Controversial Topics to Increase Saudi Learners' Willingness to speak

Three-Session Unit, Critical Study

Maram N. Alzeer

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Abstract

Introducing controversial issues as a topic for discussion have been avoided in ELT textbooks. However, according to the literature review I have conducted related to willingness to communicate in the second language and the use of controversial topics in ESL/EFL classrooms, it was found that discussing controversial issues may correlate with second language acquisition by promoting willingness to speak. Considering the fact that Saudi university-students are largely reluctant to speak in the second language (English), I decided to conduct a small-case pedagogical - research by designing a three-session unit with the aim of promoting students' willingness to communicate in English based on a cultural controversial topic. The pedagogical intervention aims at developing young Saudi female students' speaking skills by increasing their willingness to communicate in English. This search is divided into two main parts. The first part describes the unit's design by discussing the research contexts and participants, rationale behind the unit's teaching methodology, material and topic and ends with a detailed description of the lessons. The second part evaluates the unit's effectiveness in achieving its aims based on data triangulation and concludes with the units' limitations and suggestions for future development.
Key Words: Controversial Topics, willingness to communicate, Saudi Learners, Three-Session Unit.

Introduction

Reflection is a conscious practice of self-analysis about what was done in the classroom, and to be open to change it (Harmer, 2007). Adopting such reflective practice is crucial for teachers' continues professional development because it helps them to see aspects of their practice that they were not aware of during class-time (Wallace, 1991; Templer, 2004; Harmer, 2007). By doing this, it helps them to, constantly, change and avoid being 'burnt out' due to boredom form the continuous routine (Ur, 1996) and encourages them to fully understand their learners' different needs (Scales, 2013). Nonetheless, such opportunity and freedom to see some points of one's practice the real busy class-time are, especially, important for student-teachers because it might help them to adapt to classroom conventions and overcome the associated stress more smoothly (Wajnryb, 1992).

The University standards expect students to write and speak coherently in Academic English (ksu.edu.sa, 2015). However; the problem is that most Saudi university students tend to be reluctant to speak in English (Hamouda, 2012). Their demotivation and reluctance to speak might be influenced by the context's teaching methodology, involved materials and the kind of discussed topics (Riasati, 2014). Thus, adopting a reflective practice is crucial for both novice and experienced teachers to continue progress professionally and independently (Harmer, 2007). This study is

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[1]. M.A., Faculty of Education, Leeds University.

provided an opportunity to think critically about my teaching context and how to improve it in the future.

Objectives

The objective of this study is to designing a three-session unit based on using a controversial topic to increase willingness to speak and description of the rationale behind the design in details and evaluates its effectiveness based on data triangulation.

Methodology

From through Wallace's (1991) reflective model, it made consciously see how used received knowledge (theoretical background of Task-based Language Learning (TBLT) methodology, authenticity, motivation and willingness to communicate (WTC)) to feedback on experience of motivating, selecting materials and TBLT in order to design and re-design pedagogical. It also helps to reflect on study's effectiveness and skills of motivation and material design to raise professional competence in enhancing contexts' speaking skills. Therefore; it develops skills and knowledge of motivation and material design through critically reflecting on received and experiential knowledge of using controversial topics to enhance speaking skills in context.

The study was conducted on nine first-year Saudi female students majoring in Geography at King Saud University (KSU), Saudi Arabia (SA). Their English proficiency was B1 (Cambridge English Scale) according to the preparatory-year English exams. They are taking a three-credit speaking course during the summer semester. The course focuses on general English speaking conventions such as how to start a conversation. It is given by a female teacher who has been teaching at the University for two years immediately after graduation from the School of Education, KSU. The class is equipped with technology; an e-podium, a smart board and an audio system with internet access.

Discussion & analysis

1. **The Research Context and Participants:**

The teacher, in the current context, follows the traditional presentation, practice and production (PPP) approach to teach speaking like most Saudi university teachers (Aburizaizah, 2013). During such approach, the teacher, first, presents the required language in context followed by a practice stage where students practice the target item in controlled activities (Willis, 1996). After that, comes the production stage where students are involved in semi-controlled communication activities that require them to use the item in a partially restricted way (Willis, 1996). However; reach the production stage is not reached most of the time (Aburizaizah, 2013). Adopting such approach, which is teacher-cantered, resulted in demotivated students who cannot communicate in the second language outside the classroom (Willis, 1996). Also because accuracy rather than fluency is emphasized as grammar rules are introduced in controlled activities making students produce unnatural conversation forms (Willis, 1996).

Another factor for students' reluctance to speak is related to the materials. In most Saudi universities, teachers are required to use the

prescribed text-books and the accompanied audio materials (Aburizaizah, 2013). The audio material is usually simplified and does not reflect the real-world fast speech (Field, 2008). Using such material might be useful in providing learners with comprehensible input (Field, 2008). However, it produces learners who cannot communicate in reality (Cauldwell, c2014) as they cannot understand fast spontaneous speech since they have not been exposed to it (Field, 2008).

As for the topic of discussion, English text-books used in SA tend to use neutral topics like friends, families, making money or shopping and avoid using controversial topics particularly related to women driving or travelling due to the community's conservative nature (Gobert, 2015). The use of such neutral topics might succeed in increasing learners' comfort to speak about the topic (Riasati, 2014), teach students how to act in daily interaction (Iaccarino, 2012), save lesson time which provides more practice opportunities for the students instead of preparing them for the topic to increase their familiarity and conformability and might be easy and less chaotic to manage for the teacher (Clarke, 2005). However; from my experience as a female Saudi student some of these topics, like making money, may not engage me or my friends because we find them boring and demotivating. Such lack of interest might have contributed to Saudi students' reluctance to speak in English and the low level of motivation (Hamouda, 2012).

2. Teaching Methodology and Rationale of the Unit:

The unit aims at developing learners' speaking skills by increasing their WTC. It is based on introducing a controversial topic through a communicative approach as recommended by Iaccarino (2012). Having a communicative approach is necessary because it provides students with ample opportunities to speak and communicate in order to learn the second language rather than simply present language (Iaccarino, 2012). Due to the fact that Saudi students are reluctant to speak in the second language, their English speaking skills tend to be below average compared to other skills (Hamouda, 2012). In order to enhance their speaking skills, Saudi students need to be provided with and encouraged to seek every possible opportunity to speak in English (Hamouda, 2012). I believe that this unit might succeed in enhancing their speaking skills because it follows a communicative task-based language teaching (TBLT) methodology, uses authentic materials and introduces a stimulating controversial topic.

The adopted teaching methodology is the TBLT approach. TBLT, as a development of communicative language teaching (CLT), emphasizes the meaningful learner-centered use of language in authentic contexts to develop fluency (Richards and Rogers, 2001) unlike the traditional PPP which focuses on the use of prescribed language introduced by the teacher in controlled or semi-controlled activities to develop accuracy (Willis, 1996). The active involvement of students helps in motivating them as it prevents them from feeling bored and makes them responsible for their own learning (Harmer, 2007). It also creates peer interaction and communication which are crucial for developing second language proficiency (Kang, 2005). Such group interaction provides learners with a

modified compensable input that allows them to revise what they said (Gass, 2003) and increases the second language use and frequency in the classroom (Hashimoto, 2002; Clement; Yashima et al., 2004; Nazari and Allahyar, 2012) by raising their WTC in the second language (Kang, 2005; Cao and Philp 2006; Nazari and Allahyar, 2012). Moreover; students' engagement in authentic meaningful communication, away from the teacher's scrutiny, may increase their willingness to speak as it provides them with genuine reasons to do so in a way that reflects the real-world and hence could improve their fluency (Willis, 1996).

The unit consists of a collection of materials (pictures, audios and videos) used to support students with content and language needed for discussion in the main-task. The majority of the materials are authentic listening texts. Unlike the materials used in the context described above, authentic listening materials reflect the real-world fast spontaneous speech (Cauldwell, c2014). Using such material would prepare students to comprehend the actual speech speed in the outside world and exposes them to different accents (Cauldwell, c2014). It would also engage them in the lesson as they tend to be more interesting than the prescribed simplified audio texts (Field, 2008). The described context tends to avoid using controversial topics due to its conservative nature and other reason. Nevertheless, I believe that introducing cultural controversial topics to somewhat competent users of second language in a communicative approach might help in increasing students' willingness to speak (Iaccarino, 2012).

Cotemporary cultural sensitive issues related to women rights in SA like driving, travelling without permission and going out without a chaperone were selected as topics for discussion with the aim of generating more speech. They push learners to talk more by raising their sense of responsibility to provide clarification (Kang, 2005) and motivating them to speak to express their beliefs and opinions more clearly in order to prove their arguments (Iaccarino, 2012) which in turn might create livelier discussions (Cooke and Roberts). In fact, Saudi Women Driving was selected as the main discussion topic because it is relevant to the context of the participants as they are all young Saudi females. Also because it is one of the popular topics discussed in media and it is assumed that the participants have general background knowledge about the arguments people usually discuss though in the first language (Arabic), especially, the younger generation who is exposed to the outer-world media through Internet and social-networks. This, in turn, would make it a controversial and current issue suitable for debating. The topic implementation progressed from Saudi women's rights in general in lesson1 to more specific topics of driving, travelling without permission and going out without a chaperone in lesson2 to end with a single more specified topic of women driving in lesson3. I believe that such progression of topic from general to specific might help the students to get familiar with the topic and be comfortable discussing it. According to Riasati (2012, 2014), the topic may be of great influence on learners' willingness to speak in the Lesson 2

if they are familiar with it, interested in it, prepared for it and comfortable to discuss it.

3. **Lessons Description:** The unit consists of three lessons for teaching speaking; the first lesson & second Lesson are preparatory sessions for the last one which evolve around debating:

3.1 First lesson is the introductory lesson of the unit entitled Saudi Women Rights. It consists of three main phases. A pre-task phase divided into three parts. The first part is a warm-up activity that includes describing a range of pictures about Saudi women. It aims at engaging the students in the topic and ensuring that they form some background knowledge to raise their interest. I selected a wide range of different pictures that describes Saudi women in different- sometimes provocative situations- to help the students predict the topic and prepare them for the argumentative nature of the unit in addition to encouraging them to discuss such situations by illustrating them in the hand-out's pictures. According to Harmer (2007), pictures are useful to help students predict and prepare them for the following tasks. The second part involves listening to a poem that describes Saudi women somewhat negatively. The rationale behind using such negative representation of Saudi women rights and status is to rile-up the students and push them to talk and as well as to support them with necessary language and lexis which, according to Willis (1996), might allow them to perform the task with some increased confidence. The third part involves matching up cards of phrases related to expressing opinions (appendix A). Believe that the game would add the fun element to the lesson and might make the students relax to enjoy it which would in turn help increasing their motivation and engagement in the lesson as Harmer (2007) recommended. It also aims at supporting the learners with the required language for the task performance. According to Willis (1996), the pre-task phase of the first lesson is crucial in involving students and preparing them for the whole unit, thus, it might be logical to spend more on it.

The main-task aims at creating an opportunity for students to speak in English as much as possible by using controversial topic Women's rights in SA. The rationale behind using controversial topics is aforementioned. In this task, students talk in pairs which creates a more private discussion that would make students more comfortable and allow them to express themselves more freely (Willis, 1996).Willis (1996) and Harmer (2007) suggested that students in pairs are more likely to talk than those in groups because both students have more chances to speak as there is only two interlocutors. Hence; I think that grouping the students who are not used to communicative activities in pairs might create some pressure on each one of them to talk since there would not be a discussion if they do not! Also, students who are reluctant to speak before large audience may find it easier to speak with a small number of listeners (Riasati, 2012). I also believe that due to the nature of the controversial topics that are not usually discussed in large groups in the conservative SA, starting off with private pair work might help the students express their opinions more freely in a comfortable

and less anxious environment which, according to Riasati (2012), may increase Student WTC in the second language.

The post-task aims at providing students with a meaningful ending to the task. According to Willis (1996), this would motivate the students to complete the task to give them a goal for completion (for more details about lesson1 see appendix A).

3.2 The second lesson aims at developing students understanding of women's right by specifying, only, three rights for discussion Driving, Travelling without Permission and Going Out without Chaperone. It consists of the three main phases. The pre-task is watching a video about a foreign women coming to SA (Arabs4 Entertainment, 2013). The video shows her interviewing a Saudi man and a young woman about their rights and how the interviewer changed some of her views about women's rights while twisting the truth about other given rights like working. It aims at activating students' schema (Harmer, 2007) and supporting them in content which would, as Willis (1996) stated, motivate them to participate as it gets them engaged in the task.

The main-task is a role-play that involves discussing which right among the three mentioned above they believe is the most important one and must be submitted to the Shoura Council for consideration. Providing students with 'agency' in determining which right to discuss and vote for, according to Harmer (2007), might increase their motivation and interest in the task by making them feel responsible for some decisions that needs to be taken in the class. The task also seeks to create a safe environment for the discussion by seating the students in small groups of four and assigning the teacher a non-active monitoring role which might make the students more willing to speak as their confidence rises.

The post-task aims at focusing on the language of the task after the performance to push students to produce more accurate language. According to Willis (1996), if students found difficulty in using appropriate forms during task performance and then they are introduced to the appropriate structures that help them to perform the task, they are more likely to remember such structures (for more details about lesson2 see appendix B).

3.3 The third lesson aims at creating an argumentative atmosphere about Saudi Woman Driving by introducing students to debates to increase the amount of talk in English. The pre-task phase is divided into three parts. The first part is watching a video of a talk given by an activist about lifting the ban on driving (TED, 2013). It aims at supporting students with the content of the task to develop their arguments by introducing the language used to argue for and against women driving. The second part involves watching a video that describes debates and what they involve (selfandsociety, 2012). The video explains the procedure of debates and different kinds of evidence to support arguments in ppt. slides. It aims at introducing the concept of debates to the students by providing detailed explanations of the debate divisions, involved arguments and evidence and timing of each stage. The third part is watching video parts of an actual debate (Adi, 2014). It aims at supporting students with the content and

introducing them to the structure of a debate. Introducing the task by making student watch a video of a similar task is a recommended pre-task activity as it would make students fully understand what is expected form them (Willis, 1996).

The main-task is a debate about women driving. I decided to build the unit around the debate because, according to Cooke and Roberts (2007), debates have an argumentative nature that might produce a livelier discussion, especially, if combined with a controversial topic. It aims at creating a safe environment for polite structured arguments about women driving to motivate students to speak in English. The safe environment as explained earlier could be found in the nature of learner-centered group work. It also aims at making students talk in a more public environment when giving their presentations to the whole class which, according to Willis (1996), might improve the accuracy of students' production in the second language as students tend to pay attention their produced language.

The post-task is voting for a resolution. It aims at providing a meaningful ending which is important for increasing learners' motivation as discussed earlier (for more details about lesson3 see appendix C).

4. **Evaluation of The unit:**

In order to comprehensively evaluate the effectiveness of the unit, data was collected from different sources (students, teacher and researcher). The first source is students' answers from an open-ended reflective questionnaire I designed to reflect on the content of each lesson (appendix D). The second one is a recorded interview with the teacher about the unit (appendix E). The third is my field notes on students' behavior and interaction in the classroom during the sessions. They aim at investigating the effectiveness of the materials, the controversial topic and the tasks in promoting the learners' WTC in English.

4.1 The Effectiveness of the Materials:

Based on students' reports (question one and two in lesson1, one in lesson2 plus one and two in lesson3, appendix D), I believe that the unit's materials might be effective in supporting students with the necessary language for the main-task performance. They reported that were, generally, appropriate to their level of understanding and added new information. However, according to my analysis of the students' answers it seems that the materials' content might create volatile feelings due their argumentative nature and could generate passionate discussions. This demonstrates that arguments could emerge even if it is not specifically elicited in materials as the case in lesson2 according to the teacher's report (line63-67, appendix E). Moreover; according to her, the pre-tasks' materials were necessary to support the students for the main-task though they were delivered through listening tasks (line80-90, appendix E) while providing a wide range of material is recommended in order to meet all students' preferences and learning styles (Harmer, 2007). Therefore; it could be suggested that the authentic materials were generally effective in supporting the students with the necessary language for discussion although they are of the same kind i.e. listening material.

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4.2 The Effectiveness of TBLT Methodology:

According to my analysis of students reports to question four and three in lesson1, two and three in lesson2 and three in lesson3 (appendix D), I believe that the group work and task types (discussion, role-play and debate) generated speech among the majority of the students. The main-tasks' grouping seems to be most effective in pairs in lesson1 since none of the participants reported reluctance to speak unlike the other two where one or two students reported reluctance due to embarrassment or disliking of argument intensity. However; the debate, recorded an increased excitement and motivation to speak in English; some participants reported intrinsic motivation by expressing likeness of the activity itself while others reported extrinsic motivation by expressing a desire to do the activity to achieve a goal "winning the debate" (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011).According to Willis (1996), interest and excitement in the task may increase the students' engagement which might increase learning outcomes. The choice of topic in the role-play, I believe, was effective in generating speech by making student feel like they have a hand in what to discuss. This seems to increase their engagement in the discussion as well as their motivation as the choice gives some 'agency' (Harmer, 2007) in their task performance. Therefore; the latter two types of tasks might create passionate conversations as Cooke and Roberts (2007) suggested that argumentative tasks like debates or role-playing where the students are more likely to disagree about something might create lively and long discussion.

From the teacher perspective, she reported that the approach was, generally, "clear enough to implement" (line5, appendix E). Also, the tasks are relatively simple to assign, except for the debate as some students did not want to participate in the opposing group (line34-37, appendix E). The importance of making students discuss both sides would be explained below (point 2.3.). In addition to their engagement in the tasks' discussion, my field notes recorded that one student showed some reluctance to speak in lesson1 and lesson2. This reluctance could be due to dislike of the arguments' intensity as she reported (question four in lesson1 and two in lesson2 appendix D). Therefore; it could be suggested that tasks might increase students' willingness to speak as they create a safe learner-centered environment for the students to express themselves freely. However; it might cause some anxiety to few students which could be approached by preparing them for the task through showing them a similar version (Willis, 1996) and/or meeting them individually to discuss their anxiety to try to solve it (Riasati, 2014).

4.3 The Effectiveness of the Controversial Topic:

According to my analysis of students reports to questions one and four in lesson1, two in lesson2 and three in lesson3 (appendix D), it could be suggested that the controversial topics generated volatile feelings, but might make students talk either because they did not like what was said and they wanted to defend their beliefs or because they liked it and want to express their opinions. It could, however, create some reluctance to some students due to its provocative nature. According to the teacher's

answers in the interview (see line14,line1-27 and line 28-30, appendix E), it could be suggested that controversial topics might succeed in promoting speech among young-Saudi female students as such topics touch the younger generations' feelings and are usually discussed among them in Arabic. However; because some of them tend to formulate strong opinions about such topics, they refused to argue for the opposing side (line 34-37, appendix E). Getting students to argue both sides of an issue and convincing them that this does not represent their real opinions could help in freeing them from any stress of being judged and may result in a lively debating.

According to my field notes analysis, I think that it could be suggested that the controversial topic of the unit might stimulate passionate discussions among the students. My field notes recorded that during the classwork the students generated "passionate discussions" in lesson1, "a healthy buzz" in lesson2 and "noise" in lesson3. Similarly, the topic could cause some anxiety, but it might be beaten by making students more comfortable in discussing the topic and creating a suitable environment as Riasati (2012) suggested. My field notes recorded that one student looked "worried" and not arguing as much as her classmates during the discussions in the first two lessons, but she got engaged in the third one. This could be due to the gradual progress of the grouping process and the presentation of topic that might have helped the student to develop more confidence to discuss it. Therefore; it could be suggested that the unit's controversial topic might be effective in stimulating speech by increasing students' willingness to speak in English as Knag (2005), Cooke and Roberts' (2007) and (Iaccarino, 2012) speculated in their studies. However; the topic might cause some anxiety that may make students reluctant to speak according to Riasati (2014), especially, if they are unprepared for it or uncomfortable when discussing it.

4.4 Limitation and Future Directions of the Unit:

The reports analysis of the study may suggest that the unit is effective in increasing learner's willingness to speak and in turn might improve their English proficiency in speaking. However, I believe that the unit is limited in some aspects and could be developed to be more effective. For example, the authentic materials are limited to developing listening skills only. Although integrating listening skills with speaking skills is recommended in order to reflect real-life discourse (Tavil, 2010), introducing the content via other materials might be more effective to meet all students' preferences and learning styles (Harmer, 2007). Also, the relatively short time dedicated for the pre-tasks which is due the limited time of lessons seemed to be not enough in the debate session. Therefore; believe that may be assigning the first two videos as homework to be completed before the lesson might provide the teacher with more time to explain the third video more thoroughly as some students and the teacher complained about the authentic nature of the video and lack of sufficient time to deal with it (line12-13, appendix E).

Conclusions

Setting willingness to communicate in the second language as a aim for language instruction in ESOL classroom is crucial to facilitate meaningful communication in the second language, Therefore, teachers should take into consideration the different variables that influence it in order to create productive classroom atmosphere. Some of the variables include self-confidence, state of self-perceived communicative confidence, communication, anxiety motivation, topic of discussion, task type and the classroom atmosphere.

It could be suggested that the unit might be successful in achieving its aim of increasing willingness to communicate in the second language of young-Saudi females. This is because it is based on TBLT methodology, authentic materials and a controversial topic. However; it might be more effective if more variant materials were used and more time was dedicated to study such materials.

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Appendices
Appendix A: plan of lesson1 and related worksheet distributed to the teacher

LESSON PLAN1

OBJECTIVE(S):

- By the end of the lesson, students should have developed a background knowledge about state of women in Saudi Arabia (SA)
- By the end of the lesson, students should be able to express opinions using these phrases *I'm convinced , I'm (almost) positive, I'm fairly certain, I'm pretty sure, I (strongly) believe, I bet.., I imagine , I suspect , I think , In my opinion , not everyone will agree with me, but*

Stage	Procedure (What teacher does)	Tasks (What students do)	Inter actio n	Aims	Time	Rationale
Pre-task 1	T greets Ss and announces the unit topic *Women in Saudi Arabia* by asking Ss *Which picture do you feel represents you as a Saudi? What about the other pictures, what and who do they represent? How do you think Saudi women are viewed by the world? Why?*	Ss predict and answer T's questions	T-Ss	To introduce the Unit's topic and engage them in it.	3 min.	Engaging Ss in the unit's topic during the pre-task phase would raise their interest and motivate them to participate in the lesson (Willis,1996)
Pre-task2	T Explains to Ss that they are going to listen to a poem to find out how women may be viewed by the outer world, but First, T would explain the meaning of *modesty* and *guardian*.	Ss listen to T's explanations	T-S	To help Ss to develop an understanding of the words *modesty* and *guardian*	1 min	The explanations are provided before the listening activity to ensure that Ss could understand most of it. (Harmer, 2007)
	Then T plays the poem from min.3:30 till the end https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0Wbd2qyLIA, T tells Ss to find out how women may be viewed we will listen to a poem. T asks Ss to find out *Who is speaking in poem? What is she saying?*	Ss listen to T's instructions and read the questions in the handout.	T-Ss	To focus Ss listening.	2 min	The questions prior the listening is to prepare Ss for the listening which would in turn help them understand most of the audio. (Harmer, 2007)
	T replays the YouTube from min.3:30 till the end.	Ss listen to audio for general idea Ss discuss who is speaking	A-S	To develop listening skills and general idea about the state of Saudi women. To create speaking time	1 min	The 1st listening is for Ss to form a general understanding (Hamer, 2007) The discussion is for Ss to
	T asks Ss to discuss their answers in pairs		S-S pairs	and provide learners with time to reflect on their answer privately.	2 min	exchange answers and help them to be more independent in finding answer(Harmer,2007)
	T brainstorms Ss answers on the board	Ss brainstorm what women can't do.	T-S whole class	To ensure that whole class have similar answers. To ensure that Ss covered	2min	
	T asks Ss to listen to the poem for the 2nd time, but this time they have to put an (X) next to what Saudi women are forbidden from. T Pauses the audio after *travel without permission*	Ss listen for specific details. Ss respond to T	A-S	all vocabulary related to how women are described in SA and understood their meanings. To increase learner	2 min	The 2nd listening is for Ss to listen for specific details. The pause is to allow Ss to comprehend the audio (Harmer,2007). To provide Ss with some
	After the audio finishes, T asks if Ss want to listen again	Ss answer T.	T-S A-S S-S	autonomy (LA) To increase discussion	1 min or less 2min	control to motivate them, To provide Ss with control and increase autonomy (Harmer,
	T asks Ss to compare answers in pairs		Pairs	time and LA.		2007).
	T brainstorms answers on board.		T-Ss	To ensure all Ss have similar answers.	2min	
Pre-task 3	T explains to Ss that she will give each S a card and each card has a part of a phrase written on and they have to complete the phrases by combining two cards. For example, if ... has a card that says *I'm* and ... has a card that says *convinced*, they form a phrase that says *I'm convinced* together.		T-S	To focus Ss attention on the language necessary for the task performance.	5 min	To increase Ss confidence and give them something to refer to when stuck (Willis, 1996). Consciousness-raising activities increase Ss accuracy during the task (Ellis, 2003)
	T gives each S a card and asks Ss to get up and ask around to complete their phrases with another card.	Ss complete phrases. each pair sits	S-S mingle	To draw Ss attention to structures To allow Ss support each	5min	

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		together		other and talk in English in an authentic sit.		
	T discusses and elicits meaning of phrases on the spider diagram on the board. T draws Ss' attention to the language focus box as a reference for later	Ss share the expressions on the spider diagram	T-S S Indv.		3 min 2min	
Main-Task	T asks Ss to sit with a person they had not talk to today.		T-S		1 min.	
	Tasks Ss to discuss *Is the description of Saudi women in the poem true? To what extent? How do you feel about what is said? Do you think that the woman who is reciting the poem is Saudi? Why or why not?*	Ss use expressions of opinions to express their feeling about the poem.	S-S pairs	To provide Ss with an opportunity and a safe environment for discussing a controversial topic about women status and rights in SA.	15 min	Introducing controversial topics as a topic for discussion motivates Ss to speak in English in order to express their opinions and beliefs about such topics more clearly in the L2 (Iaccarino, 2012).
Post-task	T asks Ss to report their opinions to the whole class	Ss report	S-Ss	To provide feedback and an ending to the main-task.	2min	Providing a meaning ending gives Ss a reason to perform the task and motivates them to complete it (Willis, 1996).

General overview and rationale of the lesson:
Pre-task1: To raise Ss interests and engage them in the unit's topic to motivate them to participate and speak in English.

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[1] Adapted from Scrivener (2005:122)

Pre-task2: To introduce vocabulary related to Saudi women descriptions *freedom, drive, vote, forbidden, permission, modesty, guardian, inferior* that would support Ss in the content of the discussion which would increase their confidence in the discussion (Willis, 1996)

Pre-task3: to support students by focusing their attention on some of the language necessary for task performance (Willis, 1996)
Main-Task: Introducing controversial topics as a topic for discussion motivates Ss to speak in English in order to express their opinions and beliefs about such topics more clearly in the L2 (Iaccarino, 2012).
Post-task: Providing a meaning ending gives Ss a reason to perform the task and motivates them to complete it (Willis, 1996).

LESSON 1 Work Sheet:

Cut the cards, jumble them up and hand one to each student.

I'm	convinced
I'm	(almost) positive
I'm	fairly certain,
I'm	pretty sure
I	(strongly) believe
I	bet...
I	imagine
I	suspect
I	think
In my	Opinion

Appendix B: plan of lesson2 distributed to the teacher

LSEEON PLAN 2

OBJECTIVES:

- By the end of the lesson, students should be able to expressing their opinions
- By the end of the lesson, students should develop an understanding of different polite disagreement structures.
- By the end of the lesson, students should be able to speak about Saudi women's right to drive, travel without permission and go out without chaperone in a general way in English.

Stage	Procedure (What teacher does)	Tasks (What students do)	Interaction	Aims	Time	Rationale
Pre-task	T greets Ss. T asks students about the previous lesson *what did we discuss in the last lesson?* T should focus on the Ss who did not speak a lot.	Ss answer expressing opinions and describing women in Saudi Arabia.	T-S	To activate Ss schemata which would in turn affect their motivation to speak as they should have developed some background knowledge in the previous lesson.	5min	Activating Ss schema develops their knowledge which motivates them to speak (Harmer, 2007).
	T explains that Ss would listen to a documentary about Saudi women and Ss should answer the questions.		T-S	To support and scaffold Ss during the discussion.	2min	To provide Ss with content for discussion with lexis and phrases (Willis, 1996)
	T asks Ss to read the questions.	Ss read the questions in the handout.	T-S	To focus Ss listening.	1min	Focusing Ss listening helps them to find the answers easier (Harmer, 2007).
	T plays video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4Vv9wGvoIM T plays the video from the start to 2:45 min for Q1. T plays until 4:10 min for Q2. T plays 4:59	Ss listen and answer the questions	V-Ss	To support and scaffold Ss with necessary vocabulary and phrases during the discussion.	5min	To provide Ss with content for discussion with lexis and phrases (Willis, 1996)

	min for Q3.				
	T asks Ss if they want to listen again.	Ss respond to T	T-S	To increase learner autonomy (LA)	5min or less	To provide Ss with some control to motivate them (Harmer, 2007).
	T asks Ss to discuss their notes in pairs	Ss discuss in pairs	S-S pairs	To increase discussion time and LA.	3min	To provide Ss with control and increase autonomy (Harmer, 2007).
	T asks Ss to share answers with the whole class	Ss volunteer their answers	T-Ss Whole class	To ensure all Ss have similar answers.	2min	
Main task	T asks Ss to remind her of what the things Saudi women were forbidden from doing (Driving, travelling without permission and go out without chaperone) and divides Ss into groups of four. T assigns one S of each group to report to whole class	Ss listen to instructions	T-Ss	To provide clear instructions	2min	Providing clear instructions ensures that all Ss are performing the task as should be which would produces productive results (Scrivener, 2005)
	T asks Ss to discuss which right they believe is the most important right Saudi women are denied and needs to be submitted to Shuora Council for consideration out of (Driving, travelling without permission and go out without chaperone).	Ss discuss	S-S	To discuss and share opinions by practicing structure previously learned and create a safe environment for discussion	20 min.	Introducing controversial topics as a topic for discussion motivates Ss to speak in English in order to express their opinions and beliefs about such topics more clearly in the L2 (Iaccarino, 2012).
Post task	T asks Ss to report their resolutions to whole class why they opted for that right	Ss volunteer their decisions.	S-Ss	Increase Ss confidence in speaking publically	6min	Providing a meaning ending gives Ss a reason to perform the task and motivates them to complete it (Willis, 1996).
	T writes on board Ss common errors when expressing opinions of disagreement and asks Ss to come to boards to correct themselves. T draws Ss attention to structures of disagreement used by students	Ss come to board correct errors Ss answer T's questions	S-Ss-T	Push for accuracy	4min	According to Willis (1996), if Ss found difficulty in using appropriate forms during task performance and then they are introduced to them, the Ss are more likely to remember them.
	(if not), T has to introduce the structures and refer Ss to the language focus as the following: T introduces agreement and polite expressions of disagreement in the language focus by asking Ss *What if you agree with a person how would you tell that without repeating the whole opinion?*		T-Ss	Push for accuracy	Or 8min	Sometimes it is difficult to ensure that Ss use the desired structure, thus, teachers should introduce it themselves (Ellis, 2003)

	How could you disagree with a person older or of a higher status than you are without being rude?					
	T draws Ss attention to the language focus and asks them to reflect on how they express agreement and disagreement in the previous task and how it differs from the stated structures	Ss read language focus box and discuss in pairs how they expressed agreement and disagreement and how they should've expressed them	S-S pairs			
	[1]					

General overview and rationale of the lesson:

Pre-task: to activate Ss' schema and support them in the content of the discussion

Main-task: to create a safe environment to discuss a more specific controversial topic about women status and rights in terms of (driving, travelling without permission and go out without chaperone) to motivates Ss to speak in English in order to express their opinions and beliefs about such topics more clearly in the L2 (Iaccarino, 2012).

Post-task: to focus on the language of the task as if Ss found difficulty in using appropriate forms during task performance and then they are introduced to them, the Ss are more likely to remember them (Willis, 1996).

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[1] Adapted from Scrivener (2005:122)

Appendix C: plan of lesson3 distributed to the teacher

LESSON PLAN3

OBJECTIVES:

- By the end of the lesson, students should be able to distinguish between facts and opinion
- By the end of the lesson, students should be able to debate their arguments using appropriate structures and vocabulary.
- By the end of the lesson, students should be able to discuss women driving in Saudi Arabia and create logical arguments about it.

Stage	Procedure (What teacher does)	Tasks (What students do)	Interaction	Aims	Time	Rationale
Pre-task 1	T greets Ss, T tells Ss that today's lesson is about women's right to drive in Saudi Arabia (SA). T Tells Ss that, first, they would listen to a talk given by an activist about women driving in SA and they should answer the following questions: *Is it illegal to for women to drive in Saudi Arabia? (if not what is the source of the ban?) What is the authorities' stance with regard to women driving? What happened on June 17?*	Ss listen to T	T-Ss	To focus Ss listening	2min	If Ss' listening is focused, they are more likely to understand the video (Harmer, 2007).
	T plays the video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vNpmq6Ok-QQ For Q1, T plays (2:50- 4:00min.).	Ss listen and answer.	V-Ss	To scaffold Ss and support them with the content for discussion.	10 Min	By supporting Ss, they are more likely to talk more in the necessary lexis and phrases (Willis, 1996).

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	For Q2, T plays (4:45-5:15 min). For Q3, T plays (4:50- 6:00min).					To provide Ss with some control to motivate them (Harmer, 2007).
	T asks Ss if they want to listen again.	Ss respond to T.	T-S	To increase learner autonomy (LA)	5min or less	
	T asks Ss to share answers with the whole class	Ss report answer to class	T-S	To ensure all Ss have similar answers.	3min	
Pre-task 2	T explain to Ss they are going to perform a debate on whether on not driving should be permitted, but before, that they will watch a debate to learn what it looks like and kind of structures are usually used in a debate. T plays https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hamK3O4ijB4		T-S	To support Ss in the structures usually found in a debate and push for accuracy	10 min.	The researcher is aware of the importance of a 1st general listening of the whole video, but due the time limits of the sessions, she opted for selected tracks for time management.
	T play parts of video for the language aspect of the debate https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XlvpGshhTrI	Ss whach the explanations and the description of debates	V-Ss			The push for accuracy would increase Ss' confidence and then motivates them to speak (Ellis, 2003)
	T Play first min. and asks *how did the man start the argument? How did he express his stance? What is it?*	Ss answer *thank you ladies and gentlemen for coming tonight... interesting things being said ...On the other side of the house to night. let me begin by saying that as a Muslim...*	T-Ss			
	T plays (1.35-1.40 min) and asks *how did the man support his argument? What expression did he use and what do they refer to?* T explains that these are facts. They	Ss answer *In fact quoting others ... referring to statistics*				
	are important to support the arguments and other ways of expressing fact may include *It is certain that ...The fact is that...This proves that ...*					
	T plays (3:35- 4:10) *how did the man express his agreement?* (5:15 -5: 30) *how did he response to the objection?* How are opinions expressed? T plays (9:25-9:35) How did he Comment the objection? 13:00 how did he conclude his argument?	Ss answer *You're right! ...I agree with you ...I agree with you 100%* *to address this gentleman's point* Ss answer *I don't believe...* *please* Conclude *I urge you to vote yes tonight*				
Main task	T divides Ss into 2 opposing groups one side argues for *Women should be allowed to drive* while the other side should argue for *Women should be banned from driving.* T explains to Ss that the argument is just a role play and does not represent their real opinions.	Ss form 2 groups	T-Ss	To provide learners with an opportunity to practice what they have learned in the unit. To create safe environment for arguments and motivate Ss to speak in English.	3-4 min	Arguments tend to motivate Ss to speak more which would raise their talking time in English and improve their speaking skills (Ur, 1991) and Using controversial issues for discussion motivates Ss to speak in English in order to express their opinions and beliefs about such topics more clearly in the L2 (Iaccarino, 2012).
	T give students 15 min to prepare their argument and explains that they could use any available resource what are they. And appoint	Ss prepare arguments	S-S Groups	To provide Ss with time before the debate	15 min	Providing Ss with preparatory time before talking increases their fluency and accuracy while speaking (Ellis,
	one student from each group as a spokesperson for the debate. T announces debate and acts as organizer Each side is given 5 minutes to for the first speech. 1 min. for examinations of speech. Then 3 min for rebuttal preparation and 1 min each for conclusion rebuttals starting with the opposition.	Ss argue	Ss-Ss Opposing groups		20 min	2003). Prepared public performance increases Ss' confidence, fluency and accuracy (Willis, 1996).
Post task	T counts Ss' vote for a solution	Ss vote for a solution	T-Ss	To give students a meaningful ending for the task	2min	Providing a meaning ending gives Ss a reason to perform the task and motivates them to complete it (Willis, 1996).

General rationale and overview of the lesson:

Pre-task1: to support Ss with the content of the discussion

Pre-task2: to support Ss with structure of the debate

Main-task: to create a safe environment to discuss a more specific controversial topic about women driving to motivates Ss to speak in English in order to express their opinions and beliefs about such topics more clearly in the L2 (Iaccarino, 2012).

Post-task: to Provide a meaning ending to give Ss a reason to perform the task and motivate them to complete it (Willis, 1996).

¹ Adapted from Scrivener (2005:122)

Appendix D: Sample of the reflective-questionnaire administered to students after each lesson

Student Name: ……………
Lesson1 Reflective Questionnaire
Please answer the following questions to help you reflect on the content of the lesson (please try to refer to the design of the activity, the grouping, the nature of the task in term of public performance and the topic):
1. Did the warm- up activity succeed in introducing the topic of the unit Women's rights in Saudi Arabia? Why or why not?
2. Did the listening activity support you with enough vocabulary about women in Saudi Arabia for the Discussion activity? Why or why not?
3. How did the language focus section in the unit help you to perform the Discussion task i.e. did you use the language (expressing opinions phrases) introduced in the section and did this increase your willingness to communicate (WTC)?
4. Did the topic (state of Saudi women in the poem) and pair interaction of the Discussion task motivate you to speak in English? How?
5. Would you like to add any more comments on how to improve the lesson?

Student Name: ……………
Lesson2 Reflective Questionnaire
Please answer the following questions to help you reflect on the content of the lesson (please try to refer to the design of the activity, the grouping, the nature of the task in term of public performance and the topic):
1. Did the video of the warm-up listening activity support you in terms of activating and introducing vocabulary about women's rights in Saudi Arabia? Why or why not?
2. Did the topic, context and the grouping of the discussion activity affect your willingness to speak? Why or why not?
3. Did the language focus activity help you to know how express your opinions more clearly? Why or why not?
4. Would you like to add any more comments on how to improve the lesson?

Student Name: ……………
Lesson3 Reflective Questionnaire
Please answer the following questions to help you reflect on the content of the lesson (please try to refer to the design of the activity, the grouping, the nature of the task in term of public performance and the topic):
1. Did the warm-up listening activity succeed introducing the topic of Saudi women driving and supporting you with enough vocabulary for the debate activity? Why or why not?
2. Did the debate videos of the listening activity help you with performance of the debate in terms of introducing useful expressions and the process of debates? Why or why not?
3. Did the debate's topic (women driving) motivate you to speak in English? How? Did the groups and public performance of the debate affect this motivation? How?
4. Would you like to add any more comments on how to improve the lesson?

Appendix E: Transcription of the teacher's interview
Transcription of Teacher Interview
1. Researcher: Hello. Thank you for coming ah for giving me some of your time.. to do this interview.
2. Um first of all, I would like to
   ⌡   Teacher: thank you. It was my
   pleasure actually
3. Researcher: oh. Thank you. First of all, I would like to ask you how clear were the unit design?
4. Did you face any difficulties in understanding its item … ah its aims sorry?

5. Teacher: Um, um..It was actually clear and detailed enough for me to implement. Um the aims also
6. Were um.. clear though I had some difficulty understanding the relation between the aims and the
7. Task. I like the division of the time and I was surprised that I was able to stick to the lesson plan.
8. Usually in my speaking classes I have a problem with time management especially when I see
9. Students speaking and um active and don't want to stop them because they are speaking.

        i. Researcher: Um
       ii. Teacher: Um
            But,…

10. Teacher: I did face ummm some difficulties [muttering]
11. **Researcher: Like what**
12. Teacher: Um [muttering] In the time … in the last session only .. um I had to skip .. ah some parts in
13. the third video ah to make sure the girls ah have enough time for the debate.

       i. Researcher: Yeah

14. Researcher: I can remember this … Um…… Did the use of a controversial topic like ah women
15. Driving generate more discussion? Um in other words do feel that it succeeded in.. accomplishing
16. its aims and if so how?
17. Teacher: Oh, yes. Ah It did move students to speak a lot. I think um this is because students have a lot
18. to say about this topic. This generation, unlike us, are more open to the world
19. Researcher: Yeah. I was surprised
20. Teacher: and have a say in every issue
21. Teacher: and I guess they do discuss such topics among themselves outside the classroom, of course
22. in Arabic. So, um they know everything about the issue. They have um the background. They know
23. How to defend and fight for their pinion. I think it was a brilliant idea actually brining up such topics um
24. to the language classroom, especially speaking classes because these topics motivate student to
25. speak ah just like what happened in your study …. So, yes. It was successful.. in achieving its aims and
26. .. making students speak. Um and I think umm as I said students don't have to research the topic ..
27. they have the background. They know what to say. So .. I liked it
28. Researcher: Thank you. How did you feel about the topic of the unit in relation to the students'
29. Willingness to sass communicates?
30. Teacher: Um As I said earlier it increases students' willingness to speak. I think ah I answered this
31. Question. Yeah?
32. Researcher: Yeah sorry. Alright. Let's move on. Tell me about the challenges you faced while
33. Delivering the unit. Please.
34. Teacher: Um.. Oh, ah the biggest challenge was [small laugh] that students wanted to argue for
35. women driving and those who were in the group who was supposed to argue against women driving

36. were upset. They said they don't want to argue for something they don't believe in. but I explained to
37. them the purpose of this activity which was practicing the language and they were ok. As you
38. Said. They were ok As you have seen.. Also I had to ... um to move students ah I don't know what
39. Lesson ... I think when they were asked to move to someone whom they have not ah spoken to. Ah
40. They were reluctant because they feel comfortable when speaking to their friends.. but
41. generally umm ... Oh I also faced some um technical problems when playing the poem video in the
42. First lesson. I had to sign in to ah my personal ah Wi-Fi. Usually I prefer to download videos instead of
43. Umm playing them online... Also one of the videos had uh Arabic transcription and I had to cover.
44. Researcher: Yeah
45. Teacher: The part
46. Researcher: oh yes.. Yes thank you um..... Would you use ah similar controversial topic in the future?
47. Teacher: Oh, yes of course. As I said
48. Researcher: Why?
49. Teacher: As I said I like um I was surprised that students were active and speaking a lot umm..
50. Especially.. when ... ah after the vid video where there was the British lady who was presenting ah
51. Some misguided facts about Saudi women.. and they wanted to fight ...But if I am gana use such topic
52. In the future, I have to um also umm plan for it ... carefully choose the topic.. make sure that
53. student don't hurt each other one when arguing um or fighting for their opinions I think also I
54. Need to train my student ah to ah how to argue.. how to discuss .... ahhh to ensure that there is no
55. bias
56. Researcher: um so would you say it did increase students' willingness to communicate? I mean umm
57. The unit.. Did it support the students.. Did it ... increase their level of anxiety and confidence?
58. Teacher: ... could you just stop this I [stop recording as requested by the teacher. She needed to
59. leave the room]
60. Teacher: Willingness to speak yes .. it improves their willingness to speak ummm ... their level
61. Anxiety and confidence.. well I think [muttering] I cannot judge really because the topic was
62. controversial [small laugh] and sensitive and students were excited especially umm when ahh I played
63. the video the second video of the British lady coming in Saudi Arabia so they got ssssome students
64. got .. a couple of students umm got angry because they did not like the .... so they did not like .. so
65. they did not like what was said about Saudi women .. so they were more active more willing to speak
66. And they were confident yes when .. when arguing against what was said about woo women in Saudi
67. Arabia.
68. Researcher: All right then

69. Teacher: Aaing
70. Researcher: Yeah did it develop their speaking skill skills by in increasing the students' willingness to
71. Communicate. Do you think it did?
72. Teacher: Hummmm
73. Researcher: And if so. How?
74. Teacher: Um develop their speaking skills. I am not sure .. I cannot really judge from three sessions ..
75. But I think ahhh it would because if students' willingness to speak is raised, then of course their .. they
76. will speak more .. they practice the language more and then their speaking skills would improve ..
77. Eventually. Ummm .. There was also the language focus and this would improve their speaking as
78. Well. But um I don't know I can't really [small laugh] judge from three sessions.
79. Researcher: [small laugh] Fair enough. Um finally, how would you improve the unit?
80. Teacher: ummm. Well .. um I think there was a lot of listening at the beginning of the lesson.. you put
81. This for the purpose of providing students with content and umm .. and um in my opinion students
82. Don't need content here because they have a background knowledge about the topic.. they have
83. already developed their opinions ahhh ssso they I don't think they need this much listening umm but
84. if I am to reduce the listening .. I would have to think of um another way of providing students with
85. ahh vocabulary because the listening also provided umm as I as I just noticed in your study did
86. Provide the students with vocabulary.
87. Researcher: I agree with you, but don't you think that the students need to be provided with an
88. activity to help the express what they want to say in English?
89. Teacher: umm Yes, this is what I mean by vocabulary. Ahhh I think ummmm may be changing activity
90. Would make the lessons more variant.
91. Researcher: Yeah may be
92. Teacher: I have to just think ... as I just said I have to figure it out.
93. Researcher: Yes I agree. Thank for.. Providing me.. This time to do this interview. would like to
94. add any more comment
95. Teacher: Thank you it was my pleasure and good luck with your project.

Transcription Key:

} (.)= a one second pause

( ) = interruption and overlap