

Causes of English Major Student-Teachers' Classroom Participation Reluctance at Kuwait University

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Abstract: Classroom participation plays an important role in developing students' oral fluency, and general understanding of the subject content. However, there is a noticeable participation reluctance among English major student-teachers in the College of Education at Kuwait University. The present study investigates the causes of such a reluctance. The study adopted the descriptive analytical methodology applying a 4-Likert scale to respond to a thirty questionnaire items. Two domains were covered: the English language professor, and the English major student-teachers. The sample covered a total of 150 English major student-teachers 30 males and 120 females. The study revealed significant differences $\alpha=0.05$ in the means between the participants according to gender in favor of females-student teachers and according to high school specialization in favor of Arts specialization. However, there were no significant differences according to the years of study.

Keywords: Classroom participation, English major, student-teachers, participation reluctance, Kuwait University.

أسباب عزوف الطلبة المعلمين للغة الإنجليزية عن المشاركة الصفية في جامعة الكويت

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مستخلص: تلعب المشاركة الصفية دوراً هاماً في تطوير الطلاقة الشفهية للطلبة المعلمين وكذلك للفهم العام لمحتوى الموضوع. ومع ذلك، فإن هناك عزوف ملحوظ عن المشاركة الصفية لدى الطلبة المعلمين لتخصص اللغة الإنجليزية في كلية التربية بجامعة الكويت. تبحث هذه الدراسة في الأسباب المسؤولة عن مثل هذا العزوف. اعتمدت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي الذي يطبق مقياساً رباعياً للإجابة على ثلاثين بنداً لاستبيان الدراسة. اشتملت أداة الدراسة (الاستبيان) على محورين: أستاذ اللغة الإنجليزية، والطلبة المعلمين للغة الإنجليزية. كان مجموع العينة 150 من طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية (30 طالب معلم و120 طالبة معلمة). تم حساب معامل ألفا كرونباخ وكان "0.828". كما تم تطبيق كل من اختبار (ت) واختبار تحليل التباين الاحادي واحتساب الاحصائيات الوصفية عند تحليل بيانات الاستبيان للإجابة على أسئلة الدراسة. وتوصلت الدراسة إلى وجود فروق ذي دالة إحصائية (0.05) بين المتوسطات الحسابية لعينة الدراسة بالنسبة لمغير الجنس لصالح الطالبات المعلمات وكذلك بالنسبة لمغير التخصص في المرحلة الثانوية لصالح التخصص الأدبي. إلا أنه لم توجد فروق ذات دالة إحصائية بالنسبة لمغير سنوات الدراسة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المشاركة الصفية، تخصص اللغة الإنجليزية، الطلبة المعلمين، العزوف عن المشاركة الصفية، جامعة الكويت.

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English language teachers expect their students to participate during class discussions and activities. Classroom participation is encouraged and stressed by many researchers as a successful learning tool. It creates an opportunity for students to test their understanding and for teachers to measure their students' language learning progress and achievement (Petress, 2006; Tatar, 2005). Sixsmith, Dyson, & Nataatmadja (2006: 1) clarify that students through classroom participation can "apply their knowledge and develop public speaking skills". Thus, there is no doubt that effective learning will take place (Tsou, 2005). It is important to remember that classroom participation not only allows students to participate, but also increases their knowledge and even more significantly apply it contextually (Jones, 2008). According to Mustapha (2010: 91) "Active classroom involvement helps students learn not just by sitting in class listening to lecturers talking, but by talking about what they are learning, writing about it, relating to past experiences, and by applying it to their daily lives". Tsui (1996: 146) reminds us that "students who are actively involved reported higher persistence rates", as this allows effective learning to take place. Accordingly, Jackson (2002) affirms that classroom participation sets the scene for students to shape their learning styles and build their accumulative knowledge. Based on Liu's (2005) findings, active students in class participations have a better academic achievement compared to those who do not take part in classroom participation. This brings into focus the undeniable and strong connections between classroom participation and students' academic achievement. Such focus on classroom participation requires an understanding of the concept behind it.

The concept of classroom participation has been defined by several educationists and researchers to provide a better understanding of its meaning and how best it is achieved in the classroom. Ac-

ording to Burchfield and Sappington (1999: 290) participation is defined as "the number of unsolicited responses volunteered". In addition, Wade (1994: 237) describes the meaning of participation and class discussion stating that "the ideal class discussion is that one in which almost all students participate and are interested in learning and listening to others' comments and suggestions". Vandrick (2000) investigates in-depth classroom participation and confirms that it necessitates students' involvement in speaking in class through asking and answering questions, commenting on ideas and taking part in discussions.

In that perspective, Dancer and Kamvounias (2005: 448) believe that "participation can be seen as an active engagement process which can be sorted into five categories: preparation, contribution to discussion, group skills, communication skills, and attendance". Moreover, Vandrick (2000: 2) notices that students who do not participate are considered "lazy, unprepared, passive and/or uninvolved students, and are generally penalized when class grades are assigned".

Based on the above cited definitions of classroom participation, it can be summarized that participation involves students' interest in sharing willingly their thoughts and ideas of the discussed topics without any force from their teachers. In addition, this involves their ability to comprehend their teachers' and classmates' comments and points of views and provide their comments when necessary. However, students' reluctance to participate will prevent them from proper learning and sharing their knowledge and understanding. This will hinder any possible communication with their teachers and their peers (Jackson, 2002; Wen & Clement, 2003; Li & Liu, 2011).

Theoretical Background

When it comes to the English language learning context, students' participation and engagement in classroom discussions and activities are considered of paramount importance. This is applicable to students' involvement in discussions with their teachers and/or with their classmates as this allows them to express and negotiate meaning (Nunan, 1999). In other words, they become communicatively competent to the level, which enables them to express and clarify their intentions, thoughts and opinions (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Wen & Clement, 2003; Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Chang & Goswami, 2011). In turns, such classroom participation enables their language teachers to evaluate them based on the quality and amount of their talk (Donald, 2010).

However, students' reluctance to take part in classroom participation is frustrating for any teacher, and even more frustrating for the English language teacher, as his/her main aim is to establish a positive and communicative environment in the language classroom to help students achieve better learning and mastery of vocabulary and grammar (Swain, 2000). Adding to that, productive output plays a crucial role in facilitating language learning as well as developing a higher level of thinking and analytic skills (Hardman, 2008; Mercer & Howe, 2012). Therefore, English language teachers like many other teachers try to encourage and stimulate students' participation and involvement in classroom discussions and activities through assigning participation grades (Balas 2000; Fritschner, 2000; Tatar, 2005). Research shows that associating participation with grades has proven to be an active factor in motivating students to be more involved in class discussions (Maznevski, 1996; Dancer & Kamvounias, 2005; Girgin & Stevens, 2005; Petress, 2006). According to Dalimore, Hertenstien and Platt (2004), associating grades with class participation

motivates and inspires students to put in more effort in taking part in classroom activities. Yet, English language students remain silent and non-participatory in class and only a small number of them participate although they are aware of the significance of participation in developing their English spoken language (Fritschner, 2000; Rocca, 2001; Jones, 2008).

However, regardless of the significance given to classroom participation and its role in enhancing the learning process and helping students to become articulate and have opinions to present and share, many studies have documented students' lack of participation and interest to be involved in class activities (Caspi, Chajut, Saporta, & Beyht-Marom, 2006; Crombie, Pyke, Silverthron, Jones and Piccinin, 2003). Accordingly, Weaver and Qi (2005) remark that a great proportion of students act passively during class discussions and interactions. Such students' attitude towards classroom participation deserves further investigation, as Weaver and Qi (2005: 576) put "involvement matters". Crombie, et. al. (2003) discover that 64% of the students never, rarely, or only occasionally asked or answered classroom questions. Moreover, Caspi, et. al. (2006) reveal that about 55% of the students never or rarely took part in classroom participations. Furthermore, Weaver and Qi (2005) find out that approximately 25% of students participate in classroom discussions and interactions, with only 12% doing so regularly.

A review of the literature has highlighted several causes behind students' reluctance to take part in classroom participation. One of these causes is students' feeling of being intimidated when they are asked to share an opinion or participate in class activities (Hyde and Ruth, 2002; Fritschner, 2000; Fassinger, 1996). Sixsmith, Dyson, and Nataatmadja (2006: 2) indicate that, "Students often lack self-confidence, and fear that they may appear unintelligent to their peers

and instructors when responding to questions or providing their point of view on a given topic and therefore feel it is easier to remain quiet". Howard & Henney (1998) suggest that such a feeling could be a natural result of a lack of preparation. Moreover, Vandrick (2000) suggests that some of the causes of non-participation are shyness, classroom dynamics.

Students' gender and age are important aspects to consider as causes, which may affect and hinder classroom participation. According to Fritschner (2000) and Howard (2002), female students' participation increased considerably in senior classes. Myers, Martin and Mottet (2002) state that female students' participation was related to functional causes, while male students' participation was related to sycophantic causes specially when they want to show that they care about the course content. Also, mature and older students seem to participate more in classes.

In addition, instructor gender is recognized as a cause which influences classroom participation. Teachers' gender plays an important role as well. On the one hand, Howard and Henney (1998) proposed that male instructors are more influential in promoting class participation. On the other hand, Howard and Baird (2000) pointed out that female instructors were more inspiring and managed to encourage more students participation. However, Crombie, et. al. (2003), and Weaver and Qi (2005) realized that instructors' gender has no influence on students' participation.

There is no doubt that professors' traits and communication variables such as communication skills, classroom management and question formation will affect students' participation either positively or negatively (Fassinger, 2000). Rocca (2009) notices that when instructors are perceived as verbally aggressive, students are less likely to be involved in class participation. Myers and Rocca (2000) point out that students

tend to develop a defensive attitude and think that their instructors underestimate their abilities. Furthermore, Fritschner (2000) believes that when instructors speak fast and do not allow enough waiting time for students to answer, on return they will realize that their participation is unwelcome.

In addition, the way teachers use to call on students to involve them in class participation, and their way of criticizing students' answers will be influential, as this will create either a positive or negative classroom climate (Dallimore, Hertenstien and Platt, 2004). Students will be more motivated to participate when their instructors develop a verbal approach strategy, become more inclusive, appreciative of students' contributions, critical though respectful, show empathy, and get to know students as individuals (Mottet, Martin, and Myers 2004; Merwin, 2002). Thus, classrooms should be characterized as supportive, cooperative, and student-centered (Fassinger, 2000). Moreover, English language teachers need to practice their classroom authority wisely (Fassinger 1996; Howard and Baird, 2000). Other causes of students' classroom participation reluctance belong to class size (Howard, Short and Clark 1996; Howard, James and Tylor, 2002), and the level of students' preparation to be able to participate in class (Chang and Goswami, 2000). All research has proven that these causes have an influential impact on students' classroom participation.

Several research studies have investigated classroom participation reluctance in several English language learning settings. Taher (2005) explored the factors which would lead to communication apprehension (CA) in the English language classroom at An-Najah University in Palestine. For that purpose, the researcher distributed a questionnaire to 209 non-English majors. The findings revealed that most students encounter fear or uneasiness about their learning

experience which act as an obstacle in front of their English language learning.

Hamouda (2012) investigated 159 participants for their reasons of nonparticipation in the English language classroom in one of the key universities in Al-Qassim, Saudi Arabia. Hamouda related such reluctance to many causes such as students' low English proficiency, fear of speaking in front of others, negative evaluation, shyness, lack of self-confidence and lack of preparation.

Mousapour-Negari and Nabavizadeh (2012) explored the degree of non-participation among Iranian EFL learners and found out that productive vocabulary knowledge and gender play a role in their reluctance to participate. The results of their study showed that learners mostly preferred to avoid communication rather than have a negative attitude towards classroom participation. Furthermore, it was found that the learners' vocabulary knowledge had a significant relationship with their silence.

Farahian and Rezaee (2012) investigated an Iranian English language teacher's questions along with a classification of the students' responses to such questions. The results showed that the number of coded/display and yes/no questions exceeded open/referential questions. It was revealed that the causes for the students' reluctance to participate might have been due to the ineffective questioning techniques which the English language teacher used.

Soo and Goh (2013) examined the extent in which Malaysian tertiary students majoring in English language experience classroom participation reluctance and researched the underlying factors of such participation reluctance. The obtained data was from 78 students by applying the Reticence Scale-12 (RS-12) which measures the level of reticence/silence along six dimensions: anxiety, knowledge, timing, organization, skills and memory. The findings revealed that

reticent (participation reluctance) level was high among the students, and their major problems was related to the ineffective-control and delivery of information by their English language teachers.

Aghazadeh and Abedi (2014) interviewed 28 Iranian university English language students to find out their opinions regarding the nature of reticence (i.e., participation reluctance) in classroom, its causes, and its consequences. Based on thematic analysis of the collected data, the researchers arrived at several results. As for the causes, they concluded that silence might be due to students' personality type and even a legitimate form of classroom participation. While other causes were related to the teachers' emotionally negative feedback to questions and mistakes or, at a more general level, their authoritarian approach to students. In terms of consequences, students' participation reluctance was found to be hindering deeper mental engagement in classroom process.

Baktash and Chalak (2015) surveyed 87 Iranian undergraduate English language students majoring in English Translation with respect to the factors responsible for their classroom non-participation. The research findings showed that different factors influence students' reluctance to respond to the instructor in oral English language classrooms. These factors were instructor evaluation, lack of confidence, and low English proficiency.

Chalak and Baktash (2015) investigated 104 male and female Iranian EFL students' participation reluctance at university classrooms. The findings revealed that reluctance was high among the participants in relation to their feelings of anxiety and delivery skills. Adding to that, students suffered from low English proficiency, professors' teaching methods, and lack of self-confidence. It was suggested that language teachers' awareness of such reluctance could help

in providing a friendly learning environment and suitable activities which will enhance students' classroom participation.

The review of the literature has shown that classroom participation reluctance is a result of several causes which play a significant role in preventing students from taking part and being active. Both the English language professors and the English major student-teachers shoulder the responsibility to allow participation reluctance to exist.

Study Objective

The present study aims to investigate the causes behind English major students-teachers' classroom participation reluctance in the College of Education at Kuwait University. Another aim of this study is to find out the impact of certain variables (gender, high school major, and year of study) on the findings of the study.

Rationale

The rationale behind this study emerges from the need to provide the necessary knowledge about the importance of participation in the language classroom in the language classroom at Kuwait University. In addition, the present study is a pioneer in investigating the causes of classroom participation reluctance in the language classroom at a university level.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be of great significance to English language teachers at the university level in Kuwait. It will help to inform them about the importance of engaging students in class participation, inform them of the causes which hinder such participation, and learn how best to help their reluctant students overcome such causes. It could inspire the educators at the College of Education to reconsider the major sheets of the English major to add more courses to develop speaking skills. In addition, to ensure classroom participation at younger age, educationists and

curriculum developers at the Ministry of Education can reconsider increasing oral fluency activities in the English textbook's curriculum at school level.

Statement of Problem

Although classroom participation plays a positive role in enhancing students' understanding and allowing learning to take place, unwillingness to speak and participate in classroom activities and discussions is viewed as a common problem facing many language teachers in the English language learning and teaching settings. Sixsmith, Dyson, and Nataatmadja (2006: 1) point out that, "Academics often complain about student passivity". Students' lack of interest in participating in classroom discussions is noticed as an international phenomenon which has been researched to understand the causes behind it (Caspi, Chajut, Saporta, and Beyht-Marom 2006; Weaver and Qi, 2005; Dallimore, Hertenstien and Platt, 2004; Crombie, et. al., 2003; Maznevski, 1996; Gomez, Arai and Lowe, 1995).

Tatar (2005) remarked that only little focus was given to investigate classroom participation from students' perspective to understand their reasons for not taking part in classroom participation. As for the Kuwaiti context, the researcher has noticed from different courses that English language student-teachers in the College of Education at Kuwait University lack interest in being active in classroom participation. In addition, such a problem has not been investigated previously. Thus, the present study is an attempt to investigate and document the causes behind English language student-teachers' reluctance to take part in the English classroom participation.

Study Questions

The present study attempts to provide answers for the following questions from English major student-teachers' points of view.

1. **What are the causes of English major student-teachers' reluctance**

tance to participate in the English classroom discussions in the College of Education at Kuwait University?

- 2. Are there significant differences in the participants' responses according to their gender, high school specialization, and their year of study?**

Methodology

Participants

In this study, 150 Kuwaiti student-teachers majoring in English from the College of Education at Kuwait University participated. All the participants were Kuwaitis. According to gender, female student-teachers were 120 which equaled 80% of the sample, and male student-teachers were 30 which equaled 20% of the sample. The participants come from two high school specializations: as for Arts' major, the percentage was 60.0% which means 90 of the participants studied this major, while Science major percentage was 40.0% which means 60 of the participants studied this major. As for the years of study variable, the percentages of participants are as follow: 22.0% of the participants were freshmen with a total number of 33 students, 26.0% of the participants were sophomores with a total number of 39 students, juniors were 20.0% with a total number of 30 students, and seniors were 32.0% with a total number of 48 students.

Instrumentation and Data Collection Procedures

The present study followed the descriptive analytical methodology. The researcher looked thoroughly at different studies which investigated English language learners' reluctance to take part in classroom participation (Hamouda, 2013; Li and Liu, 2011; Donald, 2010; Taher, 2005; Chalak and Baktash, 2005, Fassinger, 1996). This has influenced the development of the study questionnaire to investigate the causes that lead to

classroom participation reluctance. Thus, the questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section was concerned with the demographic data of the participants covering the following variables: "gender, high school major, and year of study. The second section dealt with 30 items divided into two domains: "The English Professors" which included 14 items, and "The Student-teachers" which covered 16 items. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to willing students to participate during the Spring Semester of 2017/2018. To facilitate responding to the questionnaire items, the purpose of the study was explained to the participants as well as the questionnaire scale. In addition, the researcher read the items in front of the students for any clarifications. The participating students were asked to rate their responses of the questionnaire items according to a 1-4 Likert scale as follows: 4 = High, 3 = Moderate, 2 = Low, and 1 = Not at all. In addition, the findings according to the means of all items will be interpreted according to the following scale:

- Less than 2.50 indicates low level of participation.
- Equal to 2.50 and less than 3.50 indicates moderate level of participation.
- More than 3.50 indicates high level of participation.

Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire validity was established through consulting three faculty members from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education at Kuwait University. The questionnaire items were carefully reviewed to check their relevance and appropriateness to the questionnaire domains. Feedback was gained, and necessary changes were made, though they were very minor. As for the questionnaire reliability, Coefficient Alpha Cronbach was calculated to obtain a

measure of the internal and external consistency and reliability of the questionnaire for all items in its two domains. The reliability coefficients Alpha of all domains equals 0.838 which is relevant to the purpose of the study. Table 1 represents in detail the reliability values of all domains.

Table 1
Classification of Totals & Reliability Analysis

Variables Labels	Means	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
English Language Professor	3.10	0.624	0.802	14
Student-Teachers	3.51	0.666	0.797	16
All Domains	3.47	0.538	0.838	30

Data Analyses

To reach a clear understanding of the collected data, it was analysed using a recent version of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated. Moreover, for further data analyses, t-test and One-Way ANOVA were employed as well.

Findings and Discussion

Results Related to the First Question

To answer the study questions, the researcher calculated percentages, means and standard deviations of the participants' responses. Results related to the first question "What are the causes of English major student-teachers' reluctance to participate in the English classroom discussions in the College of Education at Kuwait University?" will be presented in the forthcoming tables 2, and 3, which show the participants' responses to the questionnaire items in its two domains.

Based on table 2, it shows that the level of participation of the English major student-teachers with reference to the items of this domain was moderate according to the mean's scale presented earlier, as the mean was 3.10 and the standard deviation was 0.624. The first four high means of the domain items

will be interpreted in a descending order. First comes item 10 (My professor does not like students to distract the flow of the class by asking questions) is the most prominent factor which hinders students' participation based on professors' classroom behavior, with a mean of 3.73 and a standard deviation of 1.059. Second comes item 7 (My professor gives harsh comments to participating students with low language proficiency) with a mean of 3.65 and a standard deviation of 1.092. Third is item 9 (My professor forms negative perspectives when students give wrong answers) with a mean of 3.61 and a standard deviation of 1.208. Fourth comes item 8 (My professor forms negative opinions when students make mistakes) with a mean of 3.60 and a standard deviation of 1.216. The lowest means are found in item 12 and item 2. As for item 12 (My professor uses the same teaching methods which makes me bored), with a mean of 2.60 and a standard deviation of 1.190. As for item 2 (My professor is very authoritarian), the mean is 2.58 with a standard deviation of 1.180.

The findings reflect the main causes which discourage students from being active in classroom participation because of their professors' traits, classroom management and communication variables which affect students participation (Fassinger, 2000; Myers & Rocca, 2000; Rocca, 2009). Although, Howard and Braird (2000) stressed the power of the English language professors' authority in the classroom as a cause of students' participation reluctance, such a cause is not significant in students' classroom participation in the present study. Furthermore, the fear of the professor's negative reaction and criticism is consistent with the findings of (Dalimore, Hertenstien & Platt, 2004), which will have a negative impact on students' self-confidence as well.

Table 2
Represents frequency distributions regarding students' opinions on TOT_1 (The English Language Professors)

Domain 1: The English Language Professor	High	Medium	Low	Not at all	Mean	S.D.	Scale of Participation Level
1) My professor is unable to attract my interest to participate.	53.6	22.0	14.4	10.0	3.38	1.231	Moderate
2) My professor is very authoritarian.	47.4	18.8	40.0	16.4	2.58	1.180	Low
3) My professor does not encourage oral participation.	42.8	19.2	30.4	7.6	2.86	1.231	Moderate
4) My Professor is impatient	31.2	22.0	33.6	13.2	2.83	1.230	Moderate
5) My professor asks difficult questions.	41.2	22.4	27.6	8.8	3.14	1.247	Moderate
6) My professor focuses on certain students only to participate.	45.8	27.2	22.8	4.8	3.27	1.107	Moderate
7) My professor gives harsh comments to participating students with low language proficiency.	62.4	19.2	15.6	2.8	3.65	1.092	High
8) My professor forms negative opinions when students make mistakes.	63.2	14.4	15.6	6.8	3.60	1.216	High
9) My professor forms negative perspectives when students give wrong answers.	64.8	12.0	17.2	6.0	3.61	1.208	High
10) My professor does not like students to distract the flow of the class by asking questions.	67.6	16.4	13.2	2.8	3.73	1.059	High
11) My professor allows very limited time to think of the answer to the posed question.	45.1	27.2	24.0	3.6	3.28	1.083	Moderate
12) My professor uses the same teaching methods which makes me bored.	40.4	18.8	28.4	12.4	2.60	1.190	Low
13) My professor corrects students' in a humiliating way	49.1	24.0	23.0	3.9	3.35	1.110	Moderate
14) My professor depends on teacher-centered class discussions	52.4	22.8	19.6	5.2	3.48	1.210	Moderate

Thus, to encourage students' participation, professors should establish a good rapport with their students which in turn will increase students' communication and active participation. It is necessary for the English language professors to make it clear for their students that not giving the expected or correct answers when participating would be still considered a positive attempt to be active during class participations. This will help to lower the anxiety level and make students feel positive about the class atmosphere. The English language professors need to show empathy and get to know their students as individuals (Mottet, Martin, & Myers, 2004).

It can be inferred as well that the English language professors are not authoritarian in their classrooms and this does not match the findings of Aghazadeh and Abedi (2014). Yet, this draws our attention to the findings of Soo and Goh (2013) that students' reluctance is a result of their teachers' ineffective classroom control. Thus, they need to create a controlled but still a friendly atmosphere and a positive learning environment (Chalak and Baktash, 2015).

As for English major student-teachers causes for classroom participation reluctance, table 3 represents their responses to highlight the main cause for such a reluctance.

Table 3
Represents frequency distributions regarding students' opinions on TOT_2 (The English major Student-Teachers)

Domain 2: The English major Student-Teachers	High	Medium	Low	Not at all	Mean	S.D.	Scale of Participation Level
1) I lack self-confidence.	69.2	17.8	11.2	2.8	3.78	1.061	High
2) I enjoy listening to the professor's explanations than talking.	67.2	19.2	10.4	3.2	3.67	1.186	High
3) I come late to class and this contributes to my lack of understanding and participation.	39.2	21.2	30.0	9.6	3.05	1.234	Moderate
4) I have poor command of the English language	68.4	13.4	14.2	4.0	3.73	1.025	High
5) I was not encouraged to participate since I was a student in school.	52.0	16.4	21.6	10.0	3.31	1.288	Moderate
6) The class climate does not encourage participation as my classmates laugh at students who make mistakes.	64.4	16.4	15.2	4.0	3.76	1.195	High
7) I do not like to participate because I do not prepare for classes.	69.6	18.0	10.0	2.4	3.92	1.078	High
8) I feel embarrassed to participate in front of classmates.	60.4	16.0	20.0	3.6	3.58	1.170	High
9) I do not participate because I do not fully understand the questions raised.	56.4	21.2	18.4	4.0	3.50	1.120	High
10) I have a problem in pronouncing many words which lead to improper pronunciation of the answer.	40.4	18.8	28.4	12.4	2.98	1.225	Moderate
11) I prefer to remain silent in order not to leave a negative impression on classmates when giving wrong answers.	37.6	18.4	32.0	12.0	2.92	1.214	Moderate
12) I do not participate because I do not like to hear negative comments from classmates.	38.4	16.6	32.4	12.4	2.91	1.226	Moderate
13) I sometimes forget the answer when I get called upon.	56.4	23.6	17.6	2.4	3.52	1.054	High
14) I am unable to sequence ideas together when giving answers.	58.8	20.4	24.8	6.0	3.23	1.124	Moderate
15) I do not like to participate when the class is mixed between boys and girls.	63.2	14.4	15.6	6.8	3.60	1.216	High
16) I only participate when I am sure of the answer.	47.6	27.2	18.8	6.4	3.36	1.189	Moderate

Based on Table 3, it shows that the level of participation of the English major student-teachers with reference to the

items of this domain was high according to the mean's scale presented earlier, as the mean was 3.51 and the standard deviation was 0.666. The first four high means of the domain items will be interpreted in a descending order. The most prominent cause that discourages students' participation is seen in item 7 (I do not like to participate because I do not prepare for classes), with a mean of 3.92 and a standard deviation of 1.078. In the second place is item 1 (I lack self-confidence) with a mean of 3.78 and a standard deviation of (1.061). Third is item 6 (The class climate does not encourage participation as my classmates

laugh at students who make mistakes) with a mean of 3.76 and a standard deviation of 1.145. Fourth is item 4 (I have poor command of the English language) with a mean of 3.67 and a standard deviation of 1.186.

The lowest three items with moderate means are found in items 3, 11, and 12. Item 3 (I come late to class and this contributes to my lack of understanding and participation.), with a mean of 3.05 and a standard deviation of 1.234. In item 11 (I prefer to remain silent in order not to leave a negative impression on classmates when giving wrong answers), with a mean of 2.92 and a standard deviation of 1.214. Finally comes item 12 (I do not participate because I do not like to hear negative comments from

classmates) with a mean of 2.91 and a standard deviation of 1.226.

The findings of this domain identify the causes related to the English major student-teachers for their passive participation which support the results of relevant cited literature. Clearly, students play a role in being passive participants in classroom activities and discussions (Hamoudah, 2012). Their poor command of the English language (Mousapour-Negai and Nabavizadeh, 2012) will influence their self-confidence which explains being inactive in class participation (Vandrick, 2000; Sixsmith, Dyson, and Nataatmadja, 2006).

Coming to class lazy and unprepared will have a negative impact on students' participation (Vandrick, 2000; Howard and Henney, 1998). Although listening to professors and other classmates is considered part of class participation as Wade (1994) defines class participation and discussion, still taking only the role of the listener is not considered active participation. In addition, it must be clear that most of the English major student-teachers were not used to class participation when they were at schools as they only participate when they are called upon. This is reflected on their poor language proficiency and limited vocabulary knowledge (Mousapour-Negari and Nabavizadeh, 2012).

Results Related to the Second Question

This section answers the second question "Are there significant differences in the participants' responses according to their gender, high school specialization, and their year of study?". It tests the existence of significant effects of the study variables on the participants' responses as causes which discourages their classroom participation. Tables (4, 5, and 6)

show the means and standard deviations of the students' responses as t-test and One Way ANOVA were applied.

Table 4 presents t-test results. It shows that there are significant differences in the two domains of the study instrument. TOT_A "The English language professor domain" and TOT_B "The English major student-teachers' domain" with reference to gender. The mean value 3.505 for female participants is more than the mean value 3.203 of male participants with reference to TOT_A. This means that females agree more than male participants in this domain. In addition, females agree more than males in domain TOT_B as their mean value 3.716 is more than that of males, which is 3.314. The findings match those of Myer et.al. (2002).

Table 5 shows that t-test results indicate that there is a significant difference in domain TOT_B (student-teachers domain) with reference to high school specialization as the mean value 3.557 of Arts specialization is more than the mean value 3.278 of Science specialization. This indicates that the Arts specialization participants agree more on the items on this domain more than Science specialization participants.

Table 6 shows that there were no significant differences between the total of answers according to the year of study with reference to the instrument domains. The results disagree with the findings of Myers et al (2002) as they proposed that senior and mature students participate more than other students.

Table 4
T-Test Tot_A to Tot_B by gender (1, 2)

Variable Names	Female			Male			t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation			
TOT_A	120	3.505	0.612	30	3.203	0.683	-3.767	144	0.000*
TOT_B	120	3.716	0.598	30	3.314	0.762	-4.571	144	0.000*

Conclusion

The present study investigated the causes of classroom participation reluctance from the points of view of English major student-teachers at Kuwait University. The results show that there are several causes which hinder student-teachers' participation in relation to the questionnaire domains. Both the English language professors and student-teachers should reconsider the concepts and objectives behind classroom participation as it is a sign of good teaching/learning process. First, the English language professors must have a good knowledge about the meaning and causes of classroom participation reluctance as this will help them evaluate their students' participation properly. Second, they must be enthusiastic, patient, supportive and motivating, and practice a good level of authority to control their classrooms. There is no doubt that the classroom environment plays an important role in motivating students to participate. Students need a positive and supportive learning environment from the sides of their professors and classmates to encourage them to participate and be more involved and active (Mottet, Martin, & Myers, 2004; Merwin, 2004; Fassinger, 2000; Swain, 2000).

In addition, students must come to class prepared and ready to be active and

take part in classroom discussions and activities. It is not surprising that shyness and lack of self-confidence are major causes in discouraging participation. The more they practice their language, the more they become competent and articulate. This will give them a great opportunity to test their comprehension, grammar, and ability to form good English sentences. Otherwise, even students with good English language proficiency, if they decide to be silent and reluctant to participate will encounter deficiency in carrying out English conversations (Wen and Clement, 2003). This will make their professors judge and evaluate them negatively (Donald, 2010).

It is recommended to investigate two important causes that could influence classroom participation. The first one is the role of participation grades. Would it make a difference in student-teachers' perception of class participation when assigning high marks on participation? The second one is faculty staff gender. It could be both an encouraging and a discouraging factor for participation factor. Thus, it is recommended to conduct an in depth quantitative and qualitative studies to explore the influence of both factors as possible causes of English major student-teachers' class participation reluctance.

Table 5
T-Test TOT_A to TOT_B BY High School Specialization (1, 2)

Variable Names	Arts			Science			T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation			
TOT_A	90	3.482	0.574	60	3.345	0.675	-1.022	144	0.308
TOT_B	90	3.557	0.538	60	3.278	0.635	-2.133	144	0.034*

Table 6
F-Test (ANOVA) by Year of Study

Variable Labels	Source	D.F.	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Ratio	Sig.
TOT_ALL	Between Groups	3	52.891	17.631	1.819	0.144
	Within Groups	146	23.842	9.692		

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