



## Methods of Scoring Writing Tests

DR. Wafa Saud

There are basically two ways for scoring tests, one is called impressionistic or holistic scoring and the other is called analytic scoring.

### Impressionistic or holistic scoring

The notion of impressionistic marking does not allow isolating the discrete features of the components of test items in order to assess the quality of a candidate's performance. It is based on giving a single score based on the markers overall impression of the test as a whole (Weigle, 2002). The marker awards a mark according to the students overall performance, without picking out any special features or using a counting system for errors. Thus this marking requires a very quick skimming of the answer rather than detailed reading to give a chance to two or more markers to assess it. Impressionistic scoring is appropriate for language skills that are very hard to define such as testing writing and speaking.

### The positive features of holistic scoring

White (1984) states that this method of scoring has high validity as it concentrates on communication while not overlooking the components of test items. Another advantage is reported by Hughes (1989) which indicates that holistic scoring is very practical as TOEFL examiners are given only one and a half minutes to assess each TOEFL composition. This kind of marking is suitable for quick placement tests where there is little time for complicated marking systems.

### The limitations of holistic scoring

This type of scoring comes under criticism for a number of reasons; Chetaravelu, Sithamparam and Choon (1995) state that many

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"It is possible to use one method as a check on the other and the other for confirmation, first by assigning candidates to a level holistically and then rating them in an analytic way."

teachers find this kind of marking confusing in evaluating many things simultaneously. Besides, marking accurate holistic-based assessments requires a lot of experience. Therefore, less experienced markers would not be expected to make assessment based on impression alone and they should

be trained by using previous years' scripts. Weigle (2002) draws attention to other drawbacks to holistic scoring as he notes that its reliability is low because of inter-rater variability. The same examiner may rate the same test differently at different times. This is often caused by many factors such as fatigue, the mood of the examiner at different periods during marking, and the examiner's experience in teaching. Besides, a number of examiners in holistic marking are consistently biased in terms of either leniency or severity in their marking. Therefore, to achieve a high score reliability, it is suggested that each student's work should be scored by different trained scorers. Another limitation is the difficulty in using holistic marking to provide useful diagnostic information; the students will not get any feedback to improve their performance or check their progress for specific weakness or problems.

#### **Analytic scoring**

This kind of marking attempts to evaluate separately the various components of the test items, and the total score is arrived at by adding the individual estimates (Chetravelu et al., 1995). In other words, the marker prepares a list of features such as content, organization, cohesion, vocabulary, grammar or mechanics to assess the test and then allots a specific

number of points to each of these areas in which the learner performs correctly.

#### **The positive features of analytic scoring**

Madsen (1983) notes that analytic marking is highly objective and highly reliable as it yields similar results when applied again; at the same time it reduces inter-rater variability effectively, and it facilitates agreement among examiners, as there are clear criteria for all markers for grading. Weigle (2002) adds that analytic scoring can be used to perform a diagnostic role to show students strengths and weaknesses as it evaluates particular aspects of language separately.

#### **The limitations of analytic scoring**

Hughes (2003) presents a number of disadvantages of analytic scoring. He states that this type does not evaluate the ability to communicate in the target language as it concentrates on the components that divert the examiner's attention from looking at the whole. Another disadvantage of analytic scoring is that it has low validity as sometimes areas are tested because they are testable and not for their importance. Finally, it is difficult to know how to weight each error or even each area being analyzed.

In general, there is no overall advantage of one approach over the other as both have their strengths and weaknesses. The choice is not clear-cut. It depends on the circumstances of scoring. It is possible to use one method as a check on the other and the other for confirmation, first by assigning candidates to a level holistically and then rating them in an analytic way. Thus by utilizing analytic marking procedures to confirm holistic grading is fair. Combining these two methods of marking seems more acceptable as it can produce a somewhat more valid, reliable and practical test.

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## A slant of stream of consciousness: A JOURNEY BY BRAIN



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“Some pious people are coming out of a mosque... .. pious? Who knows? Piety is very often said to evaporate from practices habituated to....”

**T**he station is swarming with people as usual. The train is late with regularity. I've sent them back who came to see me off to enjoy the solitariness in the midst of a thick crowd. .... I do not know when the pushing and pressing stream makes me occupy my seat by the window...So close we are sitting, very far we are, all lost in his or her self looking at the changing windows. ....Water is everywhere so far the eyes can run. ... Floodwater is receding but before another lazy month the farmers will not be able to conjugate their beloved lands.... Someone is shouting to communicate a shy message to his newly won bride and making it public, some are dozing, and some are busy selling their panaceas. A young man has collapsed on my shoulder in deep uncontrollable slumber. A little sleeping girl has loosened the grasp over her favourite fruit, which, with much difficulty she managed her father to buy from a peddler. Someone has stepped on it immediately without taking any notice.... People are pondering over something or the other looking outside without looking at anything in particular where there are billions of broken pieces of mirror floating in water and shining madly. .... I am having a flashback of the faces that I have left behind, my mother, my brother and my cousins.. ... Long alienation makes people unused to. I fear, I felt a subtle lack of suitability. Nothing goes in this world all-smooth... my mother, her job, her health, her concerns for my brother who is busy with his unemployment and an unbecoming affair. To lighten a burden I came with, renewed the burden I am returning with.... Locali-

ties of various shapes with a small encircling land girdled with water are floating here and there. A mother, with her kids on a boat, is making her way against the wind with a long pole in her hands. The antagonistic hostile wind also surrounds her on the land in the society. Where is her 'he'? Absconding?! Absconding from the law or from the olden choice to have new anchorages? Against the sun they look like dark shadows..... In the morning that person with loose garb and glistening eyes kindled a special kind of fire in the blood.... a stir indeed..... inconsiderate, primitive and overpowering... .. A slice of menacing dark cloud has covered the sun for a while. Clouds cleft asunder, now radiate all the more..... When an infant giggles, innocence overflows from its every limb. ... ..Some pious people are coming out of a mosque... .. pious? Who knows? Piety is very often said to evaporate from practices habituated to. ....Now peeps my deep desire of adolescence to mount those clouds hanging above, soft and wooly, plain and precipitous. I wanted to play, run and rest there but no eyes echoed my longing. ...The large yolk is resting near the horizon after the daylong march and has disappeared all of a sudden deserting the crimson twilight behind. At such a moment one feels like bowing down before the Big in swaying gratitude. The dragging train is going to stop with a sharp yell and with a final jerk back and forth. The dancing mane of my soaring Pegasus settles down slowly and I have to alight on the familiar earth of activity and forgetfulness.

## RE-APPROPRIATING MAGICAL REALISM IN ARABIC NARRATIVES

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The term “magic realism,” has been coined in 1925 by the German art critic, Franz Roh. It seems like an oxymoron since “magic” lives in contradiction to what is “real.” It denotes effacing borders between paradoxical codes and elements of realism and fantasy. Peter Standish perceives magical realistic narrative as fiction in which the “supernatural, the mythical, or the implausible are assimilated to the cognitive structure of reality without a perceptible break in the narrator’s or characters’ consciousness” (156–57).

In fact, magical realist narratives are characterized by specific thematic and structural generic features such as the intersection of opposite realms, irony regarding author’s point of view, authorial reticence, metafictionality and/or self- reflexivity, use of paratextuality and rustic setting.

The ex-centric marginalized native writers embrace the mould of magical realism to enter the literary mainstream in an endeavour to deconstruct dichotomous paradigms created by the advocates of dominant culture, represent their repressed narratives, and recreate a true image of their culture and heritage. Accordingly, magical realism allows for re-visioning and re-appropriating the dominant cross-cultural influences and codes that increasingly threaten to choke the imagination of the indigenous population.

Among the revealing cases in point of such marginalized natives are the Tawariq identity in Libya for Ibrahim al-Koni, the Kurdish identity in Syria in the case of Salim Barakat, Arab Jews and Palestinians for Emile Habibi. Other examples are the Europeans and the African Caribbean and multi-racial peoples of the Latin Americas.

The trend of magical realism has inspired authors in the Arab world since their cultural and political situation resemble that of the Latin American writers. Among those writers are Naguib Mahfouz , Ibrahim al-Kūnī, Emile Habibi, , Ghādah al-Sammān and Amir Tag Elsir

Naguib Mahfouz (1911-2006) is one of the great Egyptian novelists. In his *Arabian Nights and Days* (1979), he mingles fantasy and reality to create an imaginary realm so similar to our everyday one yet so different from it. Such a novel evokes *The Thousand and One Nights* not only in its title but also in its frame structure.

Ibrahim al-Kūnī (1948- ) is a Libyan writer. His *Nazif al-*

*hajar* (1990) with its emphasis on animal-human juxtapositions and metamorphoses is an example of Arab magical realism. It tells the story of a multi-generational struggle of a Touareg family against a legendary animal called a waddan.

Emile Habiby (1922-1996), is an Israeli Arab (Palestinian Israeli) novelist who has made use of Arabic folk tradition in order to represent the Palestinians’ vanished reality. His *Khurafiyah: Saraya, Bint al-Ghul* (Saraya, the demon’s daughter, 1991) is typically a magical realist narrative. In this novel, he utilizes the Palestinian myth, legend, or (*usturah*).

Ghādah al-Sammān (1942- ) is a Syrian novelist. She utilizes magical realism as a means of investigating reality in her collection of short stories entitled “*The Square Moon*” (1998) (*al-Qamar al-Murabba*). Each of her stories examines sundry problems which are the result of cultural, social, and economic conditions.

Amir Tag Elsir (1960- ) is a Sudanese writer, born in 1960. His most important magical realist novel is *The Dowry of Cries* (2004). It is an allegory for the old fantastical Sultanate of Ansaaba which counterparts Márquez’s *Macondo*. It evinces the intersection of the supernatural and the real in its dissection of the current events, habits and norms of an African tribe in the context of something old.

Other outstanding examples of Arab magical realist writers include Ghazi Al Gosaibi (Saudi Arabia), Rachid Boudjedra (Algeria), Najibah Al Hammami (Tunisia), Ben Jelloun (Morocco), Warid Badr Salem (Iraq), and Abdelkarim Al Razeby (Yemen).

In conclusion, re-appropriation of Magical Realism in Arab narratives emerges as an example of how in adopting such a mode, the act of writing becomes an act of survival, rescuing fragments of the Arab culture from oblivion, shedding light on history, tradition, and reality. In their magical realist journey, Arab writers assert the vitality of their culture, reconcile irreducible elements and obliterate the borders between dialectic realms.

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## KKU: EMPOWERING WOMEN



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IT can help women get professional education, get jobs and do business. According the Forbes, the Online Business-to-Business (B2B) commerce market will be worth \$6.7 trillion by 2020. The e-commerce forecasts show that online businesses will expand at the exponential rate. For example, Alibaba is an e-commerce platform for buyers and sellers. It is worth \$129bn and has more than 22,000 employees.

The news report of e-stores for productive families of Al-Ahsa3 for their hand-made products shows recognition of the importance of e-commerce at municipality level. Accordingly, the KKU should use IT platforms such as CISCO to educate, train and empower women at grassroots.

IT education system is unique in the sense that it offers wide range of online and face-to-face courses in terms of duration ranging between few hours to post-graduate level to meet needs of the market and general and professional education. Such IT courses can be used to train women (and men) in shortest time. For example, CISCO offers hundreds of certificate courses [<http://www.cisco.com/web/learning/certifications/index.html>].

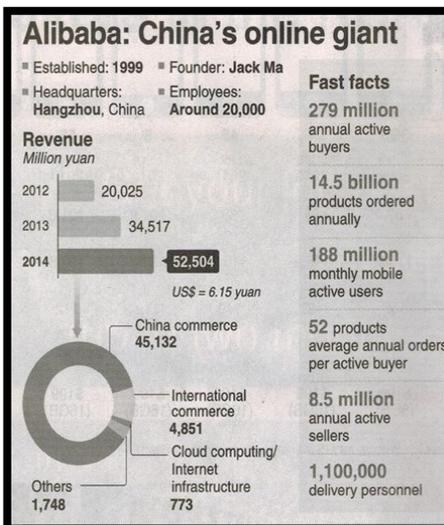
KKU can use established system of CISCO networking academies (Become a CISCO Academy plan) [<https://www.netacad.com/web/about-us/get-involved/become-an-academy>] to gain access to standards-based courses that support core academics, and meet

The economic studies report1 shows that women are facing poverty due to lack of education and illiteracy. Women need education to overcome complex social-economic factors such as divorce, death of a male bread earner or no male member in family, high cost of living and unemployment.

In Asir region, King Khalid University (KKU) can help empower women through education with help of Information Technology (IT), English language learning and Authorized

in-demand job skills and globally recognized certifications to train both women and men according to international standards. In addition, CISCO products and services model can be used to start scores of small and medium businesses [[http://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/products/index.html?referring\\_site=bodynav](http://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/products/index.html?referring_site=bodynav)].

A lot can be learnt from CISCO information for small businesses [[http://www.cisco.com/cisco/web/solutions/small\\_business/index.html](http://www.cisco.com/cisco/web/solutions/small_business/index.html) and CISCO IT solutions <http://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/solutions/index.html>].



Education institutions play a pivotal role in fighting (female) poverty in advanced world. KKU can lead the way by establishing ATCs for females (and males) in all education institutions in Asir region to train tens of thousands of Saudis in shortest possible time. These ATCs can build the base for en masse expansion of IT qualified professionals at grassroots who in turn can help create hundreds of small and medium businesses, enterprises leading to

creation of millions of jobs.

The English Language Centers in all campuses of KKU can play a pivotal role in expanding IT at the grassroots by teaching English to such IT candidates on weekends and or specially designed short English courses. It will help candidates of IT (and other specialties) to get globally recognized education from international setups that is mostly imparted in English.

In conclusion, KKU can play a pivotal role in empowering women (and men) at grassroots with the help of IT, English and ATCs. In turn, it will help them overcome complex social, economic and individual challenges.

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## Poetry and Cash



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“Cash fails to hook the paradox of life and strangeness of our psyche.

Poetry familiarizes the unfamiliar and defamiliarizes the familiar promoting subtle philosophy and nuance of meaning”.

can afford easy, ready-made pleasure which is tailored for the privileged in the society, surely it will induce less intricate mind void of the subtlety that is needed to analyze the landscape of a poem.

Poetry challenges capital. It generates pleasure and pain that material fails to conceive. Poetry tempts collective consciousness and cognitive milieu that the separatist and imprudent capital can hardly comprehend.

Money generates money. If it fails to create its value in respect of quantity ensuring purchasable pleasure, it becomes nothing but the yesterday's newspaper. Poetry generates cognition, consciousness, intrinsic pleasure. If it is a bad poem, still it is a poem with less artistic value. It never be-

comes only paper with figures and features. Even a bad poem upholds the consciousness of an individual which might have failed in form or content. No poetry is a total failure.

Money makes mind financially sophisticated butchering the artistic sophistication of an aesthetically educated soul. Money matters materialistically, poetry matters aesthetically and cognitively.

Capital capitalizes on the human hamartia, our cardinal sins (Pride, Envy, Gluttony, Lust, Wrath, Avarice, Sloth) and destroys our moral and morale inducing pleasure in excessiveness. Poetry capitalizes on collective consciousness, time, cognition, emotion, and aesthetics to prophesize human existence for better.

Cash fails to hook the paradox of life and strangeness of our psyche. Poetry familiarizes the unfamiliar and defamiliarizes the familiar promoting subtle philosophy and nuance of meaning. Cash without its purchase power is absolutely meaningless. But poetry never fades out of its meaning since the transaction is done aesthetically by cultivated souls. We need poetry to give meaning to cash.

# OBJECTIVES OF LEARNING ENGLISH IN SAUDI ARABIA

The primary objective of the education system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is to reduce illiteracy. In this case, it is tailored to ensure that it fulfills the religious, social and economic targets of the country. Also, the system has been customized to enhance integration, not only with Islamic nations, but also the rest of the world. Informed by these objectives, the government of Saudi Arabia has introduced English as a compulsory subject from class seven, though it is yet to gain momentum. It is also notable that the official language in Saudi Arabia is Arabic, hence it is the medium of instruction in colleges. English is only taught as an international language; consequently, little importance is attached to it in the country's education system. To make it more interesting, the Saudi government has identified specific objectives to be achieved in the teaching of English. This paper evaluates some of the objectives teachers must have in mind when teaching English in Saudi Arabia.

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national language; consequently, little importance is attached to it in the country's education system. To make it more interesting, the Saudi government has identified specific objectives to be achieved in the teaching of English. This paper evaluates some of the objectives teachers must have in mind when teaching English in Saudi Arabia.

One of the objectives is to enable the student to attain the necessary language skills in English. In this case, by the end of a student's English course, it is expected that he/she will have acquired distinguishable skills in both the spoken and written language. Skills in this area include speaking, reading, listening, and writing (Elyas, 2008). Similarly, this objective will allow English learners to attain the necessary linguistic competence essential in various life situations. Additionally, taking such a course will help students develop the essential linguistic competence required in diverse professions. It is therefore crucial for every scholar and every other person to be interested in the English language.

Another primary purpose of teaching English as a subject in Saudi schools is to help students develop the linguistic proficiency that will allow them to explain Islamic concepts, as well as participate in spreading Islam

(Elyas, 2008). It is notable that Saudi is an Islamic state and therefore most of the decisions are motivated and informed by religion. In this case, English is an instrumental language as it has been accepted as a universal language in the world. Therefore, when Islamic students are thoroughly conversant with the language, they will become helpful in teaching Islamic concepts, as well as articulating the religion to the whole world.

Another objective is to enhance international cooperation in science and technology. As such, learning the English language provides learners with linguistic skills that will enable them to participate in the transfer of scientific and technological knowledge to their home countries (Faruk, 2014). Therefore, learning English in Saudi Arabia is instrumental in advancing and enhancing progress in the country. Additionally, proficiency in English will make the state benefit from other professionals around the world as they will come and teach in this country.

## Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated the importance of learning a language, and emphasized the potential of international languages to connect Saudi Arabia to the rest of the world through exchange programs. Apart from acquiring communication skills required in various professions, as well as in solving daily problems, learning English will open Saudi Arabia to professional and scientific exchanges that are beneficial to the country as far as science and technology are concerned. In conclusion, the government needs to develop a curriculum that aligns with that of other nations whose first language is English.

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## ALLIGATOR:

*An LEP Word-List Item Examined*

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“American alligators can inspire great fear in humans, as they can have as many as 80 teeth at one time (and 3000 in the course of a lifetime), the upper of which are always visible, whether their mouths are open or closed.”

A list of 166 words ending in “-tor” recently stimulated conversation in A/3/1, home of the LEP (Language Enhancement Program). Most of those words were agent nouns traceable through an English verb to a Latin verb. A narrator narrates (Latin *narrare*), a director directs (*dirigere*), an investor invests (*investire*), and an escalator escalates (*scandere*), or can at least allow its travelers to do so. Of course, there are exceptions, as a gladiator does not “gladiate” and an alligator does not necessarily alligate. Though “alligate” is an English verb traceable to the Latin *alligare*, meaning “to tie,” it is not etymologically related to that massive crocodilian reptile known scientifically as *Alligator mississippiensis*, and more commonly as the American alligator. “Alligator” has a unique etymology among the types found on the word list, for its origin is traced to Spanish *el lagarto*, which came from the Latin *lacerta*, both translating to English as “lizard.” To know the territory of the American alligator is to understand this derivation, as Spanish Florida (*La Florida*) existed long before its more peripheral locales would become parts of “these United States” of Georgia and South Carolina (1788), Louisiana (1812) Mississippi (1817), Alabama (1819), and its spatial plurality, the State of Florida (1845). Explor-

er Juan Ponce de León founded *La Florida* in 1513, and the Spanish would keep most of it for all but 20 years, until 1821. In 2013, the United States Postal Service would honor Ponce de León and his territorial legacy by issuing a commemorative stamp to recognize the 500 year anniversary of *La Florida*. The focus here, however, is not on the geography of Spanish Florida or the etymologies of English words ending in “-tor,” but rather the legends, realities, and impacts of the alligator itself, as this animal and what it represents can spark curiosity, excitement, and imagination, the degree to which one hopes an item present on such a word list is capable of initiating.

“In 2013, the United States Postal Service would honor Ponce de León and his territorial legacy by issuing a commemorative stamp to recognize the 500 year anniversary of La Florida.”

American alligators can inspire great fear in humans, as they can have as many as 80 teeth at one time (and 3000 in the course of a lifetime), the upper of which are always visible, whether their mouths are open or closed. The alligator moves at 17 KPH on land and swims at 32 KPH, and its vocal expression is heard as a deep bellow. Despite having brains weighing less than one gram, they are intelligent, having the fore-

sight to lure-in wading birds as prey by balancing twigs on their snouts as “bait” desirable to the unsuspecting nest-builders. The collective noun for alligators, should you be fortunate enough to find a group of them, is “congregation.” Their mating season is June, and a female can lay between 10 and 50 eggs at a time, with the sex of the baby alligator being determined by nest temperature (cooler temps yield females and warmer temps yield males).

Nests are made of mud, sticks, and plants, and natural habitat has been a major concern for advocates of both alligators and ecosystem-preservation. Alligators were listed as an endangered species from 1967 through 1987, as private and governmental intervention helped recognize the impacts of wetland drainage resulting from population growth in areas surrounding the South Florida Everglades, as real-estate development has grown increasingly since the late 19th century. Concern expressed over such impacts can be found in the works of journalist Marjory Stoneman Douglas and songwriter John Anderson. Anderson's "Seminole Wind" composition celebrates a land of eagles, otters, alligators, tribal warriors (namely Osceola and Micanopy), saw grass and cypress trees, while lamenting the costs of man's "search for wealth untold," as well as destructive actions taken in the name of "progress" and "flood control." The delicate balance of development and conservation has continued to be a hotly-charged political topic in South Florida until this day. The alligator plays a role in preserving ecosystems found in areas such as Everglades National Park, where the animal performs an excavating service to create "gator holes," often 20 meters long, which provide a home for itself in the dry and cold seasons, as well as refuge for many other species. As for humans' fear of alligators, attacks mostly result from efforts to feed the animal, an illegal action throughout the United States.

Mention of the abbreviated "Gator" in the United States is likely to elicit one

"It is an animal  
one may long to  
see, but probably  
not at too close of  
a distance. Part of  
what makes a  
legend is perhaps  
its being a rare  
sight."

of the three following images: University of Florida athletics, the Gatorade beverage brand, or the series of Gator Utility Vehicles produced by a corporation doing business as John Deere. For 110 years, sports teams from the University of Florida have branded themselves as the "Florida Gators," and the accomplishments of their representatives are nearly unmatched by universities in the eastern United States. Since 1972, Florida Gator athletes have represented 40 countries at the Olympic Games, and they have won 126 gold medals, a figure matched by only one other university located east of the Mississippi River (that being University of Michigan "Wolverine" athletes, who have won 144 medals). Children attending Gator-related events and competitions are often eager to meet Albert and Alberta, the anthropomorphic "couple" serving as the university's official mascots. The two plush-costumed

alligators, clad in orange and blue regalia, circulate the venues housing UF's 21 varsity sports teams, eager to engage with fans in order to preserve and brighten the family-friendly atmosphere. One such venue, known as "The Swamp," seats a capacity crowd exceeding 90,000 fans. Gator teams celebrate a total of 39 national championships and 233 Southeastern Conference (SEC) championships. The Gatorade sports drink was invented in 1965 by Dr. Robert Cade and his colleagues from the University of Florida College of Medicine, and its success rose in concert with the Gator (American) football team. The Gatorade brand experi-

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**Continued on the Back Page**



## Understood yet misunderstood



Beautiful yet ugly!  
When lights reflect on your face  
It doesn't show any grace  
Of the multiplied filthiness of your camouflaged speech.  
Your words are never a dove  
Or love of the rotten time of ours.  
You say yet not understood.  
Words are twisted with simple meaning  
That even a veteran sailor fails to navigate.  
Your smile always enjoys the double wits  
Which never resembles the innocent gummy  
Of the three months. Your hair never follows the sedative touch  
Of the ever sniggering comb. Your opinions fail the intellect  
Of the vigilant critic. His every hard-earned dime disdainfully mocks him  
For his failure in deciphering your gorgeous sarcasm.  
When you are beautiful, you are ironic.  
When you are innocent, you are beguiling.  
Beautiful yet dark!

MD. SHAHREAR TALUKDER

11 March 2018  
Samasan, Abha, KSA

Hundred years with you  
 Hundreds years without you  
 Not at all; all the same  
 He who loves, never wins  
 He who loves, never fails  
 To feel within or without.

Time can never heal the gulf between hearts  
 If the heart fall broken all apart  
 Even the thousands of miracles can't end the pain  
 And the broken pieces put together again.

But we, at the end of the day  
 With or without the one-  
 Just fall in love again and interminably again

It happens all the time  
 All the way you and I go  
 Whatever with or without you  
 I just always fall in love  
 I just always fall in love.



*You Kept me Waiting*

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Where harsh words slip away,  
 And innocent faces are prey.  
 Where love carries no weight,  
 And promises always delay.  
 Where pendulums never sway,  
 And time is but a bullet.  
 Where misunderstood is you say,  
 And it seems hard to pray.  
 Where flowers fear to glow upbeat,  
 And death is all they portray.

In such an odd domain, o' friend!  
 Fall dances among dead leaves,  
 Denoting an open-ended freeway.  
 Spring is afraid to show up,  
 But a leaf up above wants to stay.  
 To see why colors never shine for good  
 And dew drops' beauties never spray.  
 After years and years, it's understood  
 All that was distressing to convey.

This is the course of life.  
 Flowers and leaves have to wither away.

*Façade of Life*

**By Alvina Yousaf**



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## Monastic Observations\*

These are new chairs  
They're not made up of pine  
Pine's soft, it's oak I guess  
Your nails won't inscribe a single character on the finely  
Seasoned backrests  
It's the first time someone told me something like that  
Walking along the Willow Lane, she said,  
"You know, the sea makes me so happy."  
Tide from the North Sea drove a whale carcass  
Deep into the sea beach where a single mother was  
Trudging with her four-year old son.  
He dislikes wearing shoes  
Pushes his toes forcefully to make impermanent marks,  
Looks back a while to see them vanish with the retreating tide  
Another one breaks free, dies as the next one rushes  
With the corner of his eyes he tries to read her face.  
While a lot of us went there to wail across the shore  
Near the cemetery by the Unthank Road.  
Stand a while here with respect,  
The dead won't know whether you pay respect or not,  
It's disrespectful in the eyes of the living.  
Relics are no more there,  
The energy is supposed to fizz up from the bones  
To be transmitted to the living  
I wait for the communion—secret and holy and imperceptible  
To people I'm living with for years.  
That's an old story you are telling.  
Chocolate eggs from the Thorntons,  
Crab-shells from the seaside,  
Candy-wrappers from the litter boxes,  
Are souvenirs  
To them watching TV,  
Having supper back home.  
It's six hours of difference only,  
And everything's so different  
On the shelves of the Tudor Gallery.

Composed during a workshop on February 24, 2006,  
at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK.

"Newcastle is not half as exciting as Norwich is,"  
She said,  
It's because you were born there.  
"Petrol reminds me of Dhaka,"  
To me Dhaka is me,  
I grew up there,  
It grew up with me  
Around me, inside me, beyond me  
It's like looking at a place from different angles  
Through glasses, windshields, viewfinders of cameras.  
Pigeon is a sacred bird  
Its poop is nasty.  
Through perforated borders smuggles pass as passports identify  
us  
Papers not people  
"What's the purpose of your visit?" Why? Why? and Why?  
Looking beyond is something I want to do, not over  
Her shoulder again,  
I fail. I lack—good intentions!  
"Tell me, what's God's intention?"  
I remain silent for a while and admit faintly good question  
"What time is it in Bangladesh?"  
She asks me to change the subject,  
Instead of wearing a smile and spouting an answer I keep on  
Filling pages at the UEA Graduate Bar,  
We keep waiting for the take-away vegetable balti  
An unheard-of Indian Sub-continental dish though  
I'm from that part of the world.  
I wonder what marvel waits for me in the package  
The deliveryman promised to bring within 45 minutes.  
I wonder if I could sit and write at a bar in Dhaka,  
I'm brown here  
I'm white there

\* This poem was included in the anthology *Maps and Metaphors: Writings by Young Writers from Bangladesh and United Kingdom* (2006) published by the British Council.



## TO B BLIND IS A GIFT\*

I fear light  
It reveals  
Everything  
Even pores  
On a baby's Dove-washed  
Johnson's oil-pampered  
Cheeks

\* First published in *Spectrum*, Volume 4, June 2006 (Journal of the Department of English, Dhaka University).



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## Photo\*

### 1. Curtain

Spots on retina -- increase.  
Silhouettes -- now companions.

### 2. Transit

Half-withered 'kaya' rooted deep in earth;  
Yellowish green dots, on unmanned soil.

\* This poem was included in the anthology *The British Council Book of Emerging English Poets from Bangladesh* (2001) published by the British Council.

## Tea\*

He stands erect and still, his cheeks bulging out  
As if he has got water in his mouth.  
He never speaks.  
"Tea," utters a woman sitting next to me.  
He takes a cup, pours water into it from a steamy kettle,  
Sprinkles sugar, dips a tea bag; clatters down the cup in front of her.  
She takes a spoon and stirs. Sips. Her eyes travel around.  
Her lower lip, red and full, leaves its imprint on the lip of the cup.  
Red lipstick half moon hanging against cloud.  
He is looking at the cup, bemused.  
Pensive, his eyes blood shot.  
His face getting pale.  
Beads of sweat gather on his forehead.  
She sips again.  
His fingers tremble.  
Another sip, he looks waxy.  
I, instinctively, reach across the table and give him a shake.  
He looks at me, irritated.  
His eyes, colourless but sharp, fix me with a piercing gaze.  
I, unknowingly, utter, "Tea".  
He moves again: cup, steamy water, sugar cube, tea bag, spoon, clatter of the cup.  
For a while I sit still looking downwards.  
"Have it, I give you my heart."  
I look at the café owner, startled.  
He is looking at the cup now.  
I, mechanically, put notes on the table and walk out of the café.

\* First published in *Spectrum*, Volume 4, June 2006  
(Journal of the Department of English, Dhaka University).



## SEMANTIC MICROSCOPE

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“Abase refers only to outward conditions. “Exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high.”

**I**t has always been a bone of contention to agree on what 'exact word' is to be used in a certain context whether in Translation, in writing natural and correct English, or even in expressing one's thoughts accurately, and hence a bad need has emerged to screen out and zoom in on the nuances of meanings and associated subtleties. Below is a breakdown of one basic word along with its cross- varietal synonyms, along with its antonyms.

### ABASE

#### Synonyms:

bring low, depress, dishonor, lower, cast down, discredit, humble, reduce, debase, disgrace, humiliate, sink, degrade.

#### Illustrative Explanatory Examples:

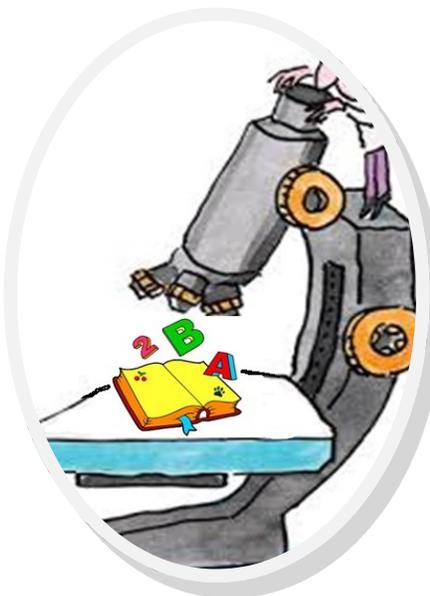
Abase refers only to outward conditions. "Exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high." Ezek. xxi, 26.

Debase applies to quality or character. The coinage is debased by excess of alloy, the man by vice. Humble in present use refers chiefly to feeling of heart; humiliate to outward conditions; even when one is said to humble himself, he

either has or affects to have humility of heart. To disgrace may be to bring or inflict odium upon others, but the word is chiefly and increasingly applied to such moral odium as one by his own acts brings upon himself; the noun disgrace retains more of the passive sense than the verb; he disgraced himself by his conduct; he brought disgrace upon his family. To dishonor a person is to deprive him of honor that should or might

be given. To discredit one is to injure his reputation, as for veracity or solvency. A sense of unworthiness humbles; a shameful insult humiliates; imprisonment for crime disgraces. Degrade may refer to either station or character. An officer is degraded by being reduced to the ranks, disgraced by cowardice; vile practises degrade; drunkenness is a degrading vice.

Misfortune or injustice may abase the good; nothing but their own ill-doing can debase or disgrace them.



#### Antonyms:

advance, elevate, honor, raise, aggrandize, exalt, promote, uplift, dignify



### Translated by

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## Poet: Antara Bin Shaddad

1. Abla's wraith approached me in my slumbers, and planted three kisses through her veil
2. Adieu it bid me, leaving flames which unabatedly raged though I hard tried to veil
3. If I did not shut myself off into seclusion , and extinguish the fire of my passion with my tears,
4. I would die in sorrows; I complain much for you are the perfect full moon of mine

أَتَانِي طَيْفٌ عَبَلَةٌ فِي الْمَنَامِ	فَقَبَّلَنِي ثَلَاثًا فِي اللَّثَامِ
وَوَدَّعَنِي فَأَوَدَّعَنِي لَهِيْبًا	أُسَيِّرُهُ وَيَشْعُلُ فِي عِظَامِي
وَلَوْلَا أَنَّنِي أَخْلُو بِنَفْسِي	وَأُطْفِئُ بِالدُّمُوعِ جَوَى غَرَامِي
لَمْتُ أَسَىً وَكَمْ أَشْكُو لِأَتِي	أَغَارُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بَدْرَ النَّمَامِ



Continued from page 9

enced growth that led to its being purchased by Quaker Oats in 1987 and later PepsiCo in 2000. A recent annual report revealed that Gatorade is one of PepsiCo's top-selling products, trailing only Pepsi Cola, Mountain Dew, and Lay's Potato Chips. As for the John Deere Gator Utility Vehicles, colored green like alligators often are when their environments contain high levels of algae, their production began 25 years ago, as their popularity has demanded 54 different models of Gator in five distinct categories. Such variety allows a wide range of choice in power sources, maximum speeds, steering capabilities, towing capacities, and bed capacities, as the Gator is used for effective transportation, hauling, and logistical support. One thinks of the Gator vehicles' frequent presence on large farms and ranches, though they can be found in almost any industry, including turf-grass maintenance and military-combat support.

As we have observed, the American alligator is able to evoke much imagery and meaning for those who spend time in its territories of the southern United States, as well as for those interacting with borrowers of its name. It is an animal one may long to see, but probably not at too close of a distance. Part of what makes a legend is perhaps its being a rare sight. I have seen alligators in three distinct spots in the South Carolina Low Country: a wildlife refuge at Bulls Island, a rural pond in a Red Top subdivision, and a golf course at Hilton Head Island. Knowing the power and capabilities of this reptile can help one to appreciate the native tribes of Old Florida who lived more comfortably integrated with nature than most of western civilization, as evidenced through the exhausting obstacles facing the United States during the costly Florida Wars of the 19th Century. Decades of fighting and millions of dollars never could remove the Seminoles from the Everglades, and they remain there today. Examining such history as that of Florida and South Carolina, we see that alligators are only one aspect of the storied landscapes, much like they are only one aspect of a long word list recently discussed by advanced English students visiting the LEP. Such props as word lists, along with dictionaries and newspapers, can serve as useful conversational stimuli for teachers and learners who wish to examine and practice the English language. The LEP is located in Room A/3/1, and has been a flourishing presence for the Faculty of Languages and Translation.

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