

# Papers in English

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**Cultural Supremacy:  
Internal and External  
Evaluators' Role in EFL Programs**

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**Abstract :**

Debate in the ESL/EFL evaluation literature about the role of internal and external evaluators has never lost its momentum and prominence. This study focuses on the role different evaluators can play in evaluating EFL programs, a task that has been neglected for a long time within the realm of ESL program evaluation. A new modified model of the participatory evaluation approach is suggested based on the type of evaluators who would be most suitable to conduct evaluation in an EFL context. Special attention is given to the negative cross-cultural consequences that have emerged as a result of one-sided external evaluation process of EFL programs, which Anderson and Scott (1992) candidly referred to as JIJOE (Jet-In-Jet-Out-Evaluators).

## الاستعلاء الثقافي ودور المقوم المحلي والخارجي في نقويم برامج نعليق اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية

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### ملخص البحث

لم يفقد الجدل حول تقويم برامج اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة ثانية أو أجنبية حيويته وأهميته في أدبيات علم اللغة التطبيقي. وهذه الدراسة تعنى بجانب أغفل زمنياً طويلاً في خضم الدراسات المهمة بتقييم برامج اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة ثانية، ألا وهو الأدوار المختلفة التي يمكن أن يقوم بها المقومون المحليون والخارجيون. وبناءً على ذلك فقد اقترحت الدراسة نظاماً جديداً لعملية التقييم يحدد نوعية المقومين المناسبين لتقييم برامج تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية. كما عنيت الدراسة بتبيين الآثار السلبية لنشاطات التقويم التي لا تأخذ الاختلافات الثقافية في الاعتبار، وذلك بسبب تفرد المقومون الخارجيين بعملية التقويم، وهو ما حدا بالدرسون وسكوت (1992) لتسمية هذا الصنف من المقومين "المقومين الرحل".

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### **Introduction**

Early attempts at ESL program evaluation attracted so little attention that many ESL scholars have been discouraged from pursuing further studies in this field. This may be due to the fact that evaluation is a complex, interdependent, demanding and challenging endeavor (Torres, Preskill and Piontek 1996: 739). Some of these early studies in ESL evaluation were reported in Beretta (1990), Alderson and Beretta (1992) and Rea-Dickins (1994). Richards (1984) and Beretta (1986) emphasized the urgent need for ESL program evaluation because numerous teaching methodologies are being rapidly introduced while the older ones have never been rigorously evaluated. In addition to discussing the role external and internal evaluators can play in evaluating EFL/ESL programs, this study will attempt to show that the process of evaluation can never be viewed as value or culture-free. It is rather highly affected by numerous factors and interests that involve cross-cultural influence.

### **Background**

When trying to give an overview of what program evaluation is about, I realized that the role of the evaluator determines how evaluation is viewed. Taylor (1950) referred to evaluation as the process through which the implementation of behavioral objectives is determined. Suchman (1967) viewed the role of evaluation in the same way as Taylor when he stated that evaluation is the determination of results attained by some activity designed to accomplish certain goals. During his review of several approaches to evaluation, Stake (1967) seemed to be endorsing the role of program evaluation as extensive data gathering that goes through the steps of collection, processing and interpretation. The only difference between Stake's and Taylor's view of the role of evaluation is that, in addition to determining the objectives, Stake also looks at the process

and what goes on in the classroom, in reference to educational evaluation. Scriven (1972) argues that the major role of evaluation is to provide judgments, and the best qualified to judge is the evaluator. Stufflebeam et al. (1971) perceive the role of the evaluator to be more of a facilitator than a judge though the evaluator is still bestowed with judgmental power. Thus, they all value the role of an evaluator as that of a person who would assist in identifying the different attainments and would provide a collection of different positions of different stakeholders. Such an approach to evaluation can be perceived as the process of collecting information that can assist decision-making with respect to the programs under evaluation.

After reviewing the different views presented in the field by different practicing evaluators, Rea-Dickins (1994) came up with a progressive understanding of evaluation as a process of collaborative efforts to reach a consensus regarding a program. As she viewed it, educational program evaluation, goes beyond the limited perspective of imposing judgment to progress into "a process designed to collect information to feed into decision making on matters of policy and practice" (72). Similar to Alderson's (1992) perspective is Rea-Dickins' views of evaluation as "participative, concerned with communication and critical debate and it is principled and systematic and an integral part of curriculum planning and implementation" (73). Cronbach (1982) views the process of evaluation as that which includes the collection of data from different participants in a program and sets the information before the decision-making body, rather than the making of individual judgments on the part of the evaluator.

The debate in the evaluation literature about the role of internal and external evaluators has never lost its momentum and prominence. In their study regarding internal and external

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evaluators' attitudes toward communicating with different stakeholders and reporting evaluation findings, Torres, Preskill and Piontek (1996) mentioned that 75% of the American Evaluation Association members who participated in the study stated that they were moderately satisfied with their communication and reporting efforts. They have also mentioned a number of problems that evaluators had reported to have hindered a successful evaluation effort. Among these problems are: (a) lack of clarity among stakeholders about goals of the program involved, and (b) sufficient time was not always given for the evaluation process to progress. (733-36) They have also reported that more experienced evaluators seem to be more satisfied with their evaluation outcomes than less experienced ones (736). Thus, it would seem that internal and external evaluators are met with different challenges in carrying out the evaluation process.

Evaluation of ESL programs cannot be detached from the history and the culture of English. Long history of the English colonial language policies and the current imperial role of English will certainly have their effect on the process of ESL/EFL program evaluation, especially when an external 'expatriate expert' is involved. Lord Macawly's doctoring words about the aims the teaching of English should achieve make an excellent example of what we mean by cultural supremacy. "A class of persons, Indians in blood and color, English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect" (Phillipson 2003: 7). The imperial role of English was saliently formulated by Rothkopf, the director of the Kissinger Foundation when he stated that:

"It is in the economic and political interest of the United States to ensure that if the world is moving toward a common language, it be English; that if the world is moving toward common

telecommunications, safety, and quality standards, they be American; and that if common values are being developed, they be values with which the Americans are comfortable" (Phillipson 2003:9).

Evaluation of English as a second/foreign language programs, though relatively a new field, has been affected by various factors relating to the huge profitability of the 'English teaching' industry. The blue print for the English teaching profession was clearly illustrated in the world of R. V. Routh, an advisor to the British Council:

"A new career service is needed, for gentlemen teachers of English with equivalent status to 'the Civil Service, Army, Bar, or Church', an 'army of linguistic missionaries' generated by a 'training center for post-graduate studies and research', and a 'central office in London, from which teachers radiate all over the world'. The new service must 'lay the foundations of a world-language and culture based on our own'." (cited in Phillipson 2003:8).

### **Aims**

The aim of this study is not to review the literature of the topic under discussion but rather to survey the role of evaluation from different perspectives, by raising the following question: Who is more beneficial in evaluating EFL programs, an internal or an external evaluator? Two related issues will be considered:

1. Cultural and ideological backgrounds that have their shadows on the evaluation process.
2. Emergence of a newly proposed model of evaluating the EFL programs, and more specifically the one of immediate concern to this study; namely the EFL program at King Khalid University.

Before dealing with the above questions, I will shed some

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light on some views as to whether a professional evaluator or a content-area specialist is more credible and competent to evaluate educational programs generally and EFL programs in particular.

### **Professional Evaluator or Content Specialist.**

The question of who is better placed to carry out the evaluation task was raised by Worthen and Sanders (1984) in the context of educational program evaluation. They referred to three different alternatives: "a content specialist, an evaluation specialist, or some combination of the two" (4). Concerning the first option, they claim that content specialist evaluators tend to bring their own personal judgments and attitudes with them to bear on the evaluation process. Professional evaluators, the second option are said to have their own prejudices and come to the evaluation task lacking knowledge in the content area. They are inevitably influenced by their own values and personal attitudes. Scriven (1972) realized that too by saying, "Once they become identified with those aims, emotionally as well as economically, they lose something of great importance to an objective evaluation- their independence" (66).

Worthen and Sanders (1984) argued that content area experts may seem more susceptible to be influenced by their colleagues and their attachment to the field. On the other hand, for professional evaluators to maintain full autonomy is not unquestionable. However, they thought that the probability of a content expert being vulnerable to dependency is greater than that of a professional evaluator. They supported their arguments by referring to Weiss (1973), who stated that "a basic difference in stance between practitioners and evaluators: practitioners have to believe in what they are doing; evaluators have to doubt . . . Practitioners are

committed to a project; they invest enormous amounts of time and energy and their professional reputation in its success. Evaluators are committed to the acquisition of knowledge, and their careers are dependent on producing competent research whether the project succeeds or fails" (52).

The third option for educational program evaluation was referred to by Worthen and Sanders (1984) as content-based evaluation. It refers to an evaluator who is qualified in both evaluation and in the content area being evaluated. This seems to be the best choice for performing the tasks of both the content specialist and the professional evaluator.

Worthen and Sanders hypothesized that in a situation where a content-based evaluator is not available, a professional evaluator is a good substitute. In support of their view, they refer to Stufflebeam's (1973) twenty-two steps in planning educational evaluation, which he provided as useful tips for realizing the evaluator's role. They claimed that twenty of these conditions were met by the professional evaluator. On the other hand, Worthen and Sanders realized the problem of credibility that professional evaluators may have to face. Such a problem reflects the importance of contribution that a content-based evaluator can make to the process of evaluation.

In the ESL program evaluation context, Beretta (1990) realized that both ESL specialists and professional evaluators seemed to be lacking in certain respects. ESL specialists lack complete autonomy while the professional evaluators lack credibility. Nevertheless, the best choice for ESL program evaluation--an ESL specialist who is trained in evaluation--is the one least available. Beretta emphasized this point by saying, "If it is true that a non-L2 evaluator would lack credibility, then his findings will be ignored. Thus it would appear that the only hope is for more L2 specialists to take up the challenge

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of evaluation" (23). Alderson (1992) specifies the type of qualifications that evaluators of language programs needed to possess in order to be able to conduct a credible and valid evaluation. He thinks that when there are particular sensitivities involved, which cannot or ought not to be revealed to outsiders, it is not desirable to involve an outsider in evaluating such a program. The qualifications specified by Alderson include: (a) experience and qualification in language education or applied linguistics would be an advantage to any evaluator participating in evaluating language programs, (b) knowledge or experience with similar programs in similar settings (educational, social, cultural, geographical) would clearly be of value, (c) and finally, statistical or ethnographic skills may be needed, as may particular linguistic abilities, or the ability to communicate well in reports or in public relations, as well as attributes like persuasiveness, diplomacy and tact ( 279-281).

### **An Insider or an Outsider Evaluator.**

After this brief presentation of different views regarding the needed expertise of evaluators in the content area, which is applied linguistics in our case, we need to focus more on the central question of this study; namely, whether an external or an internal evaluator would be more credible in evaluating EFL programs. This same question will be dealt with in a more focused EFL context in relation to the English Language Intensive Program (ELIP) at King Khalid University, which has gone through many developmental stages and is currently expected to expand to accommodate future demands for ESP and EFL intensive programs. There is no doubt that tackling this issue is rather more complex than the previously raised questions as to whether a content-based specialist or a professional evaluator should take over the evaluation. Nevertheless, the

insider/outsider evaluator issue is an important matter that has not received the attention it deserves in program evaluation in general. In addition, the whole idea of EFL program evaluation is rather underdeveloped, if not entirely neglected, in the field of applied linguistics (Beretta, 1990). It is therefore surprising to discover that the issue of insider and outsider evaluators has received little attention from practitioners in ESL or EFL (i.e. Beretta, 1990 and Alderson, 1992). The issue raised here is gaining prominent grounds for discussion in current program evaluation research, as is clear in the contributions of House (1988), Thompson (1989), Nevo (1983, 1989) and Rea-Dickins (1994).

It would seem to me that the question of who should undertake ESL program evaluation--someone from the inside or someone from outside the program--is the first to be asked whenever the need for evaluating a program arises. However, there are many ESL program designers and decision makers who do not perceive evaluation as a valuable contribution or who misunderstand what evaluation is. They need to be informed about the necessity of evaluating such programs. Nevo (1983) referred to the insider, or "internal," evaluator as the "one who is employed by the project and reports directly to its management." The outsider, or "external" evaluator "is not directly employed by the project and/or enjoys a higher degree of independence" (123).

In this section of the paper, I will try to summarize some of the different viewpoints regarding the advantages and disadvantages of insiders and outsiders in program evaluation in general and ESL programs in particular. Subsequently, such issues will be considered against a more focused context, which is the EFL intensive program at King Khalid University or probably any other similar language program, which is affiliated to a university in Saudi

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Arabia.

House (1988) noted that the trend is shifting from evaluation by outsiders to evaluation by insiders who are employed within the organization being evaluated, such as the FBI. He indicated that there are two problems linked to internal program evaluation. The first is that "internal evaluators too often become the tool of the administrators" (64). In other words, the autonomy of the insider evaluator could be threatened. The second problem is "the routinization of the evaluation" (64). House thinks that the probability is high for an insider evaluator to follow repetitive methods and procedures in program evaluation. However, he does not perceive outsider evaluators to be without shortcomings either. He mentions that outsider evaluators sometimes do not find access to certain critical documents that may reveal valuable information but which might be accessible to insider evaluators in the first place.

The claim that the outsider evaluator is more credible than the insider evaluator was advanced by Mowbery (1988). His argument was that the outsider has more autonomy than the insider evaluator. There is another aspect which may seem to favor an outsider evaluator, namely, that an outsider evaluator can notice certain elements of a program that might be overlooked by the insider evaluator. This is especially true in ESL programs, where innumerable variables interfere and where a diverse mixture of human personalities is involved. Beretta (1989) realized the superiority of an outsider evaluator in avoiding similar situations by arguing that "An internal evaluation seems to suffer from the probability that it will be partial, not only in the sense of being biased, but also in the sense of being incomplete" (26).

Nevo (1989) recommended external evaluators because they can be very helpful in providing "expert opinions" when involved in

program evaluation. He did not consider the external expert necessary for all aspects of the evaluation procedure as in data collection processes and the like. Instead, Nevo thought of external experts as providing recommendations regarding the evaluation process. He also suggested that such involvement of external experts would result in some advantages for the implementation and credibility of the evaluation.

Morris and Cohn (1993) reported that the external evaluators who participated in their study on ethical challenges have mentioned facing ethical challenges while doing evaluation more often than their internal counterparts. They explained such findings in terms of the conventional wisdom that "when one is too close to a situation clear thinking can suffer." (636) As Mathison (1991) has observed, co-optation is a particularly salient problem for internal evaluators because of the role conflicts associated with being both a professional evaluator and a member of the organization being evaluated. Sensitivity to ethical dilemmas is thus diminished because "organizations work against self-reflection and self-criticism and the internal evaluator must often go against the organizational zeitgeist" (197).

#### **External Evaluators and Sociocultural Bias.**

Based on their firsthand information of working as ESL external evaluators, Alderson and Scott (1992) seem to be very critical of the efficiency of external evaluators who they referred to as jet-in jet-out experts (JIJOE). They think that the role of this type of external evaluators is purely judgmental and incomprehensive. External experts coming in to evaluate certain projects (in this context language programs) find themselves with too many issues to be tackled in a very short period of time, usually one to three weeks. They have to familiarize themselves with the "project, its aims and

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objectives, its history, personnel, achievements, problems and hopes, and at the end she or he submits a report on the project, with recommendations as to the future development, abandonment or modification of the project" (25).

Because of the limited time and experience with certain projects, external evaluators are forced to depend on their own superficial knowledge of the program they were assigned to evaluate. They tend to overlook the complex social and cultural backgrounds that play a great role when conducting evaluation in unfamiliar contexts. It would be extremely difficult for (expatriate) external evaluators to conduct their own work without the help of local internal evaluators in providing first hand information needed for evaluating language programs which include "test results, classroom observations, reports, together with evidence for, of the effect of implementing materials, syllabuses and so on" (26).

The involvement of external expert evaluator in evaluating programs can be an opportunity for the benefactors of the project to convince the sponsors of the worthiness of the project, especially with programs subsidized by foreign, international or even governmental agencies. The JIJOE (expatriate external evaluator) can pose a threat to the program he is evaluating because "the outsider cannot possibly gain an adequate understanding of the background to the project, the nature of its development over time, the reason for important decisions and the likely effect of alternative decisions..." (26).

To secure the benefit of expert opinion from external evaluators, Alderson and Scott suggested what they coined as the participatory model of evaluation. This model involves internal evaluators to play the major role in data collection needed for evaluation. The external evaluator's role in evaluating the program is

that of an adviser. So the external evaluator cooperates at the same level as the internal evaluator rather than imposing a superior judgmental role (27). Participatory evaluation, as the name suggests, is the type of evaluation that involves all participants in the making of decisions regarding the different developmental stages of evaluation, the planning and the fieldwork involved in evaluation. All participants are expected to take an active role. Another aspect of participatory evaluation is that it should specify the potential benefits that participants could gain from the evaluation process and the type of improvements that can emerge from it. In other words, even people who serve as evaluators should be informed about the beneficial results that could be gained by participating in the evaluation process as well as the kind of improvements the program could gain.

By applying this model of evaluation in evaluating ESP programs within an EFL context in Brazil, Alderson and Scott realized that there was "a remarkable degree of enthusiasm, collaboration and interest in the evaluation on the part of ESP teachers... The teachers took the results of the evaluation very seriously". They were even receptive to negative findings, rather than viewing them as irrelevant or invalid (52). Alderson and Scott warned that a participatory evaluation process, because of its interactive nature, requires more time for the evaluation to take place. All participants play a role at all stages of evaluation from planning to data collection to feedback, etc. Therefore, participatory evaluation requires cooperative teamwork from all participants in the evaluation project: external, internal evaluators and all those involved in the execution of the program.

Alderson and Scott (1992) would rather to limit the role of an outsider evaluator to that of an advisor. "Provided that a project has

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conducted a well-designed evaluation of its activities, with or without outsider advice, an outsider can provide a very useful distanced view on the value of the resultant data, and the legitimacy of the interpretations that are offered in any written report". They sadly admitted "unfortunately, such a scenario is rarely presented to visiting 'experts' and they all too frequently expected to evaluate a project in the almost complete absence of data or reports" (56). Through applying the collaborative participatory approach as suggested by Alderson and Scott (1992) in their evaluation of an intensive English language program in Hong Kong, Lewkowitz and Nunan (1998) alluded to some problems that would require attention before going through the evaluation process. These problems of communication and interpretation should have in mind the different levels of authority involved in such a program. They suggested that these problems could be resolved through early explanation of the exact roles of the major stakeholders at the different phases of the evaluation. No major changes should take place during the process of evaluation without the consent of the major stakeholders. So, the role of the external evaluator within an EFL program is limited to presenting an expert decision regarding already collected and analyzed data by a team of internal evaluators. Both internal and external evaluators of a program participate interactively to reach a consensus regarding the matching between the goals of the program and its achievements. The external evaluator's expert advice is not an outside imposed judgment, but rather a commonly agreed upon set of recommendations.

### **Insider or Outsider for EFL Program Evaluators**

In this part of the study, a brief account of the EFL intensive program in question (English program at King Khalid University) will be discussed with reference to other relevant factors. I will also try to elaborate on the roles outsider and insider evaluators can play in evaluating such a program based on a somewhat newly modified model based on the participatory model of evaluation, as suggested by Alderson and Scott (1992).

The program I had in mind when trying to propose a suitable model for evaluating EFL programs is the EFL intensive program at King Khalid University. It is a division of the English department under the auspices of the Institute of English and Translation, at King Khalid University. It intends to fulfill the urgent need of providing university entrants who intend to major in English with a sound foundation in the language. In addition, the program has been providing an ESP intensive course for medical students for about two decades. Recently, more ESP intensive courses have been approved to start in the Fall, 2001 for science, engineering and computer science students. Such extensive demand for a variety of ESP intensive courses led the university to approve the proposal of the English Unit to supervise the different intensive courses.

The need for this program was heightened by the extremely low level of freshmen's English, although they have spent six years studying English in public middle and secondary schools (Al-Shamary, 1989: 177-9). Students are usually given a standardized placement test to place them at the appropriate level within the EFL intensive program prior to their admission to the B.A. program in the English department. Other students who score too low seek admission to other departments. Medical, science, engineering and computer science students will now be enrolled in their specific ESP

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intensive courses during their first preparatory year. With the introduction of several new ESP programs, hundreds of students will be involved. A greater number of teachers will be recruited. Selection of appropriate EFL/ESP materials for the different fields will be very demanding. Developing syllabuses and administrative procedures will be very challenging.

Decisions regarding the syllabus, methodology, or any other academic aspects are discussed within specialized committees whose suggestions are further discussed in departmental meetings for final approval and implementation. However, the dramatic changes created by introducing a number of new ESP programs demand very careful planning and collaborative efforts in managing such a complicated program catering to varied needs. It would seem that a continuous developmental evaluation mechanism is urgently required for the success of the program from an early stage.

For the program in question, as it is the case with most EFL programs, formal evaluation is non-existent. When evaluation is mentioned, it is often understood to mean standardized tests. Major stakeholders, like teachers, students and administrators need to play major roles in the planning, implementation and evaluation of such magnitude.

Prior to dealing with whether internal or external evaluation is required for such a program, the idea of evaluation and the awareness for the need for evaluation must be established. As indicated in the previous sections, an external evaluator may find it difficult to furnish such a conviction. It should be internally accepted by all participants in the program. Any outside imposition may end in failure. Moreover, an external evaluator can do this because of the previously mentioned realities. An external evaluator would need to spend an immense amount of time and effort in order to acquire an

understanding of the many facets involved in the program.

When evaluating such a complex EFL program or a collection of programs, the choice of an insider or an outsider evaluator is an immediate and a considerably more difficult task. Nevertheless, I will try to focus on who would benefit the program evaluation the most, based on the recommendations of eminent specialists in the field and on my close association with the different developmental stages of the multitude of emerging EFL and ESP programs at KKU.

Regardless of which type of evaluator is selected for evaluating the EFL ESP program, stakeholders including administrators, teachers and students need to understand the real role of evaluation. Negotiating an evaluation framework will be the most difficult part because of the stakeholders' conceptions of the nature of evaluation. They are in general similar to the traditional view of evaluation, as presented by Stake (1967), in which he viewed evaluation as purely judgmental, rather than a process to help in problem-solving and decision-making. Therefore, evaluating such a program should be integrated within the fabric of all facets involved. It would seem that devising a reliable evaluation mechanism should have accompanied the earliest stages of designing the framework of the program. Nonetheless, if that step was overlooked, evaluation remains essential for monitoring the progress of any program.

Arguments regarding the contributions of insiders and outsiders to program evaluation discussed in the previous section are of great relevance in this context, especially when a clear perspective regarding the program in question has been visualized. However, I think that there are particular characteristics of the program that may cast some light on the theoretical arguments as to which type of evaluator would be of greater benefit to EFL/ ESP programs. In addition to the TFL professional dimension, this paper

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will focus as well at the cultural and ideological factors that may interfere in the evaluation process.

### **Evaluation: The Cultural and The Ideological Dimension.**

There is no doubt that the advantages of the outsider evaluator rest where, sometimes, the insider evaluator has disadvantages. However, the multifaceted nature of the program and numerous variables would hinder the role of any serious external evaluator. Financial and professional autonomy of the outsider evaluator, as argued by House (1988), may allow open discussion of evaluation results openly with all concerned stakeholders, but may be of little value in a university environment where relationship between administration and faculty is based on peers (Henderson, 1967). Such a context differs from situations where there is a huge gap in status among those involved in the evaluation process. Most researchers, in the field of evaluation, have based their views on experiences that differ completely from this peculiar academic context. Thompson (1989), as an outside evaluator, claims to have successfully conducted an evaluation by adopting what she named the "powerbroker" role in the Maghreb situation. This involved a donor agency and some local programs. One is bound to be critical of the negative assumptions she had about the Maghrebi society, which would seem to have adversely influenced her results. She assumed the role of external evaluator as powerbroker based on vague, and to some extent, generalized stereotypes about the Moroccans. For example, Thompson referred to the Moroccans by saying, "If one person wants to raise an issue with another, he or she will visit the other, have tea, talk about generalities, and only at the end of the visit mention his or her real purpose in an offhanded way. Maghrebis never bluntly say no" (40). To support her idea about the

Maghrebis, she quoted Davis (1979), another foreigner, as saying that they have "a cultural sanction against asking direct questions, which are usually parried or politely circumvented. If one should be gauche enough to ask questions, the socially correct answer is non-informative"(11). This external generalized view regarding Moroccan Arabic sociolinguistics is very similar to those linguistically unsubstantiated statements that Shouby (1956) had previously made about the discourse features of Arabic. The only difference is that he was more candid and insensitive

Thompson (1989) based her assumptions for what was supposed to be an objective study on a vague generalization about millions of people from various socioeconomic and linguistic backgrounds. It seems to me that such a practice in the field of evaluating programs in other nonwestern societies falls within the orientalist's paradigm of picturing and describing the East. Susser's (1998) study regarding some EFL research in the 'Othering' of some practices in the Japanese culture as an orientalist's practices within the profession of English language teaching to represent one form of what we referred to as 'cultural supremacy'. One should guard against falling into the same trap as Thompson, by making a generalization about external evaluators' view of other cultures based on sporadic cases and with a superficial observation of cultural practices. It is important to caution against the negative consequences of judging other nations based on western standards as if they were the only "universally accepted" way of life. Otherwise, such studies would fall into the trap of 'linguisticism', which Phillipson (1992, 2004) has warned against in his numerous studies, especially in relationship to ESL/EFL programs.

Thompson's claim is just one more example of stereotypical generalizations about other cultures by someone who does not know

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the language and has little background about the complexity of the sociolinguistic interactions and dialects prevailing in a given society. In other words, such claims were just manifestations of presumed Western cultural supremacy. These inaccurate views of the 'Other' have led to many incorrect assumptions on the part of many outsiders, especially westerners. Said's (1978) Orientalism and later (1979) Covering Islam have thoroughly discussed the causes for the emergence of such attitudes towards other cultures. Such assumptions based on stereotypes and prejudgments are not worthy to have a place in scientific endeavor. Such attitudes tend rather to cast doubt on the involvement of external foreign evaluators in cross-cultural contexts. Said highlights this point by stating that "... books and articles continue to pour forth extolling the nonpolitical nature of Western scholarship, the fruits of Orientalist learning, and the value of 'objective' expertise. At the very same time there is scarcely an expert on 'Islam' who has not been a consultant or even an employee of the government, the various corporations, the media (xvii)".

In the context of EFL intensive programs at KKU, we should not underestimate the role an insider evaluator can play, especially if Patton's (1988) concept of utilization of evaluation is considered. The insider evaluator has full understanding of how the program is operated. He can have access to important unnoticed cumulative information, which can help in building a database for an informed evaluation. He is also aware of the actual positions of power in the decision-making hierarchy and process. An outsider evaluator, if he is a known specialist, may hold a prestigious position from which he can access some resources that may not be provided to an insider to help in the evaluation process. Nevertheless, his lack of knowledge regarding the sociolinguistic and cross-cultural aspects of the community involved may impair the whole process of evaluation.

It is not necessarily true that external evaluators are more neutral and objective than internal evaluators especially when internal disagreements that normally exist inside the institution are concerned. This becomes truer when we take into consideration that not all external evaluators possess the required expertise (Alderson, 1992:279). Even if they are well-versed in the content area, applied linguistics, they may be lacking either in evaluation expertise in certain EFL contexts or in cross-cultural knowledge which proved to be of great importance when dealing with evaluation in different cross-cultural contexts as reported by Alderson (1992), Weir and Roberts (1991).

Evaluators of a program should have immediate and first-hand information about its details because of the decisive role they play through their evaluation results. Major implementations may result based on the evaluators' recommendations.

Lau and LeMahieu (1997) recognize the role of evaluators as integral to the program in which they are involved. They emphasize that the "evaluator ... is no longer a distant, disinterested gatherer of data using predetermined and invariant methods of collection, but a breathing, living human being in close contact with the progress of the program and its participants, using his/her judgment and expertise in response to the evolving evaluation needs" (8). Cousins and Earl (1992) have also highlighted the responsibility of evaluators to be responsive to the needs of the stakeholders involved in a particular program. Torres, Preskill and Piontek (1996), after conducting an intensive study on the internal and external evaluators' practices and concerns about communicating and reporting evaluation findings among a random sample of the members of the American Evaluation Association that "internal evaluation was equally as prevalent as external evaluation..." (733).

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What really matters is the evaluators' experience and flexibility in handling different types of evaluations. Issues like ownership, sensitivity to program values, respectfulness, willingness to examine assumptions, and commitment to program goals should interact in myriad ways as all those involved in evaluation come together to negotiate the essence of their collaborative activity (Rallis and Rossman, 2000: 85).

### **The Modified Participatory Evaluation Model.**

Having presented the arguments for the roles that different evaluators could play in different evaluation contexts while bearing in mind the structure and the objectives of the EFL/ESP intensive programs at KKU, it would seem that a team of insider and outsider evaluators (with national affiliation) would be of more benefit to KKU EFL/ESP programs or any other similar programs. The external evaluator assumes the role of expert consultant with an internal sense of how to deal with socio-cultural as well as academic settings. An external evaluator (with national affiliation) refers to an evaluator who is an applied linguist himself and from another institution within the country in question. Based on this modification of the participatory model as proposed by Alderson and Scott (1992), the KKU EFL/ESP programs require a joint evaluation effort from both an external evaluator with who is familiar with the academic and the socio-cultural context and an internal evaluator who would maintain the continuous course of evaluation. According to Alderson and Scott (1992) "a strong and understandable belief persists that outsider evaluations are influenced by outsider or external priorities and perceptions..." (27). The general framework of limited external evaluator participation suggested here differs with Alderson and Scott's proposed model; in the sense that the external evaluator is of

a national affiliation but from a different institution rather than the expatriate (JIJOE) suggested by Alderson and Scott (1992). It is therefore, proposed here that both external and internal evaluators leading the different teams of participants should be skillful, trained evaluators knowledgeable in the content area.

Foreign external evaluators should be avoided in programs with cross-cultural uniqueness. They usually bring their ethnocentric cross-cultural biases and attitudes with them into the evaluation process. Such an evaluation process that calls for the participation of an evaluation team composed of internally influenced external evaluator and in-house internal evaluator will secure the advantages of both external and internal evaluators while avoiding the shortcoming of JIJOE, as named by Alderson (1992). This cooperative venture of external expert evaluator from a local institution along with an internal evaluator is more likely to facilitate the cycle of planning, implementing and reflecting as proposed by Redding (1996). Traditional approaches of evaluating health, business and government spending programs have proved to be futile. One major factor behind such failure was the involvement of expatriate external evaluators with little background regarding the evaluation environment. Evaluation of EFL programs which include a multitude of factors calls for a more sensitive model to the local evaluation demands (Alderson and Scott, 1992, Alderson, 1992: Rea-Dickins, 1994 and Lau, 1997). Lau and LeMahieu (1997) referred to teachers as being different in their understanding of evaluation because of the humane nature of their profession. "Individuals who have chosen teaching to be their mission in life find fulfillment in seeing their students learn. They welcome opportunities to improve their teaching; they feel empowered when supported to unleash their creative energies in pushing their professional development to higher grounds." (7).

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It has been recognized in the evaluation literature that each evaluation project can be a unique new challenge that requires somewhat different or modified approach. We can hardly claim that an evaluation experience in one context is a replica of another in a similar context. Cornbach (1987) underscores the need for an eclectic choice among different approaches to evaluation. "Evaluators need not-in fact, they should not- decide which school of thought they belong to. Something is gained when an evaluation becomes more objective, more reproducible, more concentrated. Something else is gained when the evaluation becomes more phenomenological, more flexible, and broader in its coverage. The choices should differ from evaluation to evaluation (32-3)."

The modified participatory approach to evaluate the EFL/ESP intensive programs at KKU requires an internal evaluator to be in charge of the long processes of data collection and fact-finding since it is easier for him to obtain the information needed for the evaluation than an outsider. An outsider expert (with national affiliation) can contribute a great deal to the evaluation of the program under discussion by directing future evaluations, pointing out areas that seem to be overlooked by the insider evaluator and enhancing the credibility and authenticity of the evaluation results. This combined effort will be more appealing to most stakeholders, especially decision makers, and it will not be as costly as having an JIJOE outsider evaluator perform the evaluation alone. The outsider expert will not need to stay for very long since the insider evaluator will do most of the data collection and processing, which is a time consuming task. However, the outsider evaluator should devote enough time and effort to the different phases of the evaluation process.

The one agenda approach in cooperative participatory

evaluation involving internal and external evaluators familiar with the evaluation context may guarantee better use of the evaluation results. Many evaluation efforts dependent on external evaluators have ended in futility. This suggested modified model of collaborative participatory evaluation for the EFL/ESP intensive programs would hopefully bring about some of the advantages that this model has already shown. Rea-Dickins and Germaine (1998) pointed out some advantages of such involvement. "It eases data collection, enhances professionalism within the field, and contributes to participants' commitment to the changes being evaluated (in Lewkowicz and Nunan 1998: 684).

One of the main outcomes of this evaluation model is accommodating views of all concerned stakeholders and therefore securing the possibility of implementing the final recommendations. "Instead of being a threatening stranger..., the external evaluator is a collaborator engaged in 'substantive conversation' with all stakeholders who feel like one team" (Lau and LeMahieu 1997: 13). In this sense he provides solutions rather than imposing judgments. Beretta (1990) warned against fruitless results by stating "that a great number of both ESL and educational evaluations have been undertaken apparently without an awareness that the studies would do little to advance theory, but also without a compensating sense of how the results might be utilized" (4).

The teamwork signified by the participation of in-house stakeholders led by content-based insider and outsider evaluators working under the framework of the eclectic participatory model discussed above will hopefully bring about success in reforming and developing the EFL/ESP intensive program at KKU as well as overcoming any shortcomings that might emerge. Thompson's (1989)

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idea of the external evaluator as a power broker is irrelevant in this academic context, its cross-cultural prejudiced overtone apart. However, most of the arguments have related to a specific context of an EFL/ESP program. Obviously, many variables have to be considered when making a choice about the type of evaluators. The purpose of evaluation in Alderson's words is to contribute not only to who should do the evaluation but also to what method should be selected.

### Conclusions

This study sheds light on some current issues in program evaluation in general and in ESL program evaluation in particular. Worthen and Sanders (1984) sealed the argument regarding who should undertake education program evaluation, content area specialist or evaluation expert. They suggested that a content area specialist evaluator is preferable because of the high credibility attached to him. Beretta (1990) seems to take the same view by suggesting an ESL specialist evaluator to assume the responsibility of ESL evaluation.

The main question of who would benefit ESL evaluation most, insider or outsider evaluator, has been narrowly focused to deal with an EFL program in a particular academic context in a developing country, specifically, King Kahlid University in Saudi Arabia. The argument advanced here is that evaluation tends to be challenging and complex, especially in a context where numerous variables are involved as is the case with KKU's intensive programs. For the benefit of the evaluation endeavor concerning EFL/ ESP intensive programs, a teamwork of evaluators will be needed to assume the evaluation responsibilities within the framework of the modified

participatory model. They will work in a participatory framework comprised of a locally selected expert as an external evaluator and an internal evaluator with the cooperation of in-house stakeholders. Outsider involvement is important to attain a higher level of neutrality and credibility for the evaluation. This will provide a balance between the need for an external (non-JILOE) aware of academic and cross-cultural variables in the program and the need for someone familiar with the evaluation procedures in relation to the local EFL context.

An insider's participation is no doubt equally invaluable because of the easier access to details about the program and the greater knowledge the internal evaluator would have about local conditions. Such an integrated approach of a team of insider, outsider and the involvement of in-house stakeholders would cater for the complex requirements of the evaluation process. In addition, this combination will facilitate teamwork because all members of the team share similar cultural and socio-political background. I argued against the involvement JIJOE external evaluators who usually come with prejudices that would eventually affect the evaluation process and outcome as in Thompson's evaluation project in Magherib. The idea of neutral and objective external (expatriate) evaluator has proven to be unachievable mission, especially in a field like TEFL, which has been ideologically and culturally motivated. The involvement of the specified type of external evaluator described in the study as an external evaluator with a national affiliation, in addition to what was mentioned in the modified participatory model to evaluation, will counter the familiarity syndrome might befall an internal evaluator (Morris and Cohn, 1993). Evaluators of EFL programs should have deep understanding of the language and the culture of both teachers and learners participating in the program being evaluated.

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Because of the limitations of human endeavors, Alderson plainly admits that there is not a perfect evaluation that reflects a single truth about the program under evaluation. There can be a manifestation of a multitude of realizations depending on the aims intended by the evaluation and the degree of cooperation and the amount of sincere effort involved in the evaluation processes. In addition to the teamwork approach to evaluation, the external evaluator within the modified participatory model of evaluation has “the advantage of being independent” and therefore less vulnerable to pressure to “conduct evaluation that create positive public relations ... but fail to provide the constructive criticism needed for improvement.” This independence will help the valuation to be credible (Hansen, 1998: 9). Expecting a completely objective evaluation is futile.

The need for evaluating English teaching programs at all levels of education has become very pressing. Most of these, if not all, have been operating for decades without any real effort for serious evaluation. This has led to a multitude of conflicting opinions regarding the inability of these programs to achieve their objectives. I think the time is ripe to call for a genuine evaluation that takes into consideration the aims they are intended to achieve and how to execute such tasks in the best possible way. Evaluation will provide a lot of input regarding many of the pressing questions of national concerns of language planning such as:

- The appropriateness of introducing English at the elementary school level.
- The effectiveness of using English as the medium of instruction when teaching science, medicine and engineering.
- The improvement of foreign language teaching programs to meet national goals.

A further study can be conducted to assess stakeholders' perceptions towards the suggested modified model of evaluating EFL programs and the possibility of its implementation.

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