

Male and Female EFL Teachers' Consciousness of Self-disclosure: A Case Study from Al Baha University, Saudia Arabia

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Abstract

Teacher self-disclosure (TSD) is a communication strategy that may positively affect students' learning by encouraging them to participate effectively in English as Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom activities. In addition, it can be considered a Second Language (L2) teaching method that can increase learner's engagement and language learning outcomes. Owing to its context-sensitive and culture-dependent nature, however, TSD topics, purposes, and considerations may vary cross-culturally. This study is an endeavor to investigate EFL University teachers' consciousness of suitability and appropriateness of TSD as well as to find out differences and similarities between male and female EFL teachers' conceptions of the relevance of TSD to successful L2 teaching. In order to achieve these objectives, the Appropriateness of Teacher Self-Disclosure Scale is administered to 60 EFL teachers (30 females and 30 males) from the Foreign Languages Departments at the Faculties of Arts and Humanities of Al Baha University, KSA. Results of the current study refer to the extent to which EFL teachers consider TSD topics, purposes, and considerations to be proper or improper. Moreover, the study finds out concurrence and indifference between male and female teachers' conceptions in topics of TSD, the purposes TSD achieves in classroom settings, and considerations the teachers consider when practicing TSD. The results of the study recommend that EFL teachers can use TSD as a teaching and career development tool to improve learning despite the fact that they should be alert of its influences in some features as TSD is culture and context oriented.

Keywords: EFL, teacher consciousness, teacher self-disclosure

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1. Introduction

There are many explanations and descriptions for the term teacher's self-disclosure. It's better to start with defining self-disclosure to get better understanding of the term. Originally, Jourard (1971) defines self-disclosure as the process when someone makes himself known to others with the attitude, love and trust. Nevertheless, this definition does not show concern to the growth of the relation of the people who are practicing self-disclosure. In accordance with this, generally self-disclosure is reported as an intended action when people reveal ones information, thoughts and feelings to other people (Greene, Derlega and Mathews, 2006).

With regard to teacher's self-disclosure, Gkonou and Mercer (2016) describe it as teacher's personal information about his/her experiences and sometimes close relationships to share with the students in an attempt to facilitate introducing the content. Bazarova (2012) describes it as teacher's voluntary action of disclosing personal and professional information and sharing it with students and colleagues which can lead to building rapport and increased intimacy. Cayanus and Martin (2008) identify three aspects of teacher self-disclosure: amount, relevance and negativity. The amount of disclosure shows how much and how many times teacher uses self-disclosure in class; relevance entails disclosure which is about the theme of discussion in the class; negativity is connected with negative revelation or disclosures to the class.

Researchers of communication education assert that teaching process is primarily a communicative activity in which sender and receiver use verbal and non-verbal messages to negotiate meaning of new messages introduced (Simomds & Cooper, 2011). Teachers communication with students, how they monitor such communication, impact of this communication on their integrative and instrumental motivation and their overall learning outcomes, and the types of conceptions teachers and students hold have been areas of investigation in learning and teaching research (e.g., Sidelinger, 2010; Hosek, 2011; Mazer, 2013; She and Fisher, 2002). Titsworth (2012) reports that teachers communicative activities can excessively develop students comprehension and conceptions of influential successful teaching. Witt et al., (2004) in their reflective analysis of the findings of 81 studies on the connection between teachers' verbal or nonverbal instantaneousness and students' learning outcomes report that teachers' verbal immediateness positively correlate with students' successful rated learning and affective learning. In addition to that teacher communication has a remarkable influence on cognitive aspects of learning, his communicative behaviors can increase students' involvement or contrarily increase their indifference and dissatisfaction with the entire learning process. In this regard, Domenech et al., (2014) indicate that unsuccessful teacher-student communication activities can lead to learners' feelings of dissatisfaction and less motivation. In line with this, Chory et al., (2014) find that sometimes students' negative feelings of injustice and malfunctioning emotional reactions can be credited to their teacher's inoperative ineffective communication behavior. Mazer et al., (2014) assert that if teachers show poor immediacy and lack for communication competence, students have inappropriate negative emotional reactions. In the same context, Titsworth, Quinlan and Mazer (2010) report that teachers' influencing communication behaviors can lead to students' positive perceptiveness, sensitivity and awareness of the classroom environment. They sum up that teachers acceptable communication behaviors are those that accumulatively contribute to students' higher or lower level of emotional engagement. Martin and Marsh (2009) indicates that intimacy and support learners receive from their educational environment can increasingly help them

develop skills to work as resilience which enables them to cope with some demanding learning conditions and circumstances.

Emphasizing that teachers should take training in particular communication skills, Norliza et al., (2010) assure that teachers who have communication competences and skills are able to participate in mediated-learning interactional activities, ask more questions, and give fewer disciplinary comments. Scholars like Chory et al., (2014) find that giving personal examples as a communication behavior, using sense of humor, and calling students by their first names can help create a more friendly immediate classroom environment, especially that humor can be the power to engage learners in the learning process as engagement and devotion are usually key factors for success.

With regard to talking to teach course content, teachers usually share information about their experiences, personal stories and beliefs with their students in classrooms (Webb, 2014). Such communication is called teacher self-disclosure. TSD as an influential communicative activity that happens within classroom context which can positively affect student learning and motivation (Cayanus and Martin, 2016). Hosek (2011) clarifies that when teachers self-disclose they talk about their experiences and personal stories that sometimes relevant or irrelevant to the teaching content and give students background knowledge about the teacher that is hard to get from other sources. Serag (2011) studies self-disclosure effect on EFL writing by computers which indicates that teachers can increase learners' autonomy by using self-disclosure as a facilitative teaching method in the writing course.

Teachers use self-disclosure for a variety of objectives and purposes as building rapport with students, gaining their trust, better clarifying course content and making students more attentive. Scholars studying the notion of TSD recommend the incremental effective role TSD can play in increasing teaching and learning outcomes. Zhang et al., (2008) discuss that TSD can have a positive influence on student-teacher relationship and encourages students to better participate in classroom communication. Tobin (2010) denotes self-disclosure enables teachers to use successful influential teaching practices when it is considered a better verbal choice. Similarly, Sanders (2014) clarifies that teacher self-disclosure is fundamentally important for successful student-teacher relationship and students consider TSD to be an effective classroom communication strategy that can be put into operation in the learning experience.

Research findings indicate that using technology in communication and, building rapport and having good relationships with our students can excessively increase our usage and understanding of teacher self-disclosure. In this context, Mazer, Murphy and Simonds (2007, 2009) discover that teachers who use Facebook as a tool for TSD experience higher levels of teacher capacity, dependability, and caring. They contend that students who have a window to TSD on Facebook show higher degrees of motivation. Researchers (e.g., DiVerniero and Hosek, 2011; Gibbs, Ellison, and Lai, 2011) have discuss that when teachers give their students an access to their private information pertinent to the course and funny posts via social networks, students' involvement and teacher trustworthiness remarkably increase.

Other studies found that the use of TSD can be influenced by such factors as the field of study, and the range of different topics. Zhang et al. (2008) argue that teachers of science majors, in comparison with teachers of social science majors, report significantly higher degrees of acceptance of the impact of TSD on classroom participation. In another study, exploring teachers' attitudes toward the use of TSD, Zhang (2010) finds that for three reasons the teachers refrain from disclosing in such topics as beliefs, and religious and political affiliation. The reasons are fear of (1) disagreeing with their students, (2) the possibility of students' having limited understanding or misunderstanding, and (3) the risk of inciting conflicts with parents and the school administration.

Thus, studies on TSD assure that teacher self-disclosure as a communication behavior that is multidimensional is capable of developing learners' participation, increasing effective learning, and enhancing social interactions. Nonetheless, TSD is a culturally oriented and sensitive topic and so it should be used reasonably and reflectively with cautious control and honest responsiveness (Rasmussen & Mishna, 2008; Zhang, Shi & Hao, 2009). The current study is driven by the rarity of studies on TSD in an Arab context. The aim of the study is to examine male and female EFL teachers' consciousness and viewpoints of suitability, convenience and appropriateness of EFL teacher self-disclosure. Accordingly, teachers' consciousness or conceptions of convenience of three aspects of TSD including TSD topics, purposes, and considerations are found out. In addition, an endeavor is made to investigate if there is a significant difference between male and female EFL teachers totaling 60 who are randomly chosen from Foreign Languages Departments at Colleges of Arts and Humanities and Arts and Sciences of Albaha University, KSA in the academic year 2018. Technically, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are male and female EFL teachers' viewpoints of convenience of TSD?
2. Is there any significant difference between male and female EFL teachers' viewpoints of convenience of TSD?

2. Review of Literature

Jourard and Jaffee (1970) define self-disclosure as the process by which an individual discloses or reveals information about himself to others. Eckhart (2011) makes clear that self-disclosure refers to information persons reveal about themselves which gives clues to their thoughts, beliefs, experiences and feelings that shapes their personal intimate relationships. Furthermore, Walker (2011) considers self-disclosure as an activity that helps a person to feel satisfied and comfortable in close relationship with others which is a basic requirement for successful social interaction. Nevertheless, one has to be cautious and alert to positive and negative potential consequences when he discloses information about his personal life.

Psychotherapists consider self-disclosure as one of the necessary tools for success in psychotherapy as it helps them in making close relationships with the subjects they are curing Ziv-Beiman (2013). Therefore, if ESL/EFL teacher is going to deal with his students as a counselor, so teacher-student relationship can be enhanced with the help of self-disclosure as a productive facilitative L2 teaching strategy.

In addition, self-disclosure enables the teacher to share his own experiences with students and so he gives them a model of behavior which they can benefit from. Jourard assures that, "I can experience your experience most directly if you disclose it to me" (1971a). As a result of that self-disclosure is a dual relationship; learners can also share information about their experiences, their families and friends with the teacher so as to help them overcome their learning difficulties. Moreover, through self-disclosure, teachers have the opportunity to discover themselves during their communication with the students. Consequently, teachers can select the methods that are suitable for their students' experiences that have been revealed to them in the process of self-disclosure. Research on student-teacher relationship and communication shows that successful teachers are those able to build a rapport or good relationships with their students so as to enhance the quality of their learning (Wilson & Ryan, 2013).

The topic of Self-disclosure has been tackled in a number of studies in the area of ESL/EFL learning and teaching, and different research findings have been found. Pishghadam and Askarzadeh (2009) examine the effects of teacher's self-disclosure on students' speaking performance and levels of anxiety. TSD has been found to be important for success in L2 speaking performance and in having a friendly healthy teacher-student relationship in language learning classroom contexts.

Goldstein and Benassi (1994) investigate the potential relation between self-disclosure and students' participation in classroom contexts. Their results reveal that there is positive correlation between teacher's self-disclosure and students' class participation that is attributed to the intimate teacher-student relationship made by self-disclosure.

In line with this, Hosseini and Tabatabaee (2010) in their study show that using TSD was influential in lowering EFL learners' anxiety in classrooms. Thus, teacher communication behaviors including TSD are capable of promoting student learning, participation and engagement or contrarily increase their dissatisfaction with the learning process. That's because, less productive teacher-student communication as indicated by Domenech et al., (2014), results in negative emotions on the part of the learners. In connection with this, Chory et al., (2014) report a number of students' feelings of injustice and negative emotional reactions can be a result of their teacher's less effective communication behavior. Mazeret et al., (2014) clarify that teachers who do not have immediacy and show poor communication competence, may increase their students' negative emotional responses. With regard to the same ideas, it is discovered that teachers' successful influential communication behaviors are associated with students' positive conceptions of their classroom environment (Titsworth et al., 2010). They assure that teacher communication competence can be responsible for students' higher or lower levels of emotional involvement during the learning process.

In accordance with this, Nemattabrizi and Pouyan (2014) in their study trace the influence of Iranian English teachers' self-disclosure classroom practices on students' general language proficiency. To this end, after giving a test of language proficiency (TOEFL PBT) to 52 Iranian advanced-level adult EFL learners, they are randomly divided into two control and experimental groups. The experimental group is the teacher-disclosing group in which the EFL teacher shares with the student's information about her feelings, attitudes and experiences about learning English

and the profession, while the control group students do not follow this procedure. This treatment lasts for 52 sessions and then both groups are given another version of the TOEFL test as the post-test of the study to find out any improvements in their language performance. The results indicate that teacher self-disclosure can positively affect students' language proficiency.

Similarly, Zacharias (2014) in his study asserts that classroom teachers decide student classroom participation as they are the ones who direct and control the turn-taking in the classroom. Although classroom teachers are the core of the teaching-learning process, but few studies have examined the role of classroom teachers in specific cultural EFL contexts such as those in Indonesia. The very objective of the study is to discover how teacher talk promotes student classroom participation activities. The researcher collects data through 85 student narratives written as part of a Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) course assessment in an English teacher preparation program in a private university in Indonesia. During analysis of the student narratives it is found out that the factors related to teacher talk are considered essential and contributing to student classroom participation. They include teachers' lecturing styles, teachers' lack of modified input, unfavorable past teacher feedback and teachers' pedagogical stories. The study refers to the primary role of teacher talk in determining student classroom participation patterns and activities.

Furthermore, sometimes in-service and pre-service teachers differ in their conceptions on the suitability and appropriateness of TSD. Fidel Çakmak and Betül Arap (2013) in their study investigate in-service and pre-service teachers' perceptions of the appropriateness of teacher self-disclosure in a Turkish context. The study is a replication of that of Zhang, Shi, Tonelson, & Robinson (2009) and included pre-service teachers (n=76) and in-service teachers (n=60) from Turkey. The results reveal statistically significant differences within two groups of teachers in their conceptions of the convenience and appropriateness of teacher self-disclosure in two areas: common topics and uncommon topics. There are no statistically significant differences in three other dimensions; uncommon purposes, common purposes and consideration of students. Both studies have yielded similar results in terms of the perceptions of the purpose of teacher self-disclosure and of the unsuitability and inappropriateness of uncommon topics. Contradicting results are found in the appropriateness of common topics of teacher self-disclosure, uncommon purpose and consideration of students. The study is a contribution to the field as a replica of a previous one with participants from Turkey and it ends up with that the year of experience and teaching context might influence the conceptions of appropriateness of TSD.

Therefore, when teachers use TSD they can help learners develop their rational judgment and so control their classroom emotional responses. On the other hand, when students share information about themselves with the teacher, they have the chance to regulate their emotional reactions to give a space to reasoning to take over. Teachers in their classrooms should encourage and use more metacognitive activities and practices to give students the opportunity to talk freely in class about themselves and so their emotions, listen to their classmates' feelings, and know about their teacher's attitudes, beliefs and motivations to teach the target content (Hosek and Thompson, 2009).

Consequently, previous studies on TSD give evidence to that the concept can be used as an effective instructional tool to increase student participation, interest, understanding, and

motivation. On the other hand, as a result of that TSD is sensitive to cultural differences, it should be practiced cautiously and properly with reasonable control and absolute understanding (Rasmussen & Mishna, 2008; Zhang, Shi & Hao, 2009). The current study is motivated by the rarity of research on TSD in an Arab context. The very aim of the study is to identify Arab EFL male and female teachers' viewpoints on the suitability and appropriateness of teacher self-disclosure. Actually, teachers' viewpoints of appropriateness and convenience of TSD topics, purposes, and considerations are explored. Additionally, an endeavor is made to find out if there is a significant difference between male and female teacher's perceptions on the suitability and convenience of TSD in foreign language classroom contexts.

3. The Context of the Study

The researcher through his experience as an assistant professor in TEFL at the Department of Foreign Language at Faculty of Arts and Humanities of Al Baha University, KSA has noticed that a number of the instructors already use TSD in their classrooms. Research findings show that teachers communicate with students about the content, discuss ideas about the lesson and sometimes share their own experiences in life. (Mazer et al., 2007). That's to say teachers use self-disclosure as an educational tool in their classrooms through relating information about themselves to the subject's content they teach.

Furthermore, the aforementioned study findings give details on the effectiveness of TSD in increasing ESL/EFL learner's autonomy, classroom participation and language learning motivation in a variety of contexts. In addition, Zhang et al., (2009) assure that teachers should identify and evaluate cultural characteristics of their students before they use TSD, gender, emotional responses and their level of the learning. Almost all the above previous studies are conducted in non-Arab contexts and so there is a rarity of research in this area in Arab EFL classrooms. Since TSD is culturally dependent and sensitive to cultural variations, the researcher is motivated to investigate EFL University teachers' consciousness of the andconvenience, suitability and appropriateness of TSD in Arab foreign language classroom contexts.

4. Methodology

4.1. Participants

The study uses convenience sampling to choose a total of 60 EFL teachers (30 females and 30 males) from five Faculties at Al Baha University, KSA. At the time of the study, the participants, ranging in ages from 26 to 55, had more than five years of teaching single-sex English classes at Foreign Languages Departments at five Faculties. With regard to their qualifications, 40 teachers have MA in TEFL and English translation and 11 teachers have BA in English language and literature. The remaining 9 teachers are six PhD candidates and two PhD holders in linguistics and applied linguistics. They are teaching skill courses, research methods and content area courses to students majoring in English language and literature.

4.2. Instruments

The present study uses an adopted version of the Appropriateness of Teacher Self-Disclosure Scale adopted (Zhang et al., 2009). The 20-item, 5-point Likert scale from 1 (very appropriate) to 5 (very inappropriate) has three dimensions that include the topics of teachers' self-

disclosure, purposes the teachers use self-disclosure for and considerations teachers take into account when they use self-disclosure. For validity purposes, the researcher submits the questionnaire to six university teachers majoring in applied linguistics and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) for revision. The jury members report that the questionnaire items are suitable and valid for the study purposes and objectives. The current study instrument is then pilot tested with five male and five female EFL teachers with characteristics similar to those who take part in the current study. The researcher used Cronbach's Alpha model to check for reliability of the instrument and the precise Alpha index of 0.79 is obtained for the questionnaire, showing that it is of high reliability. Moreover, for validity of the instrument, the researcher calculates square root of the reliability value and obtains (0.89) which indicates that it is of high validity to be administered to the participants of the study.

In order to collect biographical data about the participants, the researcher adds a section to the questionnaire in which he asks them to write information on their gender, teaching experience, and university degree.

4.3. Data Analysis Approach

The current study uses qualitative-quantitative approach principles (Tashakkori, 2009) to analyze data gathered by Appropriateness of Teacher Self-Disclosure Scale adopted (Zhang et al., 2009). It is administered to 60 Male and female Arab EFL teachers from Al Baha University, KSA to find out their conceptions on the convenience and suitability of TSD in EFL classroom contexts. Data is then statistically analyzed and interpreted to answer the aforementioned questions as the present study does not have hypotheses, but its objectives are fulfilled through giving answers to its questions utilizing the above data analysis method.

4.4. Procedures

The questionnaire is given to 30 male and 30 female EFL teachers who are told about the study objectives and how to accurately respond to its items as it is administered to the participants in five Faculties of Al Baha University, KSA in the academic year 2019/2018. EFL teachers are asked to return the questionnaire in five days to guarantee that they have enough time to fill it out.

5. Results

The study results are interpreted to answer its questions as follows;

Question (1) What are male and female EFL teachers viewpoints of convenience of TSD?

Male and female teachers' viewpoints of convenience/appropriateness of TSD topics

The results, as shown in Figure 1, clarify that male and female EFL teachers view some TSD topics as appropriate and others as inappropriate ones. For example, (93%) of them view relating their personal experiences and stories to be appropriate TSD topics. Contrarily, (33%) of them indicate that sharing information related to their family, relatives and friends is inappropriate TSD topic, while (63%) perceive sharing opinions and talking about their personal interests and hobbies (61%) as appropriate topics. Anyhow, those topics include sharing political views (15%), religious belief (43%) and giving information from their close relationships (13%) are regarded as appropriate TSD topics.

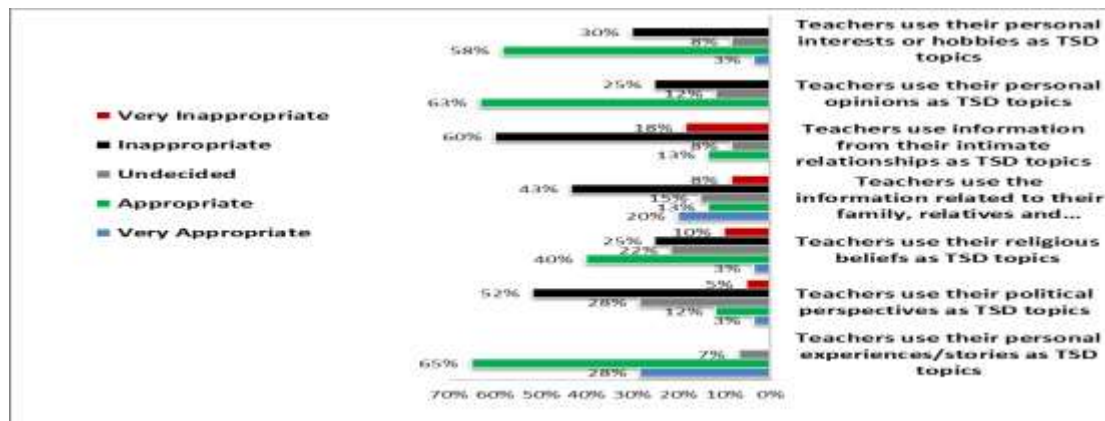


Figure 1. Male and female teachers' viewpoints of convenience/appropriateness of TSD topics

Male and female teachers' viewpoints of convenience/appropriateness of TSD purposes

The results presented in Figure 2 indicate that the teachers view such purposes as using TSD to entertain students (63%), to offer real-world examples (88%), to attract students' attention (77%), to set social role model (78%), to create a comfortable classroom environment (77%), to increase students' learning interests (71%), and to clarify teaching content (82%) are appropriate. Anyway, while only (35%) of the teachers report using TSD to please themselves, more than half of them (54%) think this purpose to be inappropriate. Both male and female EFL teachers consider some TSD purposes as appropriate while others as inappropriate. With regard to the aforementioned mentioned research findings which assert that TSD is a culture-oriented classroom practice, so teachers' views on its topics, purposes and considerations can vary from a society to another. Therefore, the researcher is motivated to investigate foreign language teachers awareness and consciousness of the suitability, convenience and appropriateness of adopting TSD as directive, facilitative and productive teaching tool. In addition, he examines the potential differences between male and female EFL teachers viewpoints on TSD in relation to topics, purposes and consideration.

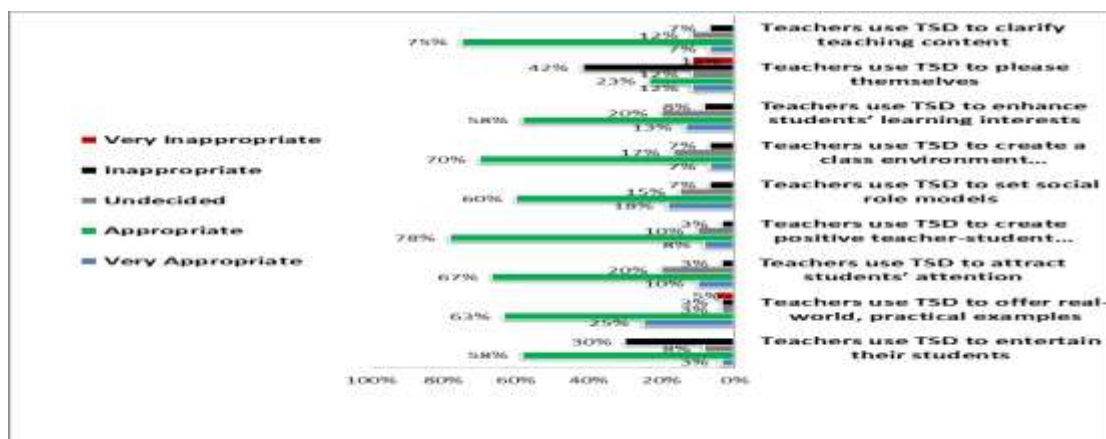


Figure 2. Male and female teachers' viewpoints of convenience/appropriateness of TSD purposes

Male and female teachers' viewpoints of convenience/appropriateness of TSD considerations

The results in Figure 3 make clear that teachers are alert to numerous considerations as they decided to use TSD in their EFL classrooms. In other words, 80% of the teachers agree that students' cultural background should be considered when using TSD. Students' feelings and emotions (82%) and their grades or levels (65%) are also viewed as appropriate/convenience considerations. Pertaining to students' gender, 61% of the teachers thought it as an appropriate consideration, while about 30% show that it is inappropriate to take students' gender into consideration when practicing TSD with their students. Thus, male and female teachers are aware of the above considerations which represent students' characteristics teachers take into account while self-disclosing. The researcher thinks that their consciousness of TSD considerations can make self-disclosure a successful interpersonal communication activity in a mediated classroom context. That's because, a positive teacher-student communication process depends on mutual trust and credibility, especially, on the part of the teacher as sometimes considered responsible for different forms of student response to TSD.

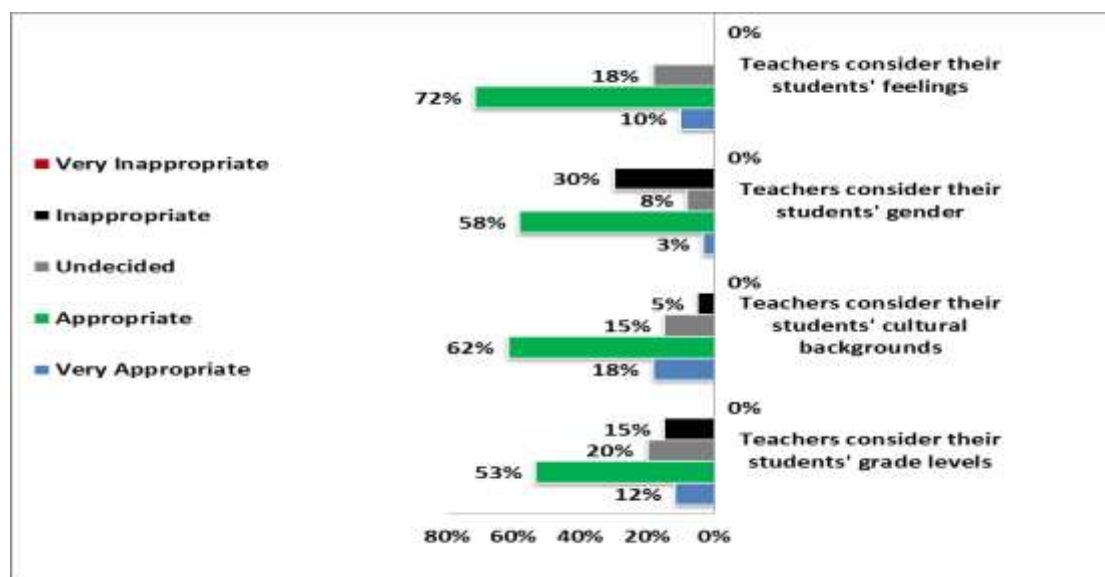


Figure 3. Male and female teachers' viewpoints of convenience/appropriateness of TSD considerations

Taken as a whole, the teachers agree on most of the topics, purposes and considerations to be appropriate features of TSD. Some topics, purposes, and considerations, however, are regarded to be inappropriate. Between 57% to 87% of the teachers do not agree with sharing political and religious views, and information about their close relationships. Using TSD to please themselves (54%), and taking into account students' gender (30%) are thought of as the inappropriate characteristics of TSD.

Difference between male and female teachers' viewpoints

Question (2). Is there any significant difference between male and female EFL teachers' viewpoints of convenience of TSD?

Results in Table 1 statistically describe the Independent-Samples *t*-tests to find out differences in viewpoints on the appropriateness of TSD topics. The findings below clarify that there is not a significant difference between male and female teachers in their conceptions on the appropriateness of the items 2, 3, 5, 7 while there is a statistically significant difference in their conceptions of appropriateness of items 1, 4, and 6. In other words, EFL male teachers conceive these items as more appropriate TSD topics.

Table 1

<i>Male and Female Teachers' Viewpoints of Appropriateness of TSD Topics</i>								
		male		female		df	t	Sig.
		Std.	Mean	Std.	Mean			
1.	Teachers use their personal experiences/stories as TSD topics	0.58	4.37	0.49	4.07	58	2.16	0.035*
2.	Teachers use their political perspectives as TSD topics	1.01	2.50	0.77	2.63	58	0.58	0.566
3.	Teachers use their religious beliefs as TSD topics	1.28	2.87	0.87	3.17	58	1.06	0.293
4.	Teachers use the information related to their family, relatives and friends as TSD topics	1.14	3.37	1.35	2.50	58	2.69	0.009**
5.	Teachers use information from their intimate relationships as TSD topics	1.16	2.33	0.46	2.00	58	1.47	0.147
6.	Teachers use their personal opinions as TSD topics	0.94	3.70	0.65	3.07	58	3.02	0.004**
7.	Teachers use their personal interests or hobbies as TSD topics	1.06	3.20	0.82	3.50	58	1.22	0.226

0.05*

0.01**

With regard to EFL male and female teachers conceptions of appropriateness of TSD purposes, the Independent-Samples *t*-tests results in Table 2 show that teachers viewpoints only significantly differ only in item 5 in favor of male ones.

Table 2

<i>Male and Female Teachers' Perceptions of Appropriateness of TSD Purposes</i>								
		male		female		df	t	Sig.
		Std.	Mean	Std.	Mean			
1.	Teachers use TSD to entertain their students	1.06	3.20	0.82	3.50	58	1.22	0.226
2.	Teachers use TSD to offer real-world, practical examples	0.76	4.07	1.08	3.93	58	0.55	0.587
3.	Teachers use TSD to attract students' attention	0.63	3.87	0.66	3.80	58	0.40	0.691

4.	Teachers use TSD to create positive teacher-student relationships	0.69	3.73	0.31	3.68	58	0.56	0.701
5.	Teachers use TSD to set social role models	0.88	4.13	0.57	3.67	58	2.43	0.018*
6.	Teachers use TSD to create a class environment comfortable to students	0.87	3.73	0.41	3.80	58	0.38	0.705
7.	Teachers use TSD to enhance students' learning interests	0.86	3.77	0.68	3.48	58	1.23	0.243
8.	Teachers use TSD to please themselves	1.16	2.53	1.15	2.64	58	0.61	0.581
9.	Teachers use TSD to clarify teaching content	0.87	3.73	0.31	3.90	58	0.99	0.325

0.05*

0.01**

Results in Table (3) points out that there is not statistically significant difference in teachers' conceptions on the appropriateness of considerations that should be thought of when they decide to practice TSD. There are not significant differences in items 1, 2 and 4 which indicate that male and female teachers consider students' grade levels and feelings when they use TSD. On the other hand, there is a statistically significant difference between male and female in item 3 in favor of female ones. Therefore, male and female teachers consider taking into account students' grade levels, feelings and student cultural background when they decide to disclose, whereas they differ in their conceptions of considering student gender.

Table 3

Male and Female Teachers' Perceptions of Appropriateness of TSD Considerations

		male		female		df	t	Sig.
		Std.	Mean	Std.	Mean			
1.	Teachers consider their students' grade levels	0.76	3.80	0.97	3.43	58	1.62	0.109
2.	Teachers consider their students' cultural backgrounds	0.55	3.83	0.80	3.67	58	0.98	0.362
3.	Teachers consider their students' gender	1.06	3.79	0.82	4.05	58	2.26	0.021*
4.	Teachers consider their students' feelings	0.69	3.93	0.31	3.90	58	0.24	0.810

0.05*

0.01**

The current study as a whole indicate similarities and differences between male and female EFL teachers' viewpoints and conceptions with regard to the topics teachers include in TSD, the purposes and objectives they use TSD for in foreign language classroom in the Saudi context and the considerations teachers are aware of when they use TSD in their teaching.

6. Discussion

Teachers are always responsible for offering teaching environment that is encouraging and contributing to student successful learning (Swan, 2013). Rahimi and Karkami (2015) in their study assert that this kind of environment can excessively increase learners foreign language learning

motivation. Impressive teacher-student communication enhances their cognitive and emotional involvement in the content of the course. Research findings indicate that successful teacher communication behaviors can evaluate student involvement in the learning process. Cayanus, Martin and Myers (2008) in their study report that teacher self-disclosure is an influential teaching tool which remarkably could develop learner's involvement and participation.

The current study is an endeavor to investigate Arab (Saudi and others) EFL teachers' consciousness of self-disclosure as a potential effective teaching tool and to find out any significant differences in the viewpoints of male and female ones. The study comes up with that when both teachers decide to use TSD they select various topics including giving information on their personal experiences, interests or hobbies and sharing information about their families and friends. On the contrary, they refuse to disclose information about their political opinions, religious beliefs or their close relationships. The results propose that when teachers choose to practice self-disclosure, they are careful and selective in deciding their communication behaviors. Thus, EFL male and female teachers at Foreign Languages Departments at the Faculties of Arts and Sciences of Al Baha University, KSA are very protective while disclosing information related to their political views, religious beliefs or intimate relationships. This could be attributed to their experiences using TSD as a facilitative teaching tool in other contexts or their colleagues' reflections and practices related to self-disclosure communication behaviors and their advantages and disadvantages. In accordance with this, Zhang and others (2009) find out that teachers don't use self-disclosure when they think that it may cause them problems and when they are not sure about its consequences. In relation to results of the current study, Myers and Brann (2009) report that the teachers are unwilling to share with their students information about their political, religious perspectives and close relationships.

Zhang (2010) in his study indicate that teachers are unwilling to disclose information on these topics as they regard them risky and sensitive. Furthermore, the present study is in line with Sturgeon and Walker (2009) in their claim that teachers would never agree to talk about private information that could probably put them later in trouble, although it could help students' learning and participation. The researcher thinks that one possible reason can be it is uncommon to discuss sensitive topics in the Arab classroom settings which are offensive to the students and can make the teaching-learning process more complicated and less productive.

The current study that also finds out that male and female EFL teachers think that it is inappropriate to use TSD as a teaching tool just to please themselves. In this regard, the results are in accordance with some other study findings. In this case, the results of the study support the findings of the other researchers (Downs, Javidi and Nussbaum, 1988; Sanders, 2014; Webb, 2014) who report that TSD used in classrooms serves many purposes. In spite of that TSD can have remarkable outcomes in improving student learning and increasing participation, there should be numerous considerations teachers need to be aware of when they choose to share information about themselves with the students to facilitate learning the class content. The study findings make clear that teachers agree on such considerations as students' feelings, their level and grade, and their gender for successful influential practice of TSD. Accordingly, teachers are selective in their self-disclosure classroom communication behaviors (Rasmussen, and Mishna, 2008). They also realize the benefits and risks of sharing private information with their students which can help them choose the successful effective TSD practices (Petronio, 2002).

The second research question is about the difference between the male and female EFL teachers' conceptions of the appropriateness of TSD topics, purposes and considerations. As a whole, the current study has various findings with regard to the three aspects of TSD. Both types of teachers do not have significant differences in their viewpoints on some aspects of TSD, while they have differences in others as indicated in *Tables 1, 2 and 3*. That's to say their views significantly differed for a number of aspects of TSD. Hereof, results of the present study are contradicting some other research findings (Consedine, Sabag-Cohen, and Krivoshekova, 2007; Sprecher and Hendrick, 2004) which explore that female teachers usually share information about themselves with the students more than the male ones. Arab EFL male teachers perceive topics including revealing information about their personal stories or experiences, families and personal opinions as appropriate TSD topics more than the female ones do. Thus, female teachers have the tendency to avoid these topics when using TSD in classrooms; which is normal in the Saudi context which is a conservative society. So, non-Saudi Arab female teachers probably have to bypass these TSD topics. This is in congruence reports that teachers' choices of what and when to include in TSD is determined by motivation, culture, gender, situation and individual differences. However, the avoidance of these topics by female teachers is a gender-specific difference which shows their aptitude to circle around individual's world of memories and previous experiences.

With regard to TSD purposes, male EFL teachers think that they use TSD to set social role models to their students more than females did which can also be explained in terms of the more freedom given by families to males in the Saudi society as compared to females. That's to say social roles expected by the society from males are more than those of females which can be due to cultural restrictions and not formal ones. This is supported by (James, 2009) who shows that almost all teacher self-disclosure aspects are cultural-dependent and therefore male and female teachers perceptions of TSD topics, purposes and considerations are bounded by cultural and individual differences. He also adds that male teachers in some societies are not required to show an ideal behavior but an acceptable one, whereas females need to show justifiable moral communication behavior. The current study finds out that there is a significant difference between males and females in their perceptions of the appropriateness of considering students' gender when practicing TSD in favor of the female ones. So females take into consideration students' gender when they choose to use TSD; which is normal in a conservative society and usually all Arab educational settings have the same orientation when addressing female students. Again, teacher self-disclosure is highly influenced by cultural and individual differences (Rasmussen and Mishna, 2008; Zhang, Shi, and Hao, 2009). Therefore, the researcher is motivated to investigate male and female EFL teachers' consciousness of the suitability appropriateness of TSD topics, purposes and considerations in the Saudi educational setting.

7. Conclusion

The current study makes clear that teacher self-disclosure is not context-free but context-sensitive or cultural dependent in the sense that subjects' perceptions of the convenience or inconvenience of topics, purposes and considerations are affected by the educational context. The results of the study propose that Arab EFL teachers at Al Baha University, KSA are very selective in their self-disclosure communication behaviors. Findings of the study indicate that TSD topics the teachers think appropriate include personal experiences or stories, giving information related to their family, relatives and friends, and sharing their personal opinions, interests or hobbies. On the contrary,

the teachers do not agree on TSD topics related to their political and religious beliefs or their close relationships as they believe that they could be misunderstood by students or fired from their jobs. Furthermore, the study clarifies that self-disclosure has various purposes in classrooms which include entertaining students, offering real-world examples, attracting students' attention, setting social role model, creating a comfortable classroom environment, increasing students' learning interests and clarifying teaching content. Nevertheless TSD has many purposes to serve, male and female teachers do not use them carelessly, accidentally or illogically as they consider students' feelings and emotions, their grades or levels along with their gender when they decide to disclose in their classrooms.

The implication of the present study is that Arab EFL teachers at Al Baha University, KSA should not only focus on fostering the cognitive processes as language teaching has become more of a social activity that heavily depends on successful effective models of classroom communication behaviors. That's to say, TSD offers students friendly effective and secure learning environment which in turn can excessively affect the cognitive domains of learning and further help them to develop language learning. With regard to findings of the current study, ESL/EFL teachers can use TSD to serve different pedagogical purposes. Notwithstanding TSD benefits and potentials, it has to be used cautiously by the teachers as it is context and culturally-oriented. Therefore, teachers should consider students' feelings and emotions, grades or levels and gender when they decide to use TSD as a teaching tool to help learners with their foreign language learning endeavors. It is not to say that teachers use customized TSD, but their disclosure has to context specific, culturally oriented and directed by student and course content needs to help develop their life experiences and enhance quality education. Professional development programs given to EFL/ESL university teachers should include successful case studies that utilize TSD techniques and language classroom practices to increase their awareness of the importance and limitations of sharing their personal experiences, stories, interests and relationships with their students to facilitate their learning. The current findings assert that teachers intentionally use self-disclosure as they know when and how to practice it in their teaching. Therefore, TSD may be a valuable instructional method to increase student involvement and participation.

The present study is an attempt to give description of the status of TSD among Arab male and female EFL teachers at the Departments of Foreign Languages at Faculties of Arts and Humanities of Al Baha University, KSA. Future research can deal with the issue in a different cultural educational setting within MENA region countries investigating language teachers TSD usage in other societies in the context of universities and schools in order to find out how pre-university teachers also practice TSD in classrooms. This kind of analysis will be important since TSD is context-dependent and the teaching environment and teacher-student relationship are different in universities from at schools. Future research can explore any possible correlation between TSD and students' motivation to learn EFL/ESL, as there is still a little known about how self-disclosure as a separate construct may affect learners' motivation. Furthermore, it would be also logical and meaningful to investigate this potential relationship in online classes or individual courses. It may be possible to mention that when teachers communicate with their students in online courses, they would be likely to reveal and share more information about themselves with the learners. Future research can also investigate if students' reactions vary in response to different kinds of learning styles. The current study explores teachers' perceptions of TSD at boys' classes and girls' while future research can study mixed classes to know if there are differences in the way teachers use TSD.

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