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ARTICLES

Review

Nineteenth century American metaphysical women poets

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This study is an attempt to contest the assumption that nineteen century American women poets were sentimental. Accordingly, the main intuition is otherwise; some of these women are highly intellectual and their poetry is not of less vigor and complexity as that of the poetry written by the English metaphysical poets in the second half of seventeenth century England. In order to account for this intuition, the study has tried to delineate the main features of nineteenth century American poetry in order to have them as a yardstick against the wit and the ingenuity of three famous nineteen century American women poets: Emily Dickinson, Helen Jackson and Mary Ritter. To substantiate the study assumption that these poets can aptly be dubbed American metaphysical poets, representative poems for the three writers were analyzed, and it was found out that the poetry of those poets is highly intellectual, both in theme and style.

Key words: Poetic tradition, sentimental poetry; intellectual poetry, elliptical syntax**,** American metaphysical poetry**,** Emily Dickson**,** Helen Hunt Jackson**,** Mary .L Ritter.

INTRODUCTION

Except for that of Dickenson's, the bulk of poetry written by women in nineteenth century America has always been dismissed as artificial, superficial and sentimental. Bennett (1998) tries to downplay such an accusation by arguing that sentimentalism does not contradict with subtlety and ingenuity. She contends that:

The point here is that even if much nineteenth century women's poetry is "sentimental" which it is, what is meant by that term and how it plays out in any particular text or writer's oeuvre can be exceedingly complicated and even treacherous to sort out (P. 39).

Bennett goes on arguing that nineteenth century women

literature, fiction, and poetry is neither simplistic nor "transparent," but it is artistic, and it requires careful reading in order to grasp and appreciate its merits. Nineteenth century American women poets, according to Walker (1982), have the potentiality to reform the poetic traditions and define the role of a female poet; Walker asserts:

Nineteenth century women poets reformed the conception of poetry that had previously existed. By defining the poet in terms of the capacity for pain, they implied that women had a special talent for verse. While men were out working in the marketplace, women…were at home suffering quietly and writing poems. Their feelings were

more profound than men; they were touched with tragic inside (P. 88).

Those women, as such, have established themselves as creative poets; they possessed both experience and talents for writing poetry which is not of less vigor and grandeur than that poetry written by the English metaphysical poets. They manage to write in a very sophisticated style which made them modern. In her biographical notes on some of the nineteenth century women poets, Bennett (1998) labels them as either modernist or harbingers of modernism.

In the light of these assumptions and the meticulous reading of some of these poems, one tends to agree with Bennett and Walker and embrace the fact that these women are as creative as men, and their poetry does not exhibit less vigor and spirit than the poetry of their contemporary male poets. Moreover, some of these women poets are witty and their poetry can be aptly termed metaphysical.

Out of this intuition, the purpose of this study emerges as an attempt to show that some nineteenth century women poets such as Emily Dickinson, Helen Hunt Jackson and Mary L. Ritter can be duly classified as American metaphysical women poets. Accordingly, the discussion of some poems written by the above mentioned women poets is intended to show how these poets are as witty as the English metaphysical poets, and they can be justly called nineteenth century American metaphysical women poets. To set up the scene for such discussion, it is indispensable, if not imperative, to give a brief account of English metaphysical poetry in terms of its philosophy and striking features.

The term "metaphysical" is a slang word used by Johnson (2011) to disparagingly refer to a group of English poets who wrote poetry at the beginning of the seventeenth century (p. 17). However, it was not until the twentieth century that this term began to acquire different and favorable connotations. Eliot (1923) a keen admirer of the Metaphysical poets, describes Donne and his followers as "witty" and "serious". Eliot highly speaks of these poets: "They have enough been praised in terms which are implicit limitations because they are 'metaphysical', or 'witty', 'quaint', or 'obscure' though at their best they have these attributes more than other serious poets".

As mentioned earlier, these poets were not popular during their time because their poetry was subversive in both content and form. Their poetry is full of philosophical and religious speculations that reflect the spirit of the age. In fact, their poetry comes as a response to a changing world, a world which lost its certainty as a result of scientific empiricism in astrology, botany, astronomy, zoology, navigation and geographical exploration, etc. These poets, however, remain faithful to the old system of belief that life on earth is a mere shadow of the eternal world. Therefore, the poetry of most of the metaphysical poets is an attempt to understand the dual reality and show man's relation to the divine presence.

Seelig (2015) argues that each of these poets tries in a "unique form and religious meditation to represent the two worlds and show the best ways of connecting them" (p.6). In this respect, she confirms that the poetry of Herbert, Vaughan, Traherene and other metaphysical poets: "create a universe of assent with particular limits" (p. 6). Gardner (1972) confirms that the term "metaphysical" suggests more than nice philosophical speculations. She argues that:

"what we call metaphysical poetry was referred to by contemporaries as 'strong lines,' a term which calls attention to other elements in metaphysical poetry than its fondness for indulging in 'nice speculations of philosophy' in unusual contexts" (p.15).

In fact metaphysical poetry is strongly lined in terms of its rough versification, elliptical syntax and concise forms. It is not easy to read because it usually fuses feelings with wit in a very ingenuous manner. In this sense, metaphysical poetry is difficult to read and this difficulty, according to Gardner, is either a merit or demerit; it is a demerit for those who favor poetry to be appealing to the heart, while it is a merit for those who believe that good poetry should appeal to both, the heart and the mind. In fact, the first type of readers does not like metaphysical poetry because it confuses the pleasure of poetry with the pleasure of puzzles; however, the second type of readers finds it most artistic and most intellectual. In her attempt to demystify the vagueness that has wrapped up metaphysical poetry, Gardner gives a list of some of the characteristics of this poetry, characteristics which are shared among most of the metaphysical poets.

DISCUSSION

According to Gardner (1972), the first characteristic is "concentration." She argues that metaphysical poetry does not demand the reader to be held by an argument or a line, then pause to reflect on, but rather it requires the reader to pay attention and go on. This reader must go on because the striking beauty of the poem lies in the argument as a whole. In addition, the metaphysical poem is always short and concise; it is interwoven in an ingenuous manner; thus, failing to read the poem in this way might make the reader loose the originality of the poetic experience. A second characteristic, Gardner lists, is the use of conceits. In fact, the metaphysical conceit is a point of departure in the metaphysical poem; it is not as ornamental as is the case in Elizabethan poetry, but rather an essential part whose function is to develop the argument. A conceit is a far-fetched image where two dissimilar things are compared to each other and the poet, in a very striking manner persuades us of the justness of this comparison. Gardner is specific in her definition of the metaphysical conceits when she says:

A conceit is a comparison whose ingenuity is more striking than its aptness, or, at least, is more immediately striking. All comparisons discover likeness in things unalike: a comparison becomes a conceit when we are made to concede likeness while being strongly conscious of unlikeness ….Here, a conceit is like a spark made by striking two stones together. After the flash the stones are just two stones (P. 19).

This kind of witty analogy is very subversive in a sense that it demands some kind of ingenuity on the part of the poet to elaborate to make it comprehensible, and in the meantime, it requires the reader to focus on the image in order to discern the latent meaning in such far-fetched images. A famous example of a metaphysical conceit is Donne's comparison, in "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," of himself and his wife to the legs of a twin compass where the wife is portrayed as the "fixed foot" and the husband as the rooming one whose movement affects the other leg. This conceit reflects the kind of relationship between the husband and the wife; physically they are two, yet spiritually they are one. A third characteristic is the argumentative nature of metaphysical poetry. Gardner confirms that:

"Argument and persuasion and the use of conceit as their instrument are the elements or body of the metaphysical poem" (p. 23).

The soul of the poem is an imaginative situation or a moment of experience out of which arises the need to argue and persuade.

Therefore, it is not strange when the study observe that most of metaphysical poetry is marked by abrupt openings, whereby the poet addresses his mistress or his God in a casual manner. Accordingly, this poetry is marked by a dramatic aspect; it is written by poets who are accustomed and frequent of plays or the art of dramaturgy. A fourth characteristic is the use of language. The Metaphysical poets use simple words, nearly everyday language, sometimes vulgar words; however, this language is often difficult to understand; it is a language which is impregnated by excessive use of antithetical statements, in terms of paradox and oxymoron. Sometimes, the meaning of the whole poem is based on understanding the paradox as is the case in Herbert's "Easter Wings": "Then shall the fall further the flight in me" (as cited in DeCesare (1978).

A final characteristic of metaphysical poetry is the novelty of its imagery. These poets often use images drawn from religion, philosophy and science; they never use the image in a cliché manner; in each poem, the same image acquires a new shape and new meaning. Sometimes, the image can be a symbol, a parable or an allegory. In "The Flea" for instance, Donne associates the symbol and the conceit with the image of flea to convey the idea of the Holy Trinity. It is a very complex image in

which the symbol is superseded by the parable of sacrificing the body to transcend to the world of divinity. In fact, religious obsession is a recurrent element in most of metaphysical poetry; however, sometimes the metaphysical poets are subversive in expressing their religious concerns. Some of them would use an erotic image in order to convey a religious belief.

Hence, on approaching any metaphysical poem, readers should be cautious before giving any judgment. Now, with this caution in mind and the characteristics of metaphysical poetry set up, it is time to turn to the nineteenth century American women poets. In fact a careful and critical reader of Emily Dickinson's poetry might find difficulty in contesting the study assumptions simply because Emily Dickinson, as confirmed by Keller, classified as metaphysical, argues that "Most of the more significant features of Emily Dickinson's poetry have at one time or another been rather loosely classified as metaphysical—her playfulness, her unusual vocabulary, her tension of thought" (Emsley, 2003). Hence, Keller goes on and identifies Dickinson's poetry by showing how it resembles the poetry of the metaphysical poets in its "complexity of attitudes towards experience" (p. 251).

Indeed Dickinson's poetry is typically metaphysical and the ensuing examples illustrate this assumption. Dickinson's poem number (280), "I Felt a Funeral in My Brain" is as witty and ambiguous as those poems written by the metaphysical poets, mainly Herbert. If we look closely at the poem, we find the opening lines as abrupt as any those of Donne's poems. The poem opens with:
"I felt a Funeral, in my Brain/And Mourners are to and fro/ kept treading- treading" (Dickinson, 1896). The reader, as is the case in most of metaphysical poetry must not pause and dwell to reflect on the seemingly nonsensical opening, otherwise, he/she will miss the whole meaning of the poem. Apparently, the poem is not about actual death, but rather about a metaphoric death of conscious thoughts. Cameron (1986) speculates that "The poem charts the stages in the speaker's loss of consciousness, and this loss of consciousness is the dramatization of the deadening forces that today would be known as repression" (Bloom,1986).

Evidently, the central argument is encapsulated in the witty conceit; the transference of thoughts from consciousness into unconsciousness is brilliantly compared to the transference of soul from one world to another as in the case of actual death. The process of thought transference is subtly compared to the real death and its accompanying rituals; it is as sad and painful as death and involves much pain and suffering. Dickinson, then, does not cast off the analogy without elaboration; otherwise, the whole image remains limited to a simple analogy. Cameron attempts to explicate the conceit and show how it works in the poem; he confirms: "Examining the conceit, we speculate that the mourners represent that part of the self which fights to resurrect or keep alive the thought the speaker is trying to commit to burial" (p.

46). The beauty and the "spark" of this conceit are actually revealed in the last line of the poem, "And Finished knowing –then- (L. 20).

One, however, should admit that the closure of the conceit as it is implied in Cameron's elaboration of the elaboration, does not resolve the mystery involved. Dickinson, in a very deliberate and brilliant manner leaves out part of the mystery to be figured out by the potential reader. The poem unlikely seems to be only about the mourning of dead thoughts or even about repression of these thoughts in negative manner. In his attempt to resolve this mystery, Cameron employs De Man's theory of functional allegory; he argues:
"Thus the allegory of the funeral attempts to exteriorize and give a temporal structure what is in fact interior and simultaneous" (Bloom, 1986).

Within this argument, Cameron hints at the irony embedded in the last line, however, he seems to remain limited to his initial thesis that the poem is about repression. At this juncture, it seems fair to push such an interpretation foreword and reflect further on the possible interpretations embedded in either the mysterious conceit or the open-ended allegory. Certainly, the poem seems to be about something more than repression or total annihilation of the conscious self. One could argue the opposite and say that the poem is a celebration of a new birth; a celebration of the birth of the creative process in the mind of the writer. In his discussion of Lacan, Syrup (1989) argues that, for Lacan the language of unconsciousness is privileged over the language of consciousness in the sense that it is much credible. Syrup argues:

"The true speech- the unconscious- breaks through usually in a veiled and incomprehensible" (p. 11).

According to Lacan, Syrup says, the language of conscious is the condition for the unconscious, in the sense that it creates and forms the unconsciousness. In fact, this theory seems to be in resonance with Coleridge's theory of imagination, primary and secondary.

In the light of these two theories, Dickenson seems to be celebrating this process of creativity, a process which involves much pain and suffering.

In this context, the mourners and the sad rituals are nothing more than the tortuous and painful experience of creativity which finally helps the writer transcend impermanence into permanence. In this context, the irony in the last line "And finished knowing- then-" (Syrup, 1989) is accounted for; the real and the valuable knowledge is this transcendental   knowledge which makes people lose sight of one world but gain a larger and magnifying sight of another world. In this sense, Dickinson shares the metaphysical poets the belief in the duality of life; therefore, one can confirm that the poem resembles metaphysical poetry in style and content. Another example of Dickinson's metaphysical poetry is

her poem number (605). In this poem, Dickinson uses the allegory of the spider weaving to convey the process and the purpose of creative writing:

The spider holds a Sliver Ball
In unperceived Hands-
And dancing softly to Himself
His yarn of Pearl-unwinds-(Dickinson, 1896)

Martin (1984) compares this poem with another spider poem written by Walt Whitman. in his point of view, the spider in Whitman's poem is used as a metaphor for his soul; it is lonely and isolated in a promontory, yet it tried to build a bridge in order to connect with the outside world "Till the bridge you will need be formed, till the ductile anchor hold / Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul" (p. 135 L.9-10). In her comparison between the two poems, Martin argues that Whitman's spider *launched* (my italics) its filament in order to reach its goal while the spider in Dickinson's poem is obsessed with its activity, without any concern for the outside world. Accordingly, she concludes that Dickinson's poetry is "self-contained" and only beautiful as a process rather than a product. Martin even goes further and asserts that the stress in Dickinson's poem is on impermanence:

Impermanence rather than permanence is stressed as is the process of spinning rather than mystery or agency is Dickinson's concern. If Dickinson's spider is a metaphor for her soul, one can safely say that her view of herself as a poet is less assertive, more self contained, less egocentric and more of relative perspectives than is Whitman's. (P. 134).

To some extent, this interpretation seems to hold; however, if we interpret the poem within the context of metaphysical poetry, we might come up with a different interpretation which highlights the depth of meaning inherent in the weaving process. In fact the weaving metaphor in Dickinson's poem is sustained to the level of allegory; it is an allegory which is often used by Edward Taylor, the first American poet who has been acknowledged as a metaphysical poet. In his poem, "Housewifery," Taylor uses the allegory of weaving to convey the hope of attaining God's grace required for redemption, a hope that justifies his persistent and strong appeal to God:

Make me, O Lord thy Spinning Wheele compleate.
Thy Holy Worde my Distaff makes for mee
Make mine Affections thy Swift Flyers neate.
And make my Soul thy holy Spoole to bee. (Taylor, 1991).

Dickinson seems to be using the same allegory but in a different way; what she is concerned in, is this moment of

illumination which comes out as a result of weaving, metaphorically, creative writing. The beauty of this moment is conveyed via the subtle conceit "The continent of light"; the poet as well as this spider create this world of celestial light which seems to be ephemeral. But, if we consider seriously and take the stylistic features into consideration, we might reach a completely different conclusion in terms of the issue of permanence and impermanence. Looking again at Dickinson's poem in comparison with that of Whitman, we might observe that Whitman's spider is involved in a single and an isolated action: "It launched filament, filament, and filament out of itself" (Whitman, 2015), while Dickinson's spider is involved in a continuous effort which is confirmed by the recurrent repetition of the action; this repetition is sustained by the use of the factual present tense in "holds, unwinds, plies, supplants and dancing" (Dickinson, 1896).

Therefore, one can assert that even if this continent of light is dangled by the housewife and the "boundaries forgot," it will come back as long as this spider keeps weaving. The light, then, is permanent by the token of its repetition, and in this sense, the allegory of weaving is brought back in its metaphysical context. With these permanent flashes of Dickinson's light, we might be guided to have a metaphysical journey into the poetry of her close friend Helen Jackson.

Helen Jackson is as great as her Amherst friend, Emily Dickinson, who elegized her with the following words:

"Helen of Troy will die, but Helen of Colorado never. Dear friend, can you walk, were the last words that I wrote her. Dear friend, I can fly- her immortal reply" (Dickinson, 1896).

Jackson was considered a leading poet in the nineteen century. Pollack (1998) asserts Jackson was deemed by Samuel Bowels as a great literary figure of her time. He announces that: "Mrs. Hunt stands on the threshold of literary triumph ever on by an American woman" (p. 325) Ralph Waldo Emerson, a 19th century American poet, also describes her as "the leading poet, not just leading poet on the continent".

As space precludes, Jackson's poem "Habeas Corpus" will be discussed to substantiate the assumption about the poetry of those nineteenth century American woman poets. If one carefully and critically looks into this poem, he/she would verily find that it has most of the characteristics of metaphysical poetry; it is argumentative, full of paradoxes and has a witty conceit. In this poem which was written few days before her death, Jackson, like Donne is addressing herself to death in a very casual manner. Donne, in his "Hymn to God, my God in my Sickness", also a poem written months before his death, does not show any fear of death; on the contrary, he sees death as a conductor to the gate to eternal life:

I joy, that in these straits, I see my West
For though their current yield return to none
What shall my west hurt me? As West and East
In all flat maps (and I am one)
So death touches the resurrection. (Donne, 2001. L. 16-19).

Jackson also is not scared of death; on the contrary she embraces it as a friend. Death for her is an emancipator and a savior. This paradox is typically metaphysical, where death is always seen as a transforming power from the shadow of reality to reality itself. Therefore, it is not strange when we find Jackson addressing death in this way: "My body. Eh? Friend Death, how now? / Why all this tedious pomp of writ? / Thou has reclaimed it sure and slow" (Jackson, 2001. L.1-3).

Jackson here seems to be sarcastic of death because she thinks it has already worked on her by weakening her body and reclaiming it bit by bit. This attitude towards death is also reminiscent of Donne's attitude in his sonnet number X when he addresses death as follows:

"Death be not proud, though some have called thee/Thou are slave to fate, chance, kings and desperate men/And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell" (Jackson, 2001. L.1-3). Jackson, as well as Donne, derides death and consider it complicit with sickness in the premature decay of her body. Therefore, it is not strange, when we find Jackson prompting death to put an end to her physical sickness:

Do quickly all thou hast to do
Not I nor mine will hindrance make
I shall be free when thou are through
I grudge thee naught that thou must take. (Jackson, 2001. L.17-20).

What is interesting in this stanza is the use of paradox in "I shall be free." This paradox has to do with the speaker's desire to be free himself/herself from sickness and its painful consequences. However, this paradox seems to fit with the main conceit of the poem:

"This shriveled lump of suffering clay/ To which I now I am chained and bound" (Jackson, 2001. L.7-8).

This conceit which is based on the analogy between the body and prison is a recurrent feature in metaphysical poetry. Jackson, in the fashion of metaphysical poets, elaborates this conceit throughout the poem by showing how the soul is captive in the body, and becomes free only when it leaves the prison of "the suffering clay." It should be noted, however, that Jackson's attitude toward death is one of ambivalence; this ambivalence has nothing to do with her solid conviction in the duality of life, but rather in her relentless ambition to complete the unfinished tasks in life. Being a talented writer, Jackson believes in the holy mission of her writings to liberate

women. Therefore, it is not surprising when we find her grudging death her hand and heart: "I grudge thee this right hand of mine/I grudge thee this quick beautiful-heart" (Jackson, 2001. L. 25-26). These two parts have made her acquire a leading and a holy role which is embodied in the parable of crucifixion:

I see now why in olden days
Men in Barbaric love or hate
Nailed enemies' hands and wild crossways
Shrined leaders' hearts in costly state. (Jackson, 2001. L.29-32).

Jackson believes that the role of the messiah she might have assumed by the vigor of her creative writings has not yet been completed; therefore, the final stanza comes out as a hymn for her soul and prayer that Heaven supplement women's efforts on earth. Accordingly Jackson, as is the case with metaphysical poets, has deep conviction in the dual life, the earthy one as opposed to life in heaven. A final example of metaphysical poetry written by a nineteenth century American women is "Irrevocable" by Mary Ritter (1998) who also recalls Donne's "The Ecstasy," where divine love is contingent on physical love:

But Oh, alas, so long, so far Our bodies why do we for bear?
They're ours, they're the sphere
We owe them thanks because they thus
Did us to us at first convey
Yielded their forces, sense to us
Nor are dross to us, but allay. (Donne, 2001. L.49-56)

In Ritter's poem, the speaker admits ignorance of the value of the physical love; she thinks that physical love is an end itself: "I thought summer of idyllic pleasure / For us, was summit (L.7-8)" Later, however, she discovers that the value of this love goes beyond her initial assumption:

 "These days where sin is not, nor selfish feeling/ But two souls made one."(L. 13-14).

The realization of the value of physical love is encapsulated in the paradox: "We die that we may love."(L.34) This is a clear parable of the idea of incarnation where man can only touch the grace of God through sacrificing the body. In this sense, this physical love is nothing more than an act of redemption, necessary to transcend the body into the divine realm. Accordingly, this physical love has not been an end but rather a mean to an end; it consumes their bodies, yet it helps them to outlive death: "Living or dead in essence we shall prove / The indivisibility of love" (L35-36). Again the poem has a subtle conceit which is tinged in biblical context: "What if the oil consumes itself in burning / we die that we may live" (L.34). This type of paradox is

inherent in the parable of incarnation mentioned earlier, therefore, the moment of revelation in which the vision of the promised land looms, is only a sign of heavenly reward for those who embrace the philosophy of the body as a means to an end:

"Behold around them arid desert sand / Beyond their reach the blessed Promised Land" (L.30.31).

Therefore, in the light of this discussion, one can affirm that Ritter's poem is another typical example of, metaphysical poetry written by a nineteenth century American women poet; the poem is metaphysical in both style and content.

CONCLUSION

One can strongly confirm that some of the nineteenth century American women poets have been unfairly stigmatized as sentimentalists and any attempt to associate sentimentalism with creativity might not do justice to many female poets in nineteenth century America. As it has been shown earlier, some of these poets manifest a talent and skill that if not equal to male poets, they may surpass them; the poetry of these women is highly artistic in the sense that it blends feelings with wit in the same fashion the highly intellectual English poets did. Some of these poets were, as described by Watts (2014), religious as is the case with the English metaphysical poets; yet those poets had the chance to express their uncertainty and pessimism in an age which was totally masculine. In this regard, Watt asserts that "Most American women poets have been religious, although they have experience a great gulf between God and woman, heaven and earth" (p. 5). Those poets succeeded in expressing their dilemma, whether religious or social, through poetry that is not sentimental as described by male critics, but rather poetry which is artistically interwoven in a metaphysical fashion. Therefore, it is neither an ornament nor a hasty judgment to call these women, nineteenth century American Metaphysical women poets.

Conflict of interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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Full Length Research Paper

The effectiveness of using multi devices technique on testing grammar of university students

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The present study was an attempt to determine the effectiveness of using multi- devices technique to develop students' grammatical ability. Participants were 40 Preparatory Year Treatment students from Qassim Private Colleges in Saudi Arabia. The experimental group (N 20) used multi devices technique for testing grammar; online testing, mobile testing, machine testing (auto test) and pen and paper testing technique whereas the control group (N20) was tested through two exams; midterm and final exams in a paper and a pen format. The pre-post-test comprised two parts, the first part includes multiple-choice questions, the second part includes fill in gaps questions. Results of the t. test analysis revealed that using multi devices technique yielded significant effects on students' grammar, i.e. the experimental group outperformed the control group. .

Key words: Multi- devices, Testing grammar, mobile testing, online testing.

INTRODUCTION

Qassim Private Colleges' students come to their classes equipped with electronic devices, including smart-phones, tablets and laptops. In addition, they use these devices frequently during class for non-course-purpose like chatting, emails, WhatsApp and calling. There are also some uses during course-related like dictionary for translation, grammar checker and spelling checker. It is difficult to deprive these students from using such available technology in their classes. Therefore, we should benefit from such devices in our teaching process. Testing as a sine qua non of teaching process shows teachers how successful, their teaching has been. It provides wash back for them to adjust and change course content and teaching styles where necessary according to the test result. In addition, it provides us with a full picture about the effectiveness of the course book, materials, and methods. At the same time, it represents the starting point of identifying areas for remedial work. Whereas testing has this effective role in language-teaching process, course designers should provide learners with different techniques for language testing. It will be difficult to determine course or treatment validity on just on form exam. Developing a test, however, is often done by individual teachers, which is laborious work, with the quality of the questions depending on the individuals' expertise (Hoshino, 2009).

The purpose of language tests

Brown (1996) identifies four purposes for language test. They can be summarized in the following points:

1. Proficiency Test:
It aims to determine the level of individual in relation to other testees.
2. Placement Test:
It aims to determine closely the level of individual.
3. Achievement Test:
It aims to determine the achievement of individual in the program.
4. Diagnostic Test:
It aims to determine the strength and weakness of individual in the program

Testing grammar

According to Larsen-Freeman (1997), grammar comprises three dimensions: form, meaning and use and hence the goal of grammar testing is to test learners to use grammar accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately. So, it means when we test our students we test learners' grammatical knowledge from all three aspects (morphosyntax, semantics and pragmatics). Therefore, one or two exams during term are not enough to assess students' grammatical ability.

The need for multi-devices testing technique

The need for multi-device testing technique could be summarized in the following points:

Device availability

Multiple devices have multiplied learners' expectations. The mobile masses demand both flexibility and convenience and expect content to be available at the point-of-need, and time-of-interest.

Bringing your own device (BYOD)

Schools and universities have been encouraging students to bring their own devices to the campus to better exploit the potential learning, interaction and even collaboration experiences that these devices can afford. Companies too support this trend and promote it to save both time and money. The practice of bringing your own device, popularly known as BYOD, allows individuals to take eLearning courses on their phone, for example, while on their way to the office or a class, continue the course at their desk and then complete it on their tablet while returning home.

Computing changing

Computing trends have changed; from huge mainframes to small personal desktop computers and mobile devices, from personal networking to the Internet and cloud computing. Learning solutions today need to keep up with the latest technologies and be served up on the latest devices.

An increasing number of millennial entering the workforce

There is a clear increase in the number of college students all over the world entering the work market every year. Therefore, this workforce should be qualified with new technologies (Khairajani and Bellare, 2015).

Context of the problem

Based on the researcher's current experience as an EFL instructor for about 2 years at Qassim Private Colleges (QPC), the following observations were made. These include the fact that the evaluation process in Qassim Private Colleges in teaching English language Department relies on two criteria; a midterm exam graded with 20%, attendance and home assignment graded with 20% of the total mark and 60% for the final exam. The midterm and final exams brought for the students in pen and pencil format. This way is unfair in evaluating and judging students all over the term in specific course. Many problems happen in adopting this criterion of evaluation like the only chance for the test takers, specific task types and students' low achievement. One of these courses that follow the same criterion is grammar course for fresh students in Preparatory Year Treatment. This was the first time to the students to be exposed for specific English courses. The students do not perform well in their midterm exam or the final exam. This was clear in their results during the previous terms. The teacher plays the role of examiner or grade-giver; being satisfied with marking in students' grammatical errors in the midterm or final exams. When he supplies students with feedback on their errors, the time is over as it is one time exam. So, the students feel disappointed about their learning process.

Statement of the problem

Thus, the study problem is identified in Preparatory Year Treatment (PYP) students' poor mastery of grammar. Therefore, the current study attempted to develop these

students' grammar through adopting multi devices techniques. To reach this aim, the study tried to answer the following main question:

What is the effectiveness of adopting multi devices techniques in developing PYP students' performance in grammar?

This main question is divided into the following sub-questions:

1. What are the theoretical bases of testing grammar in the light of the multi devices technique?
2. What are the appropriate task types that will be included in testing grammar through using multi devices technique?
3. What steps should be undertaken for designing grammar task types in the light of the multi-devices technique?

Hypotheses of the study

Hypotheses comparing the experimental groups and control groups mean scores on the post test:

1. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental groups – receiving multi devices testing techniques – and the control groups – receiving regular testing techniques – on the post-test in overall performance in grammar in favor of the experimental group.
2. There were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and the post-test in overall performance in grammar in favor of the post test.
3. There were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental groups and the control groups in their final exam at the end of the term in favor of the experimental group.
Aim and objectives of the study
The study attempted to employ the multi-devices technique in testing grammar to develop PYP students at QPC in overall performance in grammar.

Definition of terms

Testing

A test, in simple terms, is a method of measuring a person's ability knowledge, or performance in a given domain. (Brown, D. 2003).

Technique

It is the way of doing some tasks or performing

something

Device

It is an object or a piece of equipment that has been designed to do a particular job.

Multi- devices

Using more than one device

Grammar

The science teaches the correct forms of English language.

RELATED STUDIES

Through reviewing literature, the research dealt with two parts of literatures; the first is types of testing grammar and the other is using more than one technique and device in teaching.

Formats of testing grammar

There are many types of testing grammar like

1. Multiple choice format

There is a sentence called a head and a number of choices. This number of choices may vary, but most of Multiple choice items have four choices because this number is considered to be the best exchange between lower the guessing level and the work of creating distractors.

2. Cloze test format

It requires from students to fill in the gap with one word. In the cloze procedure words are deleted from a text after allowing a few sentences of introduction. The deletion rate is mechanically set, usually between every fifth and eleventh word. Candidates have to fill each gap by supplying the word they think has been deleted.

3. Error –recognition items

It requires from students to correct one or more mistakes found in the given sentence.

4. True or false items

It requires from students to tick if this sentences is grammatically right or wrong.

Related studies to Testing grammar

Chunyi et al. (2014) stated that with the advanced development of mobile technology and portable devices, learners can do their learning activities anytime and everywhere when Internet access is available. Integrating pedagogical and technical strengths of mobile technology into learning settings proves imperative in previous research. Thus, this study aims to investigate the effects of implementing a ubiquitous multimedia message-transmitting platform (C&U-Message) on college students' English learning. A total of 26 college students participated in a 6-week experiment used client-side application system C&U-Message (C&U-Msg) system for English learning through Android-based mobile phones. Data collected from the pre- and post-tests and a learning satisfaction survey questionnaire were analyzed. The findings of this study reveal that C&U message application on mobile English learning, learning content for mobile English learning, practical use of C&U message, user satisfaction with learning achievements, use of digital learning materials, and user's attitude toward learning language through mobile devices. Finally, the C&U-Msg system can be effectively utilized for English learning.

Mueller and The pen is mightier than the keyboard: Advantages of longhand over laptop note taking (2014) compare between taking notes on laptops and in longhand. He noticed that taking notes on the laptops are rather than in longhand is increasingly common. Many researchers have suggested that laptop note taking is less effective than longhand note taking for learning. This research suggests that even when laptops are used solely to take notes, they may still be impairing learning because their use results in shallower processing. The findings proved that taking notes on laptops performed worse on conceptual questions than students who took notes longhand. Whereas taking more notes can be beneficial, laptop note takers' tendency to transcribe lectures verbatim rather than processing information and reframing it in their own words is detrimental to learning.

Alemi (2012) did a comparison between adopting cloze and multiple-choice test in testing grammar. To investigate the research, the candidates were screened through a NELSON test. This test enabled the researchers to have homogeneous subjects; therefore, among 84 subjects. The two groups were provided with 10 consecutive weeks, each session 100 minutes long. Every week one experimental group was treated by a 25-item cloze test of grammar while the other experimental group was provided with a 25-item multiple choice one. The analysis of data indicated that there was no significant difference between the average performances of the two groups. In another words, the findings proved that the cloze procedure did not improve the subjects' knowledge of grammar any more than the multiple-choice

grammar test did.

Khoii and Shamsi (2012) investigated the effects of different test formats on the measurement of grammatical knowledge by comparing the construct validities of two different formats of error-identification grammar tests (one with four options for each item and one with a no error option as the fifth option) and a multiple choice grammar test. After administering all the three tests to 131 Iranian EFL learners, it was found that while the TOEFL error-identification test enjoyed the highest level of construct validity, the no-error option in the SAT error-identification test reduced its construct validity to a considerable degree, indicating that including no error options in admissions test does not allow an accurate evaluation of examinees' grammatical knowledge. Moreover, it lent support to the idea that the test method facet could be a strong source of bias in language testing affecting the fairness of the decisions in relation to admitting students to specific academic programs.

Mehrgan (2012), in his study, investigated the effects of adopting CALL on improving EFL learners' grammatical ability. To this aim, a multiple-choice test of grammar, of which the reliability was 0.79, was administered to 83 available TEFL students out of whom 60 students were selected as homogeneous and randomly divided into two groups of 30: a control group and an experimental group. The experimental group was taught English grammar through CALL and the control group received a non-CALL instruction on grammatical structures. The results of the study through a posttest revealed the fact that the experimental group outperformed the control group. Therefore, CALL appeared to be useful in developing English grammar of the TEFL students.

A study by Ophir et al. (2009) has examined the relationship between undergraduates' reported levels of "media multi-tasking"—or performing multiple, simultaneous activities in different media, including print, television, computer-based video, music, text messaging, instant messaging, web-surfing, email—and their performance on cognitive tasks measuring attention. The findings revealed that undergraduates in the study who were identified as "heavy media multi-taskers" were significantly more susceptible to distractions than were those who were identified as "light media multi-taskers."

Hoshino (2009) proposed a method for automatically generating Multiple-Choice (MC) Fill-In-the-Blank (FIB) questions for English grammar and vocabulary. He developed three AQG methods and conducted evaluations in terms of the proposed viewpoints. First, a semi-automatic question generator that allows the test author to compose questions just with some clicks on the screen. Second, a CAT (Computer Adaptive Testing) system that administers automatically generated questions. Third, he evaluated randomly-generated questions with a group of students. AQG method for grammar questions is as efficient as workbook questions. Evaluation on

Table 1. Questionnaire results.

Question No.	The first choice	The second choice	The third choice
1.	30%	30%	40%
2.	3	2	1
3.	95% no	5% yes	....
4.	25%	15%	60%
5.	45%	30%	25%
6.	25%	5%	70%

validity shows some evidence that the pattern-generated questions measure intended grammar targets.

METHODS

Design

The quasi-experimental design was used in this study, where a sample of two classes of the Preparatory Year Treatment (PYP) students was assigned to the experimental and control group. A pre/post test was conducted to measure the effectiveness of the treatment.

Participants

The subjects of this study were composed of (40) students, in Qassim Private College. The students were in the PYP in Qassim Private Colleges. These students belong to two different majors; English language Major and Computer Science Major. They study together four English courses; reading 001, writing 001, listening 001 and grammar 001. The code 001 refers to the first term in the preparatory year treatment. Their ages ranged between 18to 24 years. The students were then divided into two groups – the control group and the experimental group. Both groups were administered to the Pre-test which showed uniformity in the results with very little variation that shows the two groups are similar in their grammatical ability. Both the groups were instructed by two of the teachers for a full semester in grammar course that was designed for them.

Instruments

The researcher used two tools for collecting the data of the study:

The students' questionnaire

This questionnaire was adopted over 20 students, the experimental group, to know their attitudes towards using multi device technique in testing grammar. The questionnaire simply consisted of six questions (see appendix 1).

During designing the questionnaire, the researcher used a simple language to be understood for the students. The questionnaire results were analyzed in Table 1.

Analyzing the questionnaire results

It is clear that:

1. Nearly, most of the students preferred the online testing. That

was clear in their results in online test. They saw it as a new experience through which they could relax and hid their fear of exams. Therefore, they represented forty percent of the sample.
2. When the students were asked to rearrange their preference test techniques, they chose online testing as the first preference followed by the mobile learning and a paper and a pen test.
3. Just only five percent of the students experienced online testing before. Therefore, they saw it as an attractive and enjoyable experience.
4. Online learning gave the students chance to feel they were good at grammar. But, the students confessed for the teacher that they asked for help from their friends or another teacher to answer some questions.
5. Mobile tests came as a second preference for the students. They saw as a new technique for them. They preferred it to traditional testing.

Finally, this questionnaire showed that there were more interest with online testing and mobile test for these students in return for the traditional testing.

b. The pre/post test

A pre/posttest was designed in the light of English for fresh students at PYP. This test was basically based on the content of the course that prescribed for the students to study during the first semester of the academic year 2014-2015. Then, it was administered to the students of both the experimental and control groups to make sure that they were at the same level of performance before starting the experiment; and hence the progress achieved by the experimental group students could be attributed to using multi device technique that they received through the whole semester. The pre-test was also used as a post-test to investigate the effectiveness of adopting multi device technique to develop grammar.

Description of the test

The translation pre-posttest was constructed in the light of the following sources:

1. Reviewing previous studies concerned with testing grammar.
2. The following points were taken into account when writing the test items:
- The words and sentences used in the test items were simple, clear, and familiar to the students.

The Content of the test

It consisted of three parts;

1. Multiple Choice Questions.
The students are asked to answer 20 MCQ. These questions were related to the first eight units of grammar book. It included verb be, present simple tense, present progressive tense, past simple tense, and past progressive tense. Exam questions were divided equally between these topics. Each topic represented by four questions in this part.
2. Do as shown in brackets.
Students are asked to do specific change that is required and shown to them. It included twenty sentences.
a. He does his homework at ten. (use: yesterday)
The students were asked to change the sentences into past simple.
3. Fill in the space
The students were asked to fill in the space with the correct form of the verb. This part included 20 questions. The total mark of this test was (60) marks.

Validity of the test

To measure the test content validity, the first version of the test was given to 2 EFL assistant professors to evaluate appropriateness of each item in measuring students' mastering these grammatical categories. Moreover, they were requested to evaluate the test as a whole in terms of: (a) correctness, (b) number of items, and (c) suitability of the test items to fresh students at PYP level at Qassim Private Colleges. The test proved to be mostly valid as the jury approved the questions and considered them suitable for their level as PYP students.

Piloting the test

Piloting the test aimed at (a) determining reliability of the test; (b) determining the suitable time to be allotted for the test; and (c) obtaining item analysis results, including item difficulty and item discrimination. Therefore, 10 students were selected for the pilot study. These students were randomly selected. Students of the pilot study belonged neither to the experimental group nor to the control group. They were excluded from the whole treatment.

Test reliability

The test was administered to a randomly selected group of 10 students. Then, the test was administered one more time after two weeks to the same 10 students. The Pearson correlation coefficient between the test/re-test results was calculated. The reliability coefficient was 0.75, which is relatively high. Therefore, the test could be considered a reliable one for the purpose of the current study.

Test time

It was estimated that one classroom period (approximately 40 min) would provide sample time for the students to read the test questions and write their answers. This time was calculated in the following way:

The time taken by the fastest student + the time taken by the slowest student.

The treatment

Duration

Adopting multi using techniques continued for one hundred days during the first term.

1. Aims of the treatment
These aims can be summarized in the following points:
a. Providing students with more opportunities to have eight exams each term.
2. Decrease students' fear from exam or exam phobia in testing grammar.
3. Content of the treatment
This treatment included nine exams through using different techniques. They were divided as follows; three online exams thorough using goggle forms, three exams through using WhatsApp application on the students' mobiles and three pen and paper exams.

Validity of the treatment

To measure the test content validity, the first version of the tests was given to 2 EFL assistant professors to evaluate appropriateness of the treatment in the light of their objectives. Nearly, they approved all of them.

RESULTS

Results of this study will be reported in terms of the study hypothesis.

Hypothesis one

1- It stated: There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental groups – receiving multi devices testing techniques – and the control groups – receiving regular testing techniques – on the post-test in overall performance in grammar in favor of the experimental group.
To test this hypothesis, t-test for independent samples was conducted to compare the means between the experimental and control groups.

2- Then the t. test was computed between the two groups. Observed t. value, (2.36) with the value of the tabulated t at the level (0.05) was .003. It showed that t value obtained from the posttest was more than t table value. This means that there were a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental groups – receiving multi devices testing techniques – and the control groups – receiving regular testing techniques – on the post-test in overall performance in grammar in favor of the experimental group (Table 2).
Hence, the first hypothesis stated that there would be significant differences in posttest mean scores of both the

Table 2. Post test results between control and experimental groups in overall performance in grammar

Group	N	M	S.D.	Std. Error Mean	t value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Experimental	20	29.50	10.58	2.36	.2213	.003
Control	20	40.45	10.91	.442		

Table 3. Test results comparing the experimental group students' performance on the pre-test versus the post-test in in overall performance in grammar

Group	N	M	S.D.	Std. Error Mean	t value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Experimental	20	18.90	10.52	2.35	-19.195	.00
Control	20	40.45	10.91	2.44		

Table 4. t- test results comparing the experimental group and control group students' performance at the final exam in overall grammar.

Group	N	M	S.D.	Std. Error Mean	t value	Sig. (2-tailed)
pre-test	20	32.60	9.051	2.02	3.989	.00
post-test	20	44.70	10.10	2.25		

control and the experimental group in overall performance in grammar in favor of those of the experimental group, was verified.

Hypothesis Two

There were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and the post-test in overall performance in grammar in favor of the post test.

   To test the above hypothesis, the paired samples t-test was used, and the results are shown in Table 3.

   Then the t. test was computed between the pretest and the posttest. Observed t. value, (-19.195) with the value of the tabulated t at the level (0.05) was .000. It showed that t value obtained from the posttest was more than t table value.   Hence, the second hypothesis stated that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental groups on the pre-test and the post-test in overall performance in grammar in favor of the post test was verified.

Hypothesis three

This hypothesis was not directly included in the treatment. It was a comparison between students' marks in grammar course at the final exam. This exam was held by one of the assistant professor at QPC. Both of control

group and experimental group marks were analyzed by using t-test for independent groups.

   Then the t. test was computed between the two groups at the final exam. Observed t. value, (3.989) with the value of the tabulated t at the level (0.05) was .000. It showed that t value obtained was more than t table value. Hence, the third hypothesis stated that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental groups and the control groups in their final exam at the end of the term in favor of the experimental group was verified (Table 4).

   To sum up, the three hypotheses of the study were supported by the results. The statistical analyses of data indicate that the experimental group students who used multi-device techniques performed much better on the post-test in overall grammar than the students who received regular tests. Moreover, the experimental group students achieved significant progress in their final exam results after the treatment as compared to performance before the treatment. Hence, these positive findings proved the effectiveness of adopting multi testing techniques in developing university students' grammar.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, grammar is an essential component of language. Linguists have been studying it for centuries, and it remains an object of learning for countless learners all over the world; it is an integral part of the language we

use in everyday communication. Language without grammar would be chaotic and would certainly leave us seriously handicapped. So, when we leave our students face the same problems of one used technique in grammar exams and neglect the other techniques to decrease their fear from exam, we are mistaken. The ability to understand a text is based not only on the students' abilities to know the meaning of words, but also depending on understand the linguistic ability.

The result of this study was in line with Chunyi (2014), in his findings when he stated that using C&U message application on mobile has an effect on English language learning. Moreover, the current study did not deal only with mobile applications to develop grammar but it dealt with other devices like online testing through using Google forms an also pen and paper tests.

In addition to Chunyi, this study was in line with Alemi (2012) when used two forms to test grammar; cloze test and multiple choices tests. His findings revealed that there is no significant effect between students' performance in each exam format. Moreover, the current study dealt with three formats for testing grammar. It also used three different devices.

Besides the previous studies, this study shares the importance of using more than one test formats with Khoii (2012. It supported the idea that the test method facet could be a strong source of bias in language testing. But this study added also that using one device for testing could affect our testing process and deprive the students from his chance to get better mark or better practice. .

The result of this studies showed that when the students have more than one chance to be tested and have different test formats with different devices, they got better learning. This study found that most of the respondents in the experimental group showed improve-ment in their grammar performance. The experimental group shows a significant difference in its posttest and the final exam results.

There is another issue that is related to the questionnaire result. It revealed that students' fear of exam became less. They were not worried anymore. If they did not answer well in one test, they could do better again in the next test.

Recommendations

In light of the finding of the present study, the following recommendations seem pertinent:

1. Encouraging teachers to adopt to use multi device technique in developing other skills like writing and speaking.
2. Designing a part of our courses through using Multi-device technique.

3. Giving our students more than one test chance to be fair in our judgment upon them. .

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