Developing a Current Events Awareness Scale for Egyptian EFL Young Adult learners.

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Abstract

The current study aimed at developing a valid and reliable instrument for measuring the awareness of current events among Egyptian EFL young adult learners. The scale development process was carried out with data from participants included (266) of young adult EFL learners at secondary stage. The data collected were analyzed to provide information about the validity and reliability of the scale. Content validity, internal consistency, construct validity (using factor analysis) and reliability of the scale were examined to make sure that the scale is valid, reliable, and practical for use. The analysis results showed that the scale is a valid and reliable instrument for assessing Egyptian EFL young adult learners' awareness of current events. The final scale consisted of 30 items, which required respondents to rate their awareness on a five-point scale ranging from "never" to" always". In the light of that, the study presented some recommendations for further studies.

المستخلص باللغة العربية

هدفت الدراسة إلى تطوير أداة صالحة وموثوقة لقياس الوعي بالأحداث الجارية بين متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من الشباب البالغين طلاب المرحلة الثانوية. تم تنفيذ عملية تطوير المقياس من خلال جمع بيانات من المشاركين وعددهم (266) من متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من الشباب البالغين في المرحلة الثانوية. وتم تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها لتوفير معلومات حول صدق وثبات المقياس. وتم فحص صدق المحتوى، والاتساق الداخلي، وصدق البناء (باستخدام التحليل العاملي)، وثبات المقياس للتأكد من صدق المقياس، وثباته، وجاهز للاستخدام. وأظهرت نتائج التحليل أن المقياس هو أداة صالحة وموثوقة لتقييم وعي المتعلمين المصريين الشباب البالغين بالأحداث الجارية. يتكون المقياس النهائي من 30 فقرة، وهو ما يتطلب من المشاركين تقييم وعيهم على مقياس من خمس نقاط يتراوح من "أبدًا" إلى "دائمًا". وفي ضوء ذلك قدمت الدراسة بعض التوصيات لمزيد من الدراسات.

Introduction:

Global and scientific developments have huge and rapid effects on increasing the amount of knowledge that has become hard to keep up with. Therefore, there is an urgent need for acquiring self-achievement methods, focusing on developing scientific ways of research and thinking to match the changeable world. The development of different communication and media means in our world can participate in enhancing students' interests. Therefore, teaching current events increases the learning experience for both teachers and students, and enriches the learning environment. It is not only the aim of teaching to provide students with knowledge and

facts, but also, extends to acquire them the ability to deal with the increased information and employ them in their real-life situations.

As a result, it is important to shed light on studies that aim to measure students' awareness by developing reliable and valid instruments; in order to identify their actual level of awareness regarding their ideas, customs, and social behavior suiting their age, attitudes and ever their economic level. Consequently, measuring and identifying students' awareness level of worldwide issues, taking into consideration awareness domains; knowledge, attitude and practice, is so critical because world countries become more interdependent. Nowadays, students are in need to be aware of the world's economy, social structures, and environment to be able to make the best decisions about their own lives. As educators, it's our task to ensure that students are acquired the necessary tools to be aware of what occurs around them

Concept of Awareness and its Domains

Awareness is a less clear term, it indicates the ability of students to know, realize or be interested in knowing about something. Gafoor (2012, p.2) defines awareness as the state or ability to perceive, feel, or be conscious of events, objects, or sensory patterns. In this level of consciousness, sense data can be confirmed

by an observer without necessarily implying understanding. Besides, Gafoor (2012) provided three different definitions for awareness:

1. One frequent meaning of awareness in education is Knowledge from the milieu without direct teaching. This can be described as awareness about. For example, public awareness of cancer, HIV/ AIDS Awareness, or Nutritional awareness. Awareness may also refer to public or common knowledge or understanding about a social, scientific, or political issue. To say a person "has greater awareness", can mean they have greater knowledge of such subjects. Here awareness" may refer to public or common knowledge or understanding about a social, scientific, or political issue

2. In psychology, the most popular meaning of awareness is realization as self-perceptions. For example, when we say awareness of Body, Emotional Awareness, awareness of self, or strength awareness. This can be described as awareness of. This can be seen as sensitivity to oneself. All these examples of awareness, it is a kind of self-awareness (awareness of own individuality). Here awareness denotes "unique perception". Unique perception is completely subjective. It does not require great "knowledge". Unique perception of all is considered a "higher" form of awareness.

3. The third meaning of awareness is recognition of the ability to deal with. Some awareness measurements are conducted to find out

the ability to deal with specific situations and tasks. For example, Phonological Awareness Skills Test, and Computer Awareness Test. Again, the assumption is that the populations under consideration.

Based on the previous definitions, awareness includes three main components or domains; the **knowledge** domain which indicates the common understanding of specific issues, and the way the student gets and acquires this knowledge. Secondly, the **attitude** domain which refers to the learner's perception and cognitive reaction to a specific event. Thirdly, the **practice** domain that refers to the learner's ability to deal with or handle an event.

Measuring the Awareness of Current Events

A challenge for scale designers is to create a scale that gets the actual and true responses from the population. To do so, they need to create statements that not only capture the theoretical concept under evaluation but also decrease the impact of the created statements on the quality of the responses. Therefore, in order to create a reliable and valid scale that effectively captures actual responses, it is necessary to study the purpose of the scale, the scale's topic, and its aspects.

According to, Galczynski et. al., current events is one way to help open students' minds to ideas of multiculturalism and

discrimination. If the teachers deliberately keep the discussion going in a constructive direction, teachers can promote a greater understanding of differences amongst people (Galczynski et. al., 2012, p. 151). Smith (1963) thinks that these are events or incidents that are currently developing or newsworthy.

Due to the importance of using current events in teaching that benefit both students and teachers as Arınç and Deveci (2008) stated that the use of current events increases students' academic achievement; In addition, it is stated that it facilitates learning and makes the lesson enjoyable, therefore, measuring students' awareness of current events to identify their actual level, serves as authentic data for researchers to develop on. Also, an excellent tool that encourages learners to pay attention to their level of awareness, indeed it can be used as a means to measure improvement in students' ability to understand current events and gives the teacher the opportunity to assess how well students are applying their knowledge. (Miller,2011).

According to the necessity of global awareness in education, a review of the literature has shown numerous studies that integrated global learning in different courses. For example, Omidvar and Sukumar (2013) indicated that global education is the backbone of balanced teaching even in second language courses. Integrating global issues into the syllabus in an EFL intermediate, multilingual, and multi-cultural conversation class at the Institute of Language Studies,

India, produced competent students. The students showed a higher degree of awareness of global issues, enhanced linguistic competence, and the ability to analyze problems and apply critical thinking in their environment. They were also more active and motivated in their class participation than in other classes.

In another study, integrating global issues in language learning revealed that Turkish students had positive opinions of the global issues used in class. Global issues expanded their perspectives and improved their learning gains. Their conceptions of global issues included examples such as poverty, environment, education, and oppression (Bayraktar Balkir, 2021). Similarly, EFL freshman students had positive attitudes toward multicultural differences, yet they did not deal with multicultural situations in real life confidently. The results confirmed the indirect utilities of multicultural awareness in second/foreign language development (Zhang, Cui & Zhang, 2021).

There is research based on activities where students regularly recorded current events in diaries stated that the majority of students very much enjoyed current event analysis (Bahmani, 2016); the reason may be that when students share what they have learned about current events and analyze these events with their classmates, it significantly contributes to learning by involving productive and developmental discussions (Hughes et al., 1997). Indeed, findings

obtained by McCullough (2006) show a connection between current events and student participation.

Literature screening did not find any studies performed related to the development of a scale measuring the awareness of current events within the field of teaching English as a foreign language. From this aspect, the research was constructed as an application and it is considered that it will contribute to the literature in the development of the current events awareness scale.

The purpose of this study is to develop a reliable and valid scale for measuring the awareness of current events among Egyptian EFL young adult learners. For this reason, the current study tried to answer the following questions:

·   What are the domains of the current events awareness scale?
·   How can the awareness scale of current events for Egyptian EFL young adult learners be developed?

Method:

1. Participants

The targeted population of this study was the Egyptian EFL young adult learners through the second term of academic year 2021/2022. The research sample (n=266) was chosen randomly from Egyptian EFL young adult learners who were at the secondary stage students.

2. Procedures

The procedures used for constructing and validating the current events awareness scale were based on previous research. During the construction of the scale, it was taken into consideration that the items refer to students' common knowledge of events or understanding of the general and also knowledge of the facts, concepts, and relationships. Also, refers to a student's perception and cognitive reaction to an event, and it refers to the ability of the student to deal with specific events. The construction of the developed scale included the following three phases:

Phase 1: Development of the statements

For ensuring the content validity of the scale, it was designed based on a review of literature related to constructing awareness scales as a general e.g., (Duman and Yakar 2017, Gillihan and Ferguson 2018) but there is a lack of studies related to the construction of the current events awareness scale in EFL specifically. It was composed of three domains; Knowledge, attitude, and practice. Each of the three domains was defined operationally, and based on that definition; statements were formulated for each domain. The scale was composed of 30 statements. It was examined by a group of five experts in English language methodology and applied linguistics.

Phase 2: Ensuring the internal consistency of the scale

The internal consistency of the scale means that there is a significant correlation between the domains and related statements. The internal consistency was tested by calculating the correlation between the score of each statement and the whole score given to the domain under which this statement is categorized. Also, the correlation between the scores given to each of the three domains (knowledge, attitude, and practice) and the total score of the scale was calculated. Below is given a detailed description of the correlations between the total score of each domain and related statements.

1- Knowledge

Table (1) below shows the correlation between the "knowledge" domain and related statements.

Domain	No.	Item	Correlation value
Knowledge	1.	I consult my parents while experiencing school bullying	0.859
	2.	I would visit the UNHCR "UN Refugee Agency" site to know more about refugees suffering	0.887
	3.	I use percentages to know the indicators of online harassment.	0.859
	4.	I often focus on examples of violence cases and try to get a scientific base	0.824

	No.	Item	Correlation value
		from them	
	5.	I follow covid19 daily infection rate	0.824
	6.	I depend on more than one source to know about the types of disabilities.	0.820
	7.	I depend on graphs to identify the use of weird fashion	0.810
	8.	I prefer to meet coordinators of "Decent Life Initiative" face-to-face to know about its activities	0.886
	9.	I prefer to look at volunteer statistics to know the impact of volunteering and volunteer management on the world	0.831
	10.	I depend on research results to identify the benefits of gratitude in life	0.817

2- Attitude

Table (2) below shows the correlation between the "attitude" domain and related statements.

Domain	No.	Item	Correlation value
Attitude	1	I think that refugees need humanitarian assistance to	0.800

		meet their basic needs.	
	2	I think that World Gratitude Day is a great chance to express thankfulness and share it with others.	0.890
	3	I believe that hugging a friend is not a corona risky behavior	0.924
	4	I believe that hugging a friend is not a corona risky behavior	0.924
	5	I feel embarrassed when someone makes fun of me.	-0.794
	6	I feel that gratitude influences positively people's lives.	0.903
	7	I believe that Decent Life Initiative is changing the lives of people living in rural areas across the country	0.930
	8	I feel confident when I make a difference.	0.875
	9	I feel enthusiastic to participate in the World Youth Forum and meet youth from all over the	0.810

		world.	
	10	If I have the chance to volunteer, I would organize events to help new students make friends.	0.905

3- Practice

Table (3) below shows the correlation between the "practice" domain and related statements.

Domain	No.	Item	Correlation value
practice	1	If I have the chance to volunteer, I would organize events to help new students make friends.	0.905
	2	If I need to participate in refugee support, I would contact UNHCR "UN Refugee Agency".	0.894
	3	When I attend a large crowded conference, I get infected with Covid-19.	0.828
	4	When I appreciate my parent's role in my life, I earn inner	0.877

		peace.	
	5	If my friend writes a rude comment about me on social media, I will block him.	0.831
	6	If I get infected with corona, I would adopt a healthy lifestyle and hygiene practices	0.805
	7	When I deal with a person with a disability, I prefer to treat him as a person, and not as a person with a condition.	0.795
	8	When I intend to help people, I would help deliver meals and gifts to patients at a local hospital.	0.607
	9	If someone teases me, I would hit him/her.	-0.506
	10	If I have the fortune to attend the world youth forum, I will share my experience with my friends to encourage them to participate.	0.789

In addition to the correlation between each domain and related statements.

Table (4) below shows the correlation between the total score given to each domain

No	Domain	Correlation value	Significance level
1	Knowledge	0.989	0.000
2	Attitude	0.975	0.000
3	Practice	0.981	0.000

The values given in the above table show a strong correlation between the three domains of the scale. They were all significantly related to the total of the scale at the (0.01) level. **This means that the current events awareness scale has an acceptable level of validity.**

Phase 3: Ensuring the construct validity of the scale

Construct validity refers to a scale that measures the construct adequately. Factor analysis was done for estimating the construct validity of the scale. The Varimax method was used for this purpose. Factor loadings greater than 0.40 were considered important. Regarding the domains of the scale, factor loadings exceeded the loading cut-off (0.40), indicating practically significant levels.

Table (5) below shows the results of the factor analysis.

Domain	General factor
Knowledge	.672

Attitude	.829
Practice	.814
variance	60.079%

Phase 4: Ensuring the reliability of the scale

A measure is said to have high reliability if it produces similar results under consistent conditions. The reliability of the self-efficacy scale was tested using two different methods; Cronbach's Alpha method and the split half method.

A. Cronbach's Alpha Method

The reliability level of the scale was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha formula. The reliability values of the scale's domains ranged between (0.698) and (0.712). These reliability values were all significant at the (0.01) level. The reliability level of the scale as a whole was (0.79), which is a high level of reliability.

Table (6) below shows the reliability values of the three domains of the scale and of the scale as a whole.

No	Domain	Reliability level
1	knowledge	.698
2	Attitude	.702
3	Practice	.712

Whole scale	.799

The scale was divided into two halves and correlation was calculated using the Spearman-Brown formula. The reliability level of the scale's domains ranged from (0.674) to (0.743). These reliability values were all significant at the (0.01) level. The reliability level of the scale as a whole was (0.638).

Table (7) below shows the reliability values of the three domains of the scale and of the scale as a whole.

No	Domain	Reliability level
1	knowledge	.674
2	Attitude	.720
3	Practice	.743
	Whole scale	.638

Discussion

Regarding the previous results, the awareness scale of current events is reliable, valid, and well-balanced. Results revealed that there is a strong correlation among all statements of each domain and also between all scale domains. In addition, Factor loadings were considered important as they are greater than 0.40, indicating practically significant levels. All these assert the validity of the developed scale. Furthermore, the reliability of the scale was tested

by Cronbach's alpha and split-half method. All the reliability values were significant at the (0.01) level. Also, the reliability level of the scale as a whole was (0.79) and (0.638), which is a high level of reliability.

The study of Saka and Asma, (2020) aimed at examining ELT students' intercultural awareness levels according to various variables. To attain this goal, a scale measuring intercultural awareness was developed in the first phase. The scale development process was carried out with data of 207 ELT students studying in a state university. The results showed that the students' intercultural awareness did not significantly change according to their genders, grades, or the number of been abroad; however, their intercultural awareness significantly changed according to their presence abroad. According to the results, the students having been abroad had higher intercultural awareness compared to the ones who did not go abroad.

Conclusion

Measuring the awareness level of current events with a reliable and valid instrument is very important for every student at the common and individual levels. Because of globalization, Students need to be equipped with an understanding of the world's economy, politics, social norms, and environment in order to deal with new changes and make the best decisions about how to live their own lives, and to be connected with the global and local community. In addition, awareness evaluation gives the opportunity to continue

education and make a commitment to lifelong learning. According to the delimitations of the study and the findings reached, the researcher developed a reliable, valid, and well-balanced awareness scale of current events. Actually, this scale will contribute to the field of measuring the awareness of current events for Egyptian EFL young adults. The researcher used a large sample size, so the obtained results have been more significant and reasonable.

Recommendations

Based on that conclusion, the study presents the following recommendations:

- Well training and equipping of researchers in administrating the awareness scales.
- Avoid coloring findings of the awareness scales.
- Administering more online awareness scales
- Developing scales for measuring the awareness of current events for different learning stages.
- Making periodic surveys of current events awareness

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