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FROM THE EDITOR

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FI Connections

The FI Connections journal is a forum for pedagogical comment and discussion. It's also a showcase for creativity and a stage for entertainment. We welcome your full-feature contributions to the journal, or simply a few occasional comments, suggestions or reviews. Some pieces are written by teachers for teachers, and some by teachers for students; others are by students about whatever takes their fancy so they can express themselves freely. This way we can all make better connections by understanding each other.

In this edition

We have informative articles by Teachers about language and other topics, and some really insightful poetry, stories and advice from Students, as well as their very impressive artwork.

The Cover Photo

The photo of Wahiba Sands represents the natural beauty of the desert land of Oman that sprouted a modern civilization despite natural extremes of climate. A sample of the fruits of that civilization can be found in our students' contributions in these pages.



A Previous Cover-Photo Puzzle

Edition 4 of FI Connections posed a puzzle which no one has yet solved, so it's repeated here:



How come the shadows of the photographer and the trees are pointing in opposite directions?

The first person to explain this will be awarded a day off! (Conditions apply!)

Haresfinch Park, St Helens, UK

MORE ABOUT L1 INTERFERENCE

We continue our series on the difficulties Arabic speakers face in learning English in a non-immersive environment.

Adapted from esl.fis.edu/grammar/langdiff/arabic.htm

In general

- Arabic is a Semitic language and its grammar is very different from that of English. Thus, Arabic speakers find it more difficult to learn than do their counterparts who speak Indo-European languages. This means that L1 interferes with both written and spoken English.
- Arabic has root words of three consonants. All words are formed by adding fixed vowel patterns and affixes to the roots. *K-t-b* is found in *kitaab* (book) and *maktab* (desk or office). There are few such patterns in English to help Arab learners distinguish nouns from verbs or adjectives, etc.
- Texts are read from right to left and written in a cursive, single-case script. Punctuation rules are not as rigid as in English.

Phonology

- Arabic has 28 consonant phonemes and 8 vowels/diphthongs. English has 24 consonant phonemes and around 22 vowels/diphthongs. Short vowel sounds are not so important in Arabic and are therefore often omitted by Arabic learners in writing English.
- The large difference in the number of vowel sounds means that beginning learners fail to distinguish between some words they hear, such as *ship/sheep* or *bad/bed*.
- They may find some problems pronouncing the *th* sounds in words such as *this* and *thin*; in swapping /b/ and /p/ at the beginning of words; and distinguishing between /f/ and /v/.
- Consonant clusters, such as those in *split*, *threw* and *lengths*, also tend to be spoken with an extra vowel: *si-pi-lit*, *i-threw* or *length-es*.
- Arabic word stress is regular, so Arab learners have difficulties with English stress patterns. Even in semantic groups, English stress is inconsistent. For example, *yesterday* is stressed on the first syllable and *tomorrow* on the second.
- Elision (swallowing) of sounds in English is often resisted by Arab speakers. (*Do you know her?* in conversational English becomes *Joo know her?*) Thus, Arab learners tend to produce a staccato quality in spoken English.

Grammar – Verb/Tense

- Arabic has no verb *to be* in the present tense, and no auxiliary *do*.
- Arabic has a single present tense, whereas English has the simple and continuous forms. This results in errors such as *She good teacher*, *When you come to Oman?*
- Arabic has no present-perfect tense, hence: *I finished my work*; *can you check it?*
- Arabic has no modal verbs. Thus, we may find *Maybe I am late* for *I might be late*.
- Another common mistake is using an auxiliary unnecessarily, as in *Do I must do that?*

Grammar – Other

- Arabic has no indefinite article, which is therefore often omitted in English.
- A definite article exists, but is not used in quite the same way as in English. For instance, the possessive construction, *the man's camel*, is rendered in Arabic as *camel the man*.
- Arabic adjectives follow the noun they qualify, resulting in word-order mistakes in English.
- Arabic requires the pronoun in relative clauses, resulting in mistakes such as *Where is the book which I gave it to you yesterday?*

Vocabulary

- There are very few similarities between English and Arabic words. This increases learners' difficulties in comprehending listenings and readings. It also requires more effort for them to expand their vocabulary.

DISAPPEARING DISTINCTIONS

A continuing look at changes in the language—with some lamentation

We must accept that language is dynamic and not to be bound by stifling rules, but certain ‘rules’ might be better regarded less pejoratively as ‘pointers’—pointers to useful nuances of expression that make the language so versatile. Of course, communicative necessity will always overcome lost distinctions by providing workarounds, but there’s a transitional period in which each loss is torn painfully from the corpus.

I shall or I will?

These two have been subjected to various and complicated rules over the years, but now we are basically left with using *shall* for offers or suggestions in the first person: *Shall I open the window?* A clue to its originally intended meaning is in its past-tense form, *should*, which we teach to indicate obligation. *Shall* is sometimes thought to “sound better” than *will* because of the perceived politeness in declaring an action as a result of submissive obligation rather than of imposing personal intent: *I shall deliver the report before 10am, as requested.* Although I understand it is often misused in the legal world, even there the style rules suppose *shall* to mean *has a duty to....*: *The landlord shall conduct repairs as necessary.* However, there are even calls in that sphere to abandon it completely in favour of *must*, and to simply use *will* to indicate the future. *Will* will have its way, a sentiment to which our students constantly attest.

Which is That and Which is Which?

Although the usage of **which** and **that** tends to be presented as interchangeable in text books these days, it’s nevertheless accompanied by a vestige of distinction in its written application: a **which** clause is preceded by a comma, and followed by a comma or full stop, while a **that** clause is *not* preceded by a comma. This actually points to the original distinction: **that** introduces defining information tied significantly to the content of the main clause; **which** introduces non-defining information, parenthesized as extra by its punctuation.

*The car **that** is in the garage needs fixing.* (Defining clause)

(We have more than one car. Only the one in the garage needs fixing.)

*The car, **which** is in the garage, needs fixing.* (Non-defining clause)

(We have only one car. It's in the garage and needs fixing.)

Might I convince you to persuade?

Persuade is hardly used anymore, which means we’ve lost an important nuance of distinction. Persuade used to mean to make someone act on an idea despite their possible, continued misgivings about it; convince was to make someone not only act on an idea, but also believe in it. Usage used to be: *persuade someone to act*; *convince someone that an act is right*. Today, persuade has lost both itself and its infinitive to convince, and we no longer know if acts are performed totally willingly or not. As a final thought, consider that you could actually persuade someone against their better judgement, but you could hardly convince them in that case.

(https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/against_one%27s_better_judgement)

The alternating use of alternate and alternative

In British English, *alternate*, as an adjective /al-TER-nate/, does not mean the same as *alternative*: *She came to class on alternate days* (once every two days); *The alternative route to town is longer but quicker* (other, different). Alternating current is electricity that goes first one way along a path, then the other way, and so on. American English seems to have abandoned *alternative* and burdened *alternate* with the roles of adjective, verb and noun.

LANGUAGE AFFECTS THINKING

“For a long time, the idea that language might shape thought was considered at best untestable and more often simply wrong. Research in my labs at Stanford University and at MIT has helped reopen this question. We have collected data around the world: from China, Greece, Chile, Indonesia, Russia, and Aboriginal Australia. What we have learned is that people who speak different languages do indeed think differently and that even flukes of grammar can profoundly affect how we see the world. Language is a uniquely human gift, central to our experience of being human. Appreciating its role in constructing our mental lives brings us one step closer to understanding the very nature of humanity.”

Lera Boroditsky (https://www.edge.org/conversation/lera_boroditsky-how-does-our-language-shape-the-way-we-think)

English does not apply genders to its nouns, but some other languages do, thereby demanding knowledge of the correct gender forms of accompanying parts of speech, such as articles and adjectives. Where the application of gender may seem quite arbitrary, it's very likely to have developed according more to the morphology or phonology of nouns, than with a strict sense of their meanings or attributes. In German, the sun is feminine, and the moon is masculine; in Spanish the reverse is the case. In German a *bridge* is feminine, but in Spanish it's masculine, and this seems to affect speakers' perceptions of what the nouns signify. Lera Boroditsky's studies have shown that German speakers are more likely to describe a bridge with words like beautiful or elegant, while Spanish speakers use words like long or strong, or even dangerous. The obvious tendency is towards typical feminine and masculine descriptions according to the implications of the language's grammar. Thus, language shapes thinking.

Languages differ in the way they allow speakers to describe events. Consider an accident in which a man knocks over a vase and it breaks. In English we would commonly say *He broke the vase*. However, regarding the same accident, Spanish speakers would be more likely to say *the vase broke* or *the vase broke itself*. If it's an accident they wouldn't necessarily say someone did it.

Now consider a strange English construction, *I broke my arm*, as if it were the result of my intentional act without external action. Other languages would not allow that construction for an accident. Thus, attention is paid to aspects of an event according to what the language requires. In the cases of both the vase and the arm, English speakers remember who did it because that structure is required, even if it was an accident. Spanish speakers are more likely to remember it was an accident and ignore the intention. This has a significant bearing on eye-witness testimony when two people with different languages are asked to recount an event. Language shapes thinking.

As Ms Broditsky points out, *“Language is [...] central to our experience of being human. Appreciating its role in constructing our mental lives brings us one step closer to understanding the very nature of humanity.”* Thus, it must surely also bring us closer to determining what and how we teach in order to prepare Arabic speakers for advanced academic courses in English.

Please see the link above for Lera Boroditsky's further findings, or check out her TED talk on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=RKK7wGAYP6k>

ELECTRONIC ENGLISH

by Latifa Hichri Saidani

Nowadays, IMing, text messaging, and other email and chat room communications have become widespread means of interaction, and the brevity and urgency it demands have given rise to a new type of language. Its users resort to many lexical abbreviations such as acronyms, foreshortenings and contractions, as well as sentence fragments and internet slang. The consequent morphology and neglect of correct grammar are considered a threat to the language. Emoticons replace words to describe emotions; netspeak words and phrases like 'lol' replace precise nuances of expression. The focus is on how to say too much in a very short time. Here are some examples of this electronic language: ORLY/ O RLY = Oh really? NO WAI = No way! Iz = is, Dat = that, Y Halo Thar = Hello, Mite = Might, Kat = Cat, Bai = Bye, Tha = the. Abbreviations are used expansively too: LOL = Laughing Out Loud, ABT2 = about to do something, BFF = Best Friends Forever, BBL = back later. Another practice is to change all the words ending in y into "eh". Funny would be *funneh*, lousy changes to *louseh*.

The incredible use of this electronic language is indeed alarming. I have got students writing their essays using this language in schoolwork and exams. It is not only a matter of isolated cases but an overpowering phenomenon affecting the abilities of the students to write properly and accurately. The hectic pace of life seems to affect those people's preference and choice of wording. On reading this abbreviated language we can feel their impatience, and urgency. Grammar and spelling are the least of their worries. The written language is being damaged. However, just as there are teachers who blame the internet and social media for ruining the written language of the young generation, there are those who defend it claiming that it is lucid, logical, efficient and understandable.

Those who are against it—mainly teachers and academics—claim that the fact that this language is lucid and efficient is the core of the problem; students have got used to lazy ways of writing. They set themselves free of any kind of constraints. Teachers also view this netspeak simply as the trend that shattered the magic and the appeal of the written language. There is no more attention given to metaphor, comparison, idioms, play on words, prose, poetry... this electronic language is too straightforward and impersonal, leaving little room for imagination. Serious writers learn the rules before they break them, because then they know how to break them in informative and entertaining ways when using such social media.

Users seem to like mistakes and even make them on purpose. They are fond of mixing letters, numbers and symbols. Their punctuation is entirely different too. Their language skills are already affected. The broad use of homophones, omissions, non-essential letters and initials has destroyed their grammaticality and their spelling. Those very users are the same youngsters who have to go to schools and produce formal written work. They are the nightmares of teachers actually. Those students can quickly and efficiently write a text message, in which they communicate so many ideas and feelings, but seem unable to write properly and compose a well-written essay. They seem lost and scatterbrained to the normal rules of grammar. Some students of mine have confessed that they are open and eager to communicate when they are in chat rooms, because it is a less restricted environment, but in class they cannot write properly and find it difficult to express themselves. They are quite aware that they should not be using netspeak in class, but they seem helpless.

A teacher's job is already difficult and challenging and it becomes more perplexing with students losing their sense of correctness and writing skills. In fact, it now seems as if the teachers should learn the basics of this new language. Teachers' criticism of it is endless. Tough marking and zeros might be the waking blow for some students to push them to pay more attention when writing in class, and keep them level-headed, at least to differentiate between contexts and formality.

In this day and age then, it has become clear that communication can be achieved in diverse ways. Language as the traditional means by which one observes and perceives the world and transmits one's beliefs, values, truth and thought is undergoing a dramatic change. The new language may be creative, quick and efficient to use in the virtual world, but its drawbacks outnumber its benefits. It is causing confusion and a great damage to the written language as we know it. It hinders its beauty as well as its accuracy. But if we accept that languages are changing all the time, and that thanks to these added novelties and modifications that languages can resist extinction, one may understand that this new phenomenon is simply a natural trend leading to the progress of our language in the future. One may come to accept this trend as simply the way our language evolves through time. Maybe one day, in an utterly digital world, this electronic language will be the perfect medium to communicate whatever needs to be communicated. And just as we study old and ancient writings like Sumerian, Egyptian and Sanskrit today, one day our traditional language will be the subject of similar historical study.

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WHEN IS A PHRASAL VERB NOT A PHRASAL VERB?

Increase your awareness for teaching verbs with prepositions – Part 2

Definitions

- A phrasal verb may contain an adverb or a preposition, either of which serves essentially as an adverb by its lexical fusion with the verb, but is distinguished by the term *particle*.
- Phrasal verbs are *transitive*, *intransitive*, *separable* and *inseparable*.
- A prepositional verb contains a preposition which usually modifies the meaning of the verb element to some degree, and also requires a prepositional object.
- Prepositional verbs are *transitive* and *inseparable*.

However, both prepositional verbs and phrasal verbs are often referred to under the one umbrella of *phrasal verbs*, particularly in second-language student grammars.

Tests for Phrasal Verbs

1. Since phrasal and prepositional verbs look very similar, a phonological test (Leech & Svartvik p264) may be applied to distinguish transitive verbs in the passive:
 - *Her mother was **picked up** in the car.* (phrasal verb with stress on the particle)
 - *Their friends were **called on** during the holiday.* (prepositional verb with stress on the verb element)

Since prepositional verbs are naturally transitive, all *intransitive* multi-word verbs are phrasal verbs.

2. The following are syntactic tests (Murcia & Freeman p430, Leech & Svartvik p235, Quirk & Greenbaum pp347-351) that may be used to distinguish prepositions from particles in multi-word verbs:

Only prepositions, not particles, allow:

- Adverb insertion: *We **turned quickly off** the road.* **We turned quickly off the light.*
 Phrase fronting: ***Up** the hill John **ran**.* **Up the hill John ran.*
 Wh-fronting: ***About** what does he **write**?* **Up what does he write?*

Only particles (not prepositions) in separable phrasal verbs allow:

- Passivization: *The light was **turned off**.* **The road was turned off.*
 Verb substitution: *They **called up** the men = They **conscripted** the men.*
 Object-movement: *We **turned the light off**.* **We turned the road off.*

It is acknowledged by Murcia & Freeman p431 (who cite O'Dowd and Hopper & Thomson in support), that "*it is perhaps more helpful to view phrasal verbs and verbs taking prepositions as opposite ends of a continuum rather than as a categorical dichotomy.*" In other words, it is considered that only context, and thereby the nuance placed upon the verb, can indicate the grammatical function of the non-verb element in multi-word verbs.

Of course, many suggested tests for determining the difference between prepositional and phrasal verbs may only be applied by native speakers and advanced L2 learners. However, as we shall see later, it might be helpful if students do the following:

1. Learn some common usage of particles, such as *up* to imply increase or emphasis

2. Learn which words are mostly used as particles and which as prepositions in order to determine separability
3. Learn how to make the choice in discourse of a separated or non-separated phrasal verb.

Otherwise, phrasal verbs may appear as a vast field of confusion to students. Fortunately, there has been a move away from what Mercer and Freeman call the “monolithic” treatment of phrasal verbs towards teaching the general meanings of the particles in order to give some idea of how the verb element might be altered. In *Phrasal Verbs Workout* (p5), Dominic Currin writes: “*While phrasal verbs do not obey hard and fast rules, their meanings often conform to familiar patterns, depending on the adverbial particle they are constructed with.*” Some words tend more towards being construed as particles, and some towards prepositions. This is demonstrated in the following diagram from Murcia & Freeman (p431):

<u>USED MORE AS PREPOSITIONS</u>		<u>USED MORE AS PARTICLES</u>	
<i>with, of, for, from</i>	<i>to, in, on, about, by</i>	<i>through, around, over, across, off, along</i>	<i>up, out, down, away, back</i>

(To be continued)

LAB FOR SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

by Lynette Brummer

There is such excitement in Classroom 17B! The learning lab for the Special Needs students is finally active. The University of Nizwa is now ready to better support the students with visual and/or hearing disabilities to excel in the Foundation Phase. The ten cubicles have been equipped with PCs and can be put to use.

One of the software programs is a text reader. It allows the students with serious visual problems, such as blindness, strabismus or retinitis pigmentosa to listen to words as they appear on the screen. It means that even though they don't have the ability to read, they can now hear the text read by a virtual voice. They can also type answers or sentences, and the voice will read what they are typing. Some students learn to type very fast and quite accurately.

People who are deaf and/or cannot speak use sign language to communicate. They do not use this software because they can read from the screen or a book. They use the computer to type their work. The amazing outcome is that the all the students and the teacher can now, for the first time, communicate quite well with one another using script.

At the moment we are all learning how to use the technology well. We are really excited about the progress in our classroom. It means everyone has a better chance at success with the Foundation program and realizing their dreams about pursuing a job in future.

WORD HISTORY: KANGAROO

An amusing legend has been around for many years that the word "kangaroo" derives from an aboriginal expression meaning "I don't understand you." It is said that when the English explorer Captain James Cook set eyes on the strange creature with long legs and a pouch, he asked a local Aborigine what the animal was called. The Aborigine replied "kangaroo", which was intended to mean "What?" Cook assumed this was the name of the beast, and the story goes that his compatriots have suffered the ignominy of his misunderstanding for almost 300 years. So, could this be true? Well, the Aboriginal names for that mysterious marsupial sound nothing like "kangaroo". However, lexicographer Eric Partridge insists that kangaroo is in fact of Aboriginal origin and means "jumping quadruped", and it's the name of a specific *kind* of kangaroo in an extinct Aboriginal language of North Queensland. So now you know.

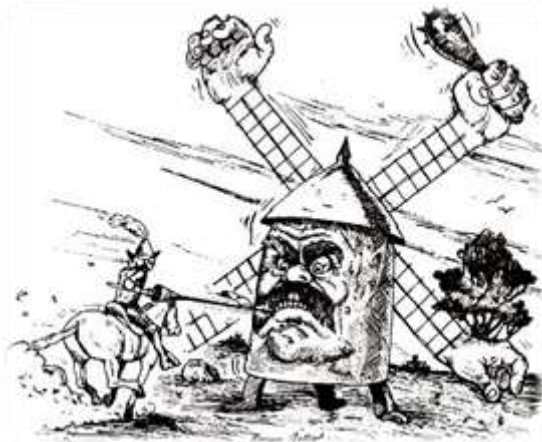
FAMOUS FRIENDS

by Malcolm Veitch

What is a friend? Is your best friend exactly like you? Or are they different in many ways? Let's take a look at some famous friends and see how they relate to each other.

Cat & Mouse

First, consider a couple of characters you probably don't think are friends at all: Tom and Jerry! Tom Cat is usually trying to catch Jerry Mouse, because that's what we traditionally expect of cats and mice. We love to see the terrible things that happen as Tom chases Jerry and Jerry escapes. Of course, we all want Jerry to escape because he is the "underdog" (the weaker and cuter one). So, how come they are friends? Well, in some episodes, Tom and Jerry get together to help another character who is in trouble. For example, when a human baby crawls out of a house because the babysitter is asleep, Tom and Jerry try to protect it everywhere it goes. This reflects a typical human situation in which a common compassion makes each character forget their differences and combine their resources to help another vulnerable character. Thus, enemies become friends, or at least partners in a common cause.



Don Quixote & Sancho Panza

Another imaginary pair of friends (who don't chase each other) are Sancho Panza and Don Quixote (/kihoty/). They are Spanish travelers in a novel by Miguel de Cervantes. Sancho Panza is Don Quixote's servant, but he is wiser than his master. Don Quixote is only superior by his madness. He's crazy! He thinks he is a great nobleman (rich and important) fighting

with his enemies. However, the enemies in this case are windmills! He rides on a tired old horse that he imagines is a great healthy animal, and charges at windmills. He sees ordinary buildings as castles (forts). He is in love with a woman who does not return his passion for her. Sancho Panza, on the other hand, is fully aware of reality, and helps his friend when his friend cannot help himself. Nevertheless, Don Quixote's wild imagination leads both travelers into trouble, as other people see how it makes him gullible (easily tricked). Both men are robbed, beaten up and humiliated at various times. This is a common theme in literature: the one who seems like the underdog is actually the cleverer one in a relationship, and is prepared to suffer because of their loyalty (faithfulness).

The King and the Fool

In Shakespeare's play, *King Lear*, the king makes bad decisions because he is old and going crazy. His decisions eventually lead him and his personal entertainer, the Fool, to be exiled (sent out) from their own land. However, the Fool is not foolish, but he is loyal to his king, so he suffers the same fate as him as he stays by his side, just as Sancho Panza does with Don Quixote. This is "loyalty". The Fool always knows when the king makes a bad decision, but he can't tell him he is wrong or the king will kill him. So he tries to tell him indirectly, or without actually saying that he is wrong. It's an interesting case of role-reversal, in which the one who is supposed to be wise, the king, is actually foolish, while the supposed foolish one is wise.



Jeeves & Wooster

A similar kind of relationship applies to P G Wodehouse's comedy characters, Jeeves and Wooster. Jeeves is Bertie Wooster's personal servant, and is much cleverer than his master. Bertie is very well off (rich), but only because he inherited money from his parents. Consequently, he doesn't work, he has no skills, and he has no knowledge of the real world, so he depends on the

wise and wily (clever and devious) Jeeves to help him in times of trouble. Bertie often tries to foil (avoid) his aunt's attempts to find him a wife, so that he can keep his independence. In the end, Jeeves' wisdom and logic overcome adverse (bad) situations to make his master comfortable again, and to keep Jeeves' own comfortable position secure (safe).

The unexpected

In each of the above cases, the friend who should be cleverer and more powerful in the relationship is actually the weaker one in terms of logic and intelligence. This is a typical trope (device) in stories that like to turn readers' expectations upside-down, and it shows the reality of some relationships to provide both humour and examples of morality (the right things to do). You can learn a lot about life from reading stories. Stories explore relationships, and this helps us understand our own lives. When you read them, see if you can recognize people you know in the characters.



ETIQUETTE OF GREETING

by Erno Muzamel

The way we greet people varies around the world. Whether you travel or if your country receives a lot of tourists, it is a good idea to know how to greet people from different countries. It is also essential to understand things to do and not to do in order to avoid inadvertently offending someone. Here are some of the ways people greet each other around the world, as well as some 'dos' and 'don'ts'.



In most western countries, a simple handshake is expected. However, there are some important differences you may not be aware of. For example, in the United States, the handshake is generally an unofficial way of showing someone how far they should stay away from you, or the extent of closeness they are allowed to you. If someone extends **their** arm completely, this means they want you to stay at least an arms-length away. If they bend their elbow and extend their hand only slightly, they are more willing to allow you to be closer to them. This is important to remember because Americans take their personal space very seriously. If you stand too close to someone who is **sensitive** about their personal

space, you may offend them. In addition, kissing the cheek is not acceptable with the vast majority of Americans, who see the action as a complete invasion of their space. **It** is often regarded as disgusting. Most Americans stick to the simple handshake.

The handshake is also the most common form of greeting in Russia. However, men seem to compete for who has the stronger grip and will often squeeze another man's hand quite tightly. In addition, men will stare intently into the eyes of each other. You mustn't lower your eyes during the greeting or you will be seen as weak and will instantly lose the respect of the person you are greeting. Fortunately, men are gentler with women and do not squeeze their hands, though they still maintain direct eye contact during the handshake. Russian men may also often kiss either the cheek or hand of a woman.



In Europe, people tend to be a little more intimate. For example, in Great Britain, people generally tend to only shake hands when they first meet. However, after they know you, they will often just say 'hello' if the greeting is between two men. If the greeting is between a man and a woman, or a woman and another woman, they might offer a very brief kiss on the cheek. In France, kissing is more widely accepted and often expected. The French will often kiss both cheeks when greeting almost anyone, both when meeting and leaving each other's company. In Belgium, they don't kiss as much, reserving their kiss to only one side of the face.

In Asia, greetings vary from country to country. For example, in Japan, it is recommended that you bow when you greet someone, whether man, woman, friend or new acquaintance. The lower the bow, the more respect it **conveys**. In addition, children mustn't look into the eyes of an adult, especially a teacher. Instead, they are only allowed to look at the upper chest, just below the neck. Looking into the eyes of a superior is viewed as very disrespectful and could lead to problems in a relationship. The Chinese tend to be a little less formal and instead of bowing with their full upper body, they will nod their heads and smile, or shake hands if the meeting is business-related. In Thailand, you mustn't ever touch the head of anyone. This is seen as extremely disrespectful. When greeting a Thai, you should put your hands together, and bow slightly.

In most Arab countries, greetings are generally quite friendly. Arab men will shake hands, pull each other close, hug or kiss each other on both cheeks. In some areas of the Middle East, both men and women may touch noses, though never with someone of the opposite sex. In fact, a man mustn't extend his hand to a woman or touch her in any way. Moreover, handshakes between men and women are quite rare. The only way a handshake is allowed is if the woman extends her hand to the man first. Even then, it is important to shake hands very briefly and not to pump your warm up and down. **(To be continued)**



FI GROUP

**The FI Group organizes its first event for the Fall Semester
by Sara Al Kindi**



The FI Group organized on Tuesday, 6th of November 2018 its first event for the fall semester under the title "FI Group Gathering". The event began with short sketch about the difficulties that the students encounter in their first year at the university. Then the FI Group members presented a Music show through singing a classic song and playing some musical instruments. Then they proceeded with some educational and entreating games which aimed to

enrich the students' knowledge. Moreover, the Group hosted Alia Al syabi and Idris Al Riyami to share their experiences in taking participation in students' activities. The event ended with another music show which was presented by one of the international students, and with a short movie about the achievements that have been accomplished by the group during the last years. It is very important to be noted that the FI Group always aims to attract the new foundation students to join the group and take participation in its events, so they can improve themselves by practising some activities outside the classroom.

ANJIZ

by Rayyan Hamed Al-Qamshouai

Days pass and everything changes, life becomes different and our personalities change, but we have to stay brave, loyal and adapt to everything. Actually, transition period from school life to university life is enjoyable and frightening at the same time. For the first time we will be fully responsible for our life and our privacy. We will have to adapt to strangers and make friends and find solutions to our problems. University life is a new page we start. When we move to new surroundings, we will have an excellent opportunity to change what we want from our previous habits. I think Anjiz center is the ideal place for students to learn English at Nizwa University.

Some university students, whether they are major students or foundation students, don't know much about Anjiz Center. Some of them keep asking "What is Anjiz Center?" but they never try to go there and explore it. Anjiz is the Foundation Institute's fully equipped resource center for self-study. Students will be able to get personal assistance with their work from teachers or qualified employees, whenever they like. Students can relax and study within the comfy surroundings, and be a part of the workshops to have fun with words and concepts. Anjiz is open from 8am to 4pm from Sunday to Thursday. Moreover, it is located in Building 2; it has Voice and Fun Zone sessions. Voice, located in a Study Room in Anjiz Center, is where students can go to practice English conversations with other students and teachers. Fun zone is located in the other room and it includes doing activities for students to improve their English skills. The center targets foundation students. Anjiz is equipped with helpful equipment and tools, which can assist students to write their reports, for example, and many other things. According to University of Nizwa website (2018), there are "Thirty-two PC work stations with access to TOFEL practice and full internet". Therefore, the center is helpful and everything is available in it.

The idea for Anjiz came from Doctor Suliman Al Hosaini. It was established in 2012. Miss Salwa, the Director of Anjiz, trains major students who can be with foundation students to enhance their reading, writing, listening, grammar and spelling skills. I asked Miss Salwa, “Do you think that Anjiz center is a good place to learn English?” She said “Yes of course because like you see the environment that we are living in here in the university is Arabic environment so the students don’t have the ability to practice English outside the class, unless they come to the center. They should come as much as they can because they can find many services that allow them to enhance their skills.” Then I asked “Do you face any financial problems to provide the necessary tools at the center?” She said, “To be honest no, the university is trying their best; they never postpone any activities for development because they think this is a very important role which helps the students to develop the language skills.”



I believe that Anjiz Center is an ideal place to learn English. I started to go to this center since the second week from the previous semester. I joined all the sessions there because I came daily. Voice is the most interesting for me because I can suggest any topic that I want to talk about. Also, I like it because I learned new things, learned new vocabulary and met different teachers. I like all the services that are provided by the

center. Furthermore, I think the manager of the center Ms Salwa, and the team who works there are very active and cooperative and I appreciate all their efforts.

I decided to ask one of the teachers to know his/her opinion about Anjiz Center. When I was in Voice room, I did an interview with Mr Pawel (2018). He is a teacher in FI level three and he agrees with my view. I asked “Do you think that Anjiz Center is a good place for students to learn English?” The answer was yes it is a good place of course, but it also depends on whether the students are motivated and know how to use the resources available in the center. I inquired which session he prefers and why. He said he wasn’t sure, because he hadn’t tried the reading club yet. In addition, he said that there are two totally different sessions that he did, Anjiz Duty (teacher for support) is like teacher duty, it is more about assisting students, like: doing extra activities and exercises for them, helping students in their reports and explanation. Voice is doing conversation only, that’s why he can’t compare between them, but in the end of his answer he said, “It depends on the day, when I feel good and energetic I prefer to do Voice because it requires me to be more stimulating”. I asked him do you have any suggestions or ideas to improve the center? He said “Probably buy more new collections of book, like interesting books”.

In conclusion, Anjiz is one of the important supporting centers in Nizwa University and approximately all of them have the same goals. I think it will be always a beneficial center for all students who want to improve their English language. Students of foundation year are supposed to take advantage of this period and do many good things because they are freer now, so they should go to the center at least twice a week.

SURVIVING CLASS with Ms SHAHIEDA

Advice from Shahieda L. Sallie's students

Towards the end of each cycle I like to ask my students to write a piece of advice to the students who will come after them. Most decide to do it in the form of a letter or a list of top 5 or 10 things to do. They are free to write anything they feel would benefit others. We discuss some of the advice they wish someone had told them at the start of the level in order to be successful at that level. Generally I then collect the advice and I give it to the new students the following cycle. This cycle I asked them to share their advice with me earlier so that it could be published in the FI Connections magazine and so here are some extracts:

If you become in ms Shahieda class, you will not eat at all.

...Don't talk with somebody when she is talking because ms Shahieda be very upset.
Mather Alruqaishi

Ways to improve your English language

Dear level one students, Level one was very easy and fun, but you will find Level 2 difficult and boring, if you don't follow these steps:

...8. Avoid cheating...

I wish to you all the good things.

Amal Amer Swiden Almasoudi

FRIENDLY ADVICE

Dear level 1 student,

I know that you are working hard to pass level 1 to start in level 2 with high marks but make sure that it is not enough and you have to work harder than the past. You cannot stop in one way to achieve your dreams. You should try to collect from education gardens. This will be realized by doing some steps. You have to work with yourself and search for your own source. Do not wait for everything from your teacher. Also, you should study every day as you can and do much practice for what you have learned. Indention, it will be better if you submit everything on time. The most important things to pass anything in this life do not be proud or arrogant and do not cheat. You have to be peaceful, humble, understanding and seek out a forgotten friend. Also, respect your teacher and listen to him/her.

NANCI

How To Survive Level 2 With Ms.Shahieda

Hello guys from level one,

Ms. Shahieda is my English teacher in level 2, so I want to give you guys some advice to survive and pass level2 with Ms.Shahieda .

- First of all, know that Ms.Shahieda is a teacher with super soft heart, she doesn't want anyone in the class room to be sad or in bad mood, so she is always using high attitude and kind ways to deal with her students.
- Second thing, this is a small advice for Ms.Shahieda future students ...DONT TOUCH MS.SHAHIEDA'S AC... Because she is always feeling hot at the morning class and you CAN NOT switch it off.
- Third thing that you should know it that... Ms.Shahieda come to her class before 15 minutes, so you should be in the class before 20 minutes .
- Forth, Ms.Shahieda DOES NOT ALLOWED eating in the class, that's why you should eat a huge meal before her class.

That's all guys ... with my best wishes to level 2 future students.

ALIA HANI ALI AL ATRIS SOLIMAN



To Pass Level Two You Have To Follow This Step:

- 1. Come to class early.**
- 2. Prepare every day and submit Homework in a Time.**
- 3. Read book in Free Time.**
- 4. Go to Anjiz.**
- 5. Listen to foreigner speaker without translation.**
- 6. Chat Online.**
- 7. Participate in class.**

MANAR NASSER

10 tips to pass level 2:

Do your homework on time
Study every day
Use English inside and outside the class
Watch films to improve your listening
Read books
Take notes
Participate in class
Focus on exactly what you want to know
Practice writing

Don't forget to remind yourself why you are learning English language

GHALEA NASSER KHALFAN AL RAHBI

Overcoming Difficulties

Everyday every second we face problems we can't avoid ourselves from problems and difficulties in this life. The only way we know that we can protect ourselves from that things. one of my protective process I do that I write diaries. I mean people are writing their diaries to express their feelings. I think that we need to write in notes to realize our life how does it go and also we need someone to show these feelings. So the only way that we can find someone who we trust is to write in books. You even can learn from your mistakes that you have done before. If you only read those words you can know that you have improved yourself more and more. It's very useful way to grow up very well and you become strong enough to face the hard time and you stand again because if you face a problem and you read your old diaries you can realize that this problem wasn't anything to stop you, it was just a piece of cake.

Muntaha Nasser AL-Awfi

Ten ways to improve your English

- Try to speak English with your friends.
- Watch English movies without subtitles.
- You should take notes in your English class.
- Try to read more English book or story to improve your writing and speaking.
- Use your mobile phone in English language to have anew vocab in English.
- Do your homework because it is like exercises for you.
- Learn anew five worlds every day.
- Search about the meaning for every word you don't understand it in English not in Arabic.
- Listen to English music.

ABTIHAL ALI AL-MUSLHI

TO OUR GREAT STUDENTS

Be stronger more than your excuses don't let it effect in you by any way.
Give a lot of value for Anjiz center because it really improves your English by marvelous ways.

The important thing in your study at this period is to take language and benefit not to get full mark only.

Be sure you can achieve any things you want but you need to fight to it.
Just keep moving

SIHAM ALI AL-SHARJI

Study Smart & Hard

All the students work hard to get good marks in their exam and quiz. And all of us do everything to pass in our level to go to another lever. As you know, when you are in pre-foundation, you take enough rest because the subjects were very easy for you. However now you are in level 1, so the subjects will be more difficulties than pre-foundation. All of you should study hard to improve your English skills. You are student; do you know what is meant? Do you have great goals that you need to achieve it? You should learn more and more to be successful. some students said “ we are students in foundation , so we don’t need to study “ ,moreover most of student lost their motivate . You are responsible for your mistakes. You should do your work in the time. You should manage your time. Also you should use Schedule. You need to focus in you aims. In level 2, you will see a lot of challenges. If you want to be what you want, you can do it, just focused and learn from your mistake. At the last , I will say shine like stars and don’t give up .



Name :Taif farih al-badi .

Teacher :Mrs. shahidah salih .

NAME: WEDAD ZAID ALI AL-DARRAI

In high school we live in a gold dish, but now everything gone. You need to forget everything that you have in your high school.

Some time you miss high school, tenderness and the way we act in high school, but we should remember that we are going to achieve our dream.

In your first year you will think it's easy because it's the same as high school, after a few days you will see the difference.

To succeed in your first year you need to follow the rules as, put the phone away and take notes. Do everything in its time. There is a famous saying says "do not delay today's work to tomorrow". If you follow this rule in your life you will succeed.

In university life you will fell upset and disappointed because of frequent requirements and Low scores, but remember that you are Here for a reason , you are Here to improve yourself and remember you are so close to achieve your goals and dreams.

CHASE

A short story by Maryam Al Sulaimi

A figure dressed in all black was walking hurriedly. The figure bumped into the people in the street, earning himself complaints and insults. He won't stop... No, he CAN'T stop for that thing would reach him. He ran and ran. His breathing came short and heavy. He stumbled, tripped, fell on his face but he went on and on, RUNNING. It seemed that lady luck wasn't on his side this time. It started raining heavily, and because of the rain drops covering his lens, he couldn't see well.

He stretched his neck to see if the thing was still following him or not. He sighed in relief, but it didn't last for he heard the most bone chilling sound. He ran faster and faster, inhaling air like crazy.

He could hear it tapping its tiny feet. That wicked creature...

He swayed on his feet, running like a madman made him dizzy and tired. His eyes widening comically as he tripped. He fell hard on his backside. He was trembling, cold sweat dripping down his forehead.

"N-no," he heard himself stuttering weakly. "Mercy!"

"S-stay away," he screamed.

The creature that was hidden by the shadows of the night, stepped closer and closer, the moon light falling down to show it's round small face--

--The creature cranked its head aside and then meowed.

--O--

LOOKING FOR THE REAL ME

(Anonymity agreed)

I have been searching for the real me due to lacking the trust in myself more than anything else happening around me in life.

I didn't care much about me who needed help who was screaming to be saved that's why it got worse and my life was ruined side by side with the none stop bullying from the other students.

I even considered doing nonsense actions against myself to leave this painful life yet never gave myself the chance to live a proper life just like everyone else. I was the main reason why my life got ruined. I wouldn't suffer that much if I have told the poor me that it was just a thing that will end faster than I can imagine but I kept making it worse instead of calming myself down.

Looking for the troubles or the troubles are looking for me I don't know any more, it's just so confusing it spins my head around nothing less. I hate that I think too much about things even if I don't have to think about. It's just an idiotic behavior of mine that won't change that easily.

I hate how most of the things I like just go away to somewhere where I can't reach. Where can't I find. Somewhere that I won't be able to go to unless I die and what makes me feel more annoyed that I don't know when I will die.

I am too foolish because I cling into the people that I love and the things that I love so strongly and maybe that's why it goes away.

I have never felt happiness for so long it's just temporary for a short period of time.

I hated myself for being weak and unable to overcome all these stupid issues happening in my mere life. It is hard to be loved and hated at the same time it has never felt good. Life is not so good but we still need to live it to the end we can't end it even though it is hard to live it.

We will be considered as criminals if we ever end it by ourselves and not by God sake. That is why we shall never think of suicide or ending our life just because it is too painful and hard to live. We should compare our life to others life I mean those who have gone through a harder time and overcame it because we can overcome the pain we are in too, just like they did. It can never be easy but we have to try at least doing something to change our life to a better life.

A LESSON LEARNED

Eman Al-Saghir Nasser Al Mughairi – Level 2

There was a family of three: a mother and a daughter and a son. The mother preferred the girl to her brother because she was successful and helpful in matters of the house. Her son didn't take it seriously and was playing all his time, so he went out of the house for a long time to play only. The mother's husband had died recently and left her to look after his death. The mother took responsibility for the house and her children all by herself. The mother no longer used the grandmother's presence at home because she was annoyed by her behavior.

One day, the mother had to prepare her daughter to be the future doctor. The grandmother came and inadvertently poured water all over the papers which they were studying. The mother was very upset and ordered the workers to build a room outside the house for the grandmother.

Her son was very upset and wanted to learn also but no one cared about him and the girl did not focus in her book. So the mother gave him a sketchbook to draw something and ordered him to go away from her eyes so as not to see and get angry. When the boy came back from outside, his mother said to him, "I want to see what you drew." She told him to explain what was in the picture and he said to her "This is my future home, consisting of two rooms and a kitchen and a lounge." The mother said "It's beautiful, but I see a room outside the house, why?" He replied, "It's yours when you bother me."

The mother was upset and sad so she immediately arranged for her room to become the grandmother's room and he became an engineer.

Prove to be worthy.

MY EXPERIENCE WITH ENGLISH

by Engi Eissa,

English is the second mysterious world. To be in it you have to be brave to get through it. To learn English you have a million ways. When everyone writes about his/her own experience with English you find it looks the same, but my experience with English was strange.

It started, when I was only five years old. I was the youngest of the students of my class. They all were between six or seven years old. In my first day at the school the teachers told me that I must do an interview. I was shocked because I didn't understand what that word it even mean. I keep thinking about it until one of the teachers say my name and he picked me from my questions world. He took me to one of the class rooms, and I found there three teachers. In front of them was a small chair which was for me. I sat down and they start asking a lot of questions. Do you know that feeling when you are walking in a street, and suddenly it is raining heavily? That was exactly how I felt in that moment. Some of the questions were in Arabic, and the others were from strange language.

The strangest thing was in that situation that I pass the interview. After all the students finished their interview, we started our first class. Day by day, I understand what was the language that I heard in the interview: it was called "English". I went through a very hard time. I didn't know how to deal with that language. I wasn't used to it. Until that day came, the day that changed my thought. My teacher took me to be the official representative of the class in English competition. I told her why me? There are a lot of students that better than me. She smiled and told me "I believe in you and I can see a very special thing in you." I return back to my home, I told my mother what happen with me and she told me the same thing that my teacher say.

My mother and my teacher help me to improve my English language. The day of the competition, it was a very small competition between the first grades. There were a lot of a question, the first one who solve it and have a lot of points is the winner. It took two hours and finally the teachers say the name of the winner and was me. I did not believe that I win. After that, I went through a lot of competitions for the school.

In the end, everything starts when someone or you believe in yourself.

THE EFFECTS OF DRUGS ON STUDENTS

Arwa Ahmed Hamed Al Nabhani -- Level 2

Drugs are the chemical substances that have many effects for body and brain. Some effects include health consequence. These effects are long-lasting and permanent or some of them are temporary. They disappear when the person stops using drugs.

The effects of drugs on students:

There are many effects on students who take drugs.

First, students who take drugs are more likely to addiction in their life because they continue using it and they have inability to stop using it.

Second, drugs make the students behave badly such as they well be aggressive, violent, non-manners and negative thoughts.

Emotional problems: drugs can cause many emotional problem like anxiety, depression and mood swings. Continuing drug abuse increases emotional problems.

Learning problems: taking drugs lead to have problem in memory short-term and

long-term. Some memory problems appear in an older time.

Diseases: many diseases appear when the person take drugs. Some of them are blood-borne diseases such as HIV, AIDS and Hepatitis B and C. Others are heart diseases and strokes.

Brain damage: drugs lead student to have mental disorders are serious and permanent that causes brain shrinkage or impaired reasoning, perception and intuition.

Finally, most teenagers have road accidents because of drugs. They can't focus correctly on their way and they don't follow traffic law.

In conclusion, drugs are very dangerous to students. It affects their university life and social life negatively. It also has negative impacts on their future by leading them to failure.

POETRY

by Sara Al kindi

Lost In the Race

Crowds of people were standing in the race
They were waiting for the big day
For the sun to rise after a long hard days
She was obliged to take a part in the race
Regardless of what her heart was beating for
They took her passion, her strength and the poetic
heart that she had
They took all the poems that cheered her heart up
every night
She lost her mind, so she didn't date her beloved this night
All the lovely poems and sweet memories were buried
Actually, she was the one who was buried too
She walked alone in the race
And when the crowds of people finally arrived the end of the race
She disappeared; the heavy wind took her away



Stories

A thousand of untold stories
Lived at corner in the memory
Some of these stories should be told
To make the heart beating with joy and hope
The other shouldn't be disturbed
Let them live silently at corner in the memory
As they stole our higher laughter and our most beautiful smiles
And they kept us fully awake the whole night

STUDENTS' ART GALLERY



St Paul Asylum, Saint-Remy
by Vincent Van Gogh (b.1853-d.1890)
Copy by ASMA AL-KASBI, Level 2

Asma has captured the very distinctive technique of Vincent Van Gogh in her copy. Van Gogh's famous paintings are instantly recognizable by their vibrant, swirling lines that seem to give motion to everything, including things that normally appear still. What's your impression of this style? Why do you think Van Gogh painted like that? Please send your opinions to malcolm@unizwa.edu.om so we can discuss this artist in the next edition of FI Connections.

FACT: Van Gogh sold only one painting in his lifetime. He received 2,000 dollars for it. Now his paintings are sold for nearly 100m dollars.



Here's a very different style of artwork from **NANCI AHMED ZAGHLOUL**. Apart from being good fun at parties, it allows us to contemplate human vulnerability by representation. Please send your impressions to Connections.



ALIA HANI ALI AL ATRIS SOLIMAN Level 2



ALIA HANI ALI AL ATRIS SOLIMAN Level 2

Alia has made excellent studies of how light and shade reveal form.



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

by Shahieda L. Sallie

There are two students in Level 2 Section 2 who are true artists and have been kind enough to share their work with us.

They are **Nanci Ahmed Zaghloul** and **Alia Hani Ali Soliman**, who both come from Egypt but who have lived in Oman for all of their lives. They are exceptionally talented in their own way and have created some the most amazing art work that our class has ever seen.

Nanci is 18 years old and is a self-taught artist. She lives in Sharqiah and taught herself how to draw and paint and do theatre make-up by watching YouTube and videos on the internet. She paints on walls and doors and generally asks her parents if she can decorate walls in her home. She feels art is an essential way for her to express herself. She does amazing make-up for plays and parties and she is definitely the person to go to for your next Halloween event or to do the make-up for your next theatrical production. She comes from an artistic family and her mom, a music teacher at a school in Sharqiah already uses her talents when they have graduation shows.



Alia is also 18 years old and lives in Muscat where her dad works. Alia used to watch her sister, who is also an artist and then practise and do what she did. This way Alia practised and improved her drawing skill. As you can see by her drawings, she is extremely good at portraits and even does portraits in 15 minutes. She has progressed to using actual make-up as her paint and this gives her portraits the more realistic look. Alia has exhibited some of her work at the Sultan School in Muscat and at a variety of art fairs and exhibitions



COMING SOON IN FI CONNECTIONS 7...

More about language-learning

More creativity

More insights into what concerns our students.

If you think you can take it... turn on, tune in, and connect!

~oOo~

