reflect either a misunderstanding of the real meaning of American academic slang or too strong of a focus on purely academic material to the exclusion of any language skills that might not help in passing courses and graduating. One of the male participants who showed a negative attitude toward teaching American academic slang in schools stated, “I can learn American academic slang from friends, in the street, or in movies.” By contrast, a male participant who approved of the teaching of academic American slang in schools explained, “It should be taught in schools to help international students involve themselves in American social life and deal with Americans

in the street and the supermarket.” Both of these opinions indicate that the students do not recognize the difference between academic slang and the intimate register, which may contain sexual or racial implications. This results in some participants adopting a negative attitude toward American academic slang because slang, in general, is regarded as a lesser form of speech that usually “contain[s] racial and social significance,” as mentioned by one of the other participants.

One male participant wrote, “I do not need to learn American academic slang because I do not need it in reading and writing,” while another wrote, “I do not need it in doing research.” Because these participants do not believe that slang will help them academically, they only want to understand Standard English, which will enable them to “understand lectures.” Although fewer participants showed a negative attitude towards the teaching of American academic slang, the reasons provided revealed an ignorance of the reality and importance of American academic slang. The academic registers can be both spoken and written. Students need both registers to successfully operate within universities.

Conclusion

The results obtained from the analysis of the data indicated that participants in the study did not show sufficient comprehension with regard to the common academic slang terms used in the survey. It showed high familiarity of some terms and low familiarity on others depending on the content of the term. However, most of the terms fell in the middle where either half or slightly over the half of the students answered them correctly. The results also revealed a mostly moderate attitude towards the importance of knowing academic American slang among both males and females, as well as an interest in expanding vocabulary and communicating

successfully in American society. Based on the results of the survey, it seems that there are several students who expressed their desire to learn academic American slang in order to enable them to communicate with American students. On the other hand, there was quite a bit of ignorance among the participants concerning the reality of the academic American slang. Although most of the participants have spent more than one year in U.S., and many of them have completed their Masters degrees, the L2 learners are still not aware of the variation and depth of English language. It will add to their vocabulary knowledge if they introduced to the different variations of English language.

Implications and Recommendations for Further study

Based on the findings of the study, some pedagogical recommendations may be applied. Although it is quite important, there are different opinions regarding teaching slang in class for the students. Some instructors believe that it should be presented to students in class. Others feel that students should only be introduced to Standard English, which would help them be more fulfilled in the academic area. Based on the results of this study and on my own experience as a non-native speaker of English, I believe that academic slang language should be introduced to L2 learners, especially to those who live in the U.S. These learners are in direct contact with native-English-speaking students. Most of the Saudi students do not have any ideas concerning the existence of academic American slang or the academic spoken register. They need to be aware that there are different language registers. They should also be aware of where and when to use it. This could be accomplished through an organized syllabus, which contains word activities that present terms in different levels, including academic slang usage. Students should be aware of the positive and negative usages of the words that they may face in academic situations.

Appropriate teaching materials could open the students' eyes to the variations of English language.

Due to time constraints, it was not possible to support the research tool by including student interviews. Therefore, a future study should include recorded interviews as a research instrument in order to collect more quantitative data. The researcher might include some open-ended questions to obtain more opinions from the participants. The two main variables in this study were gender versus the awareness of and attitudes toward academic American slang. A future study might consider time spent in U.S. or age of participants as main variables in the study. Including these variables, a correlative relationship might be found between one of these variables and the familiarity of academic American slang. This study has collected the data through a vocabulary test, but this will only measure the knowledge the students have, not the use of it. A future study may collect data through real world usage, in order to test the usage of academic slang terms among students off campus. This would measure the possible limits of how these students use the words they know.

Limitations

The current study has some limitations that need to be addressed. First, seven of the questionnaires were distributed through friends. This was controlled by giving them detailed instructions similar to the instructions given to the students who took the survey in the presence of the researcher. Second, this study was conducted only on students at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, and the number of participants (24 females and 26 males) was limited. The assumption of the reasons regarding the results of the research was limited as well. Therefore, the results of this study cannot be generalized to students outside of a university campus. There is a possibility that the questions might have been misinterpreted. This possibility

was limited by providing clear instructions with the questionnaire, and explaining the purpose of the study to the participants in order to motivate them to reply truthfully and quickly. In addition, a pilot survey was conducted to test the survey.

REFERENCES

- Arua, A.E., & Modupe, M. A. (2008). Gender and student slang in the University of Botswana. *English Language and Literature. Cross-Cultural Currents*. New Castle: 38–53.
- Arua, A.E., & Modupe, M. A. (2009). The creation of students' academicslang expressions in the University of Botswana. *Linguistic Online*, 40(4/09), 16.
- Biber, D. (2012). Register as a predictor of linguistic variation. *Corpus Linguistics and Linguistic Theory* 8–1, 9 – 37.
- Biber, D. , Conrad, C. , Reppen, R. , Byrd, P. & Helt, M. (2002). Speaking and writing in the university:A multidimensional comparison. *TESOL Quarterly*. 36 (1)
- Communication strategies for the classroom: Student slang. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.biostat.jhsph.edu/research/TAtaining/slang.pdf>.
- Cooper, T.C. (2001). “Does it suck?” or “Is it for the birds?” native speaker judgment of slang expressions. *American Speech*, 76(1), 62-78.
- Dalzell, T. (2005). The power of slang. Do you speak American? Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/speak/words/sezwho/slang/>.
- De Klerk, V. (1992). How taboo are taboo words for girls? *Cambridge University Press*. 0047-4045/92
- Eaton, S. E. (2012, June 6). Literacy, language and leadership. Retrieved from <http://drsaraheaton.wordpress.com/page/15/?archives-list&archives-type=cats>.
- Eble, C. C. (1996). *Slang and sociability. In-group language among college students*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Flexner, S. and Wentworth, H .(1975) *Preface to the dictionary of American*

- slang*. In H. Wentworth and S. B. Flexner (Eds.). *Dictionary of American slang*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell: xii
- Grossman, L. A., & Tucker, S. J. (1997). Gender differences and sexism in the knowledge and use of slang. *Sex Roles*, (37), 101-110.
- Hummon, D. M. (1994) College slang revisited: Language, culture, and undergraduate life. *Ohio State University Press*. 65 (1), 75-98.
- Jay, T. (1992). *Cursing in America: A psycholinguistic study of dirty language in the courts, in the movies, in the schoolyards and on the streets*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Kim, Y. (2004). Perceptions of American slang: A comparison of native and nonnative English speaking university students. Unpublished master's thesis, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.
- Lighter, J.E. (1994). *Historical dictionary of American slang*. New York: Random House.
- Lakoff, R. T. (1973). *Language and Woman's Place*. New York: Harber & Row.
- Saudi Arabian Culture Mission. (2006). The Saudi ambassador, HRH prince Turki al-Faisal meets Saudi students in Texas and Arizona. Retrieved from http://www.sacm.org/Publications/56091_newsletter_lres.pdf
- Thorne, T. (2004). Slang, style-shifting and sociability. Retrieved from <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/study/elc/resources/tonythorne/styleshiftingandsociability.doc>

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Consent Form

Dear participant,

My name is Anood Albalawi. I am a graduate student in the Department of Linguistics at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. I am currently developing a research study as part of my Master's Degree in Applied Linguistics. In this study, I will investigate Saudi L2 learners' familiarity of academic American slang expressions, and their opinions towards learning academic American slang and teaching it in schools. I will also investigate the differences between males and females in the familiarity of academic American slang, and the differences between their opinions towards learning academic American slang and teaching it in schools. The sample of this study will include a minimum of 60 Saudi students in each group (30 males/30 females), who will be recruited from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois.

If you agree to participate in my study, you will be asked to fill a questionnaire of 13 multiple-choice questions and two yes-no questions. It will take about 20 minutes to complete. All your responses will be confidential and anonymous. You will be asked to provide demographic information (gender, marital status, age group, etc.) about yourselves, but not your names. Your participation in the survey is VOLUNTARY. If you agree to take part in the investigation, you need to sign this form. However, if you change your mind, you may withdraw at any time without hesitation.

The people who will have access to the data will be myself and the thesis advisor, Dr. Cheng. After the study is completed, the raw data sheets will be destroyed. All possible steps will be taken to protect your identity.

For additional information, you can contact me, Anood Albalawi, Project Researcher, 1249 Sanpat In, Apa. # 4, Carbondale, IL, 62902, tel.: (618) 303- 5713, email: lordena@siu.edu or Dr. Dongmei Cheng, Research Advisor, Department of Linguistics, Faner Building 3231SIUC, Carbondale, IL, 62901, Office tel.: (618) 453---3424 email: dongmei.cheng@siu.edu@siu.edu. Thank you for your precious collaboration and assistance in this research.

I have read the material above, and any question that I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand a copy of this form will be made available to me for the relevant information and phone numbers. I realize that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

Name _____

Signature _____

This project has been reviewed and approved by the SIUC Human Subjects Committee. Questions concerning your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the Committee Chairperson, Office of Sponsored Projects Administration, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901-4709. Phone (618) 453-4533. E-mail siuhsc@siu.edu

Questionnaire

Academic American slang Language

Dear participant,

Thank you for your time in doing this questionnaire. I would like to inform you that the results will be used for the purpose of my research and not to evaluate your knowledge of the English language. Also, your answers will be completely anonymous. Please, answer every question before submitting your answers.

I. In this part, your task is to identify the meaning of 13 slang (informal) terms by selecting the correct meaning for each term.

1. This was **a blow-off course**.

- 1) a very difficult course
- 2) a very old course
- 3) a very easy course
- 4) a very important course

2. You have to **pull an all-nighter** before the test.

- 1) spend all night sleeping
- 2) stay up all night studying
- 3) relax through the night
- 4) spend all night at work

3. He **bombed** the test.

- 1) failed
- 2) passed
- 3) ignored
- 4) forgot

4. The lecturer gave his students **a pop quiz** today.

- 1) an easy quiz
- 2) a difficult quiz
- 3) an unannounced quiz
- 4) a follow-up quiz

5. She **aced the final exam.**

- 1) got a C
- 2) got a B
- 3) got an A
- 4) got an F

6. I **spaced out** during class.

- 1) fell asleep
- 2) was distracted
- 3) was focused
- 4) enjoyed the discussion

7. He **sucked up to the teacher.**

- 1) was impolite to the teacher because he was tired
- 2) was upset with the teacher because of a bad grade
- 3) was friendly with the teacher to receive special treatment
- 4) was happy with the teacher because of a good grade

8. She **nailed that test.**

- 1) performed well in the test
- 2) performed bad in the test
- 3) did not take the test
- 4) slept through the test

9. I asked the teacher for **a makeup exam.**

- 1) an exam taken on the different day from the actual exam
- 2) an exam taken to me a student into the proper level
- 3) an exam measuring my language level
- 4) an exam taken for me to enter college

10. I **crammed** for the test.

- 1) used friends notes
- 2) tried to study a lot in a short time
- 3) had a lot of time to study
- 4) relaxed my self

11. At the end of the term, I am always **swamped.**

- 1) very confused
- 2) extremely nervous
- 3) really excited
- 4) too busy

12. I am going to **crash** for seven hours.

- 1) sleep
- 2) walk
- 3) study
- 4) eat

13. He was **bumped out** about the test.

- 1) sad
- 2) happy
- 3) excited
- 4) confused

II. In this section you will find 2 questions. Please CIRCLE the proper answer. Then EXPLAIN your answer in details (in English or in Arabic).

1. Do you think that knowing academic American slang is useful? Please explain why.

Yes

Somewhat

No

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

2. Should academic American slang be taught in schools? Please explain why.

Yes

No

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

III. Please provide the following information:

Years spent in United States:

Gender: Female Male

Nationality:

Native language:

Age

Major:

VITA

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University

Anood S. Albalawi

lordena_anood@hotmail.com

Tabuk University
Bachelor Arts, July 2005

Thesis Title:
Saudi L2 Learners' Knowledge and Perceptions of academic American slang

Major Professor: Krassimira Charkova