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**A RHETORICAL CRITIQUE OF TEACHER SUPERVISION AND THE
POTENTIAL FOR PEDAGOGY TO SERVE THE PURPOSES OF LIBERATION
IN SYRIA**

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

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December 2011

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Teacher supervision is closely related to teachers' professional development and effective teaching as well as students' learning. This study is grounded in critical/feminist theory. It offers a rhetorical analysis of the phenomenon of teacher inspection and the role of liberatory education and critical pedagogy in combating oppression, and it lays the foundation for a subsequent empirical examination as much rhetorical research does.

For teacher inspection to achieve its end (improving students' learning and teachers' teaching practices), it has to be descriptive, differentiated, collaborative as well as collegiality-oriented. Dialogue should play an important role in the teacher-supervisor relationships instead of fostering fear and hatred, instead of the-supervisor-knows and the teachers-do not-know autocratic attitudes. Therefore, this study rhetorically shows that democratizing and humanizing teacher-supervisor relationships is essential to a better and healthier education. This dialogue should also serve as the first building block in solving political crises of the sort going on currently in Syria.

This dissertation argues that education is a freeing, liberating force that leads us back to our natural condition where oppression and autocracy have no room. The educational mirrors the political, and for the former to be healthy and effective in developing students' and teachers'

learning, the latter has to step down from dictatorship to democracy, from being the oppressor to being an active participant in the welfare of all people. The political has to know and be aware of the fact that the pen is stronger than the gun, that light is stronger than darkness, that the natural is stronger than the unnatural, that the democratic is stronger than the autocratic and that love is stronger than hate.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Three Supervisory Scenarios

Suspense from the start! Let's imagine the following three experience- and literature-based scenarios. The first is a scenario that is real, in so far as it plays out in varying ways within Syrian public school classrooms on a regular basis throughout the academic year. The second and third scenarios are taken from literature. The second is described by one of the teacher participants in Brimblecombe, Ormston and Shaw's (1995) research on inspection, stress and anxiety. The third is taken from Marshall's (2009) book, and it describes the inconsistency of supervisory visits and the attitudes of a "veteran" teacher.

Experience-based scenario: an EFL teacher's nightmare.

An English instructor is teaching 35 students in a 15-square foot classroom within a castle-like building located on a mountainside in a rural area. Suddenly, halfway through the class period, a janitor knocks on the door and comes in without being invited, shouts a few words and leaves. You might be wondering what would be so important as to allow this janitor to disrupt a classroom lesson. In fact, his words are life-saving for all of the school staff and students. "Be careful, Teacher Marwan (a pseudonym). The headmaster has told me to warn you that the English and History inspectors from the Ministry of Education just got here, and they might come to your class."

Marwan gets very anxious, as do his students, and all nervously count the remaining minutes of the class period. Approximately ten minutes before the bell rings for a break, another knock on the door takes place and a gentleman enters saying "Good morning," to the teacher. He walks to the very back of the room and shares a desk with a student there. Two minutes

before the end of the class, while the teacher is explaining the differences between “hurt” and “injure,” that gentleman comes up to the front and stands at the podium. He announces, “Teacher Marwan is a good teacher, try to benefit from him,” and then leaves the room.

Literature-based scenario I: another nightmare to all.

Every time there was a knock on the door, everybody leapt about three foot in the air . . . that was the worst thing for me, waiting for somebody to come in, not knowing whether they were going to walk in half way through the lesson and maybe it wasn't going too well. (Brimblecombe, Ormston& Shaw, 1995, p. 102)

Literature-based scenario II: principal no-shows mean “well-done” to teacher?

A well-regarded veteran teacher says she hasn't been evaluated in five years and the principal is almost never in her classroom. She takes this as a compliment – her teaching must be ‘okay’ – and yet she feels lonely and isolated with her students and wishes the principal would pay an occasional visit and tell her what he thinks. (Marshall, 2009, p. 20)

Overview of the Study

This research study will answer traditionally empirical questions, using rhetorical means. It attempts to explore and examine English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) teacher evaluation in Syria, or "inspection" as I will refer to it throughout this research. Inspection is a closer equivalent to the Arabic term than are “evaluation” and “supervision” though they are used interchangeably and done by the same person, the educational advisor/supervisor (al-Muwajjih al-Ikhtisasee /الموجه الاختصاصي/al-Mushref al-Tarbawee /المشرف التربوي/al-Mufattish al-Tarbawee /المفتش التربوي). I want to bring to light, problematize and challenge the relationships between in-service Syrian high school EFL teachers and educational inspectors and the beliefs and

perceptions that they have of the other. Special attention will be given to the theory-practice divide on the part of inspectors as well as the effects inspection has on teachers and consequently on teachers' professional development and students' learning *in situ*.

Furthermore, due to the social unrest in Syria and the Arab World, I was unable to conduct my original study in the summer of 2011. I will propose a future empirical study that could supplement my rhetorical inquiry in which two groups of participants could be used: teachers and inspectors. Please see more details about participant selection and sampling methods in Chapter III. Teacher participants could be interviewed about inspectors and inspection in focus groups, whereas inspector/supervisor participants could be individually interviewed about inspection and the teachers they supervise. All participants would be asked to provide short narratives related to the phenomenon of teacher inspection. Teacher evaluation forms used by Syrian teacher supervisors would be analyzed as well. This research also provides an extensive historical background of teacher inspection and of teacher inspection in the Middle East and especially the Arab World. Moreover, I will attempt to operationally define and use interchangeably three key concepts related to teacher education: evaluation, supervision and inspection. These three concepts may be seen as the three sides of an equilateral triangle. Teacher inspection is also looked at internally and externally and characterized by power relations.

In addition to that, models and modes of teacher supervision and theories and practices of teacher evaluators are discussed, problematized and looked at critically and rhetorically. The effects of this triangle's three angles on teachers' growth and development and on students' and teachers' learning as well as on the concept of leadership in inspectional/supervisory missions and tasks are also discussed in light of current and most recent literature. Finally, other

alternatives, either replacing or at least “mitigating” teacher inspection, are suggested, especially with regards to teachers’ as well as inspectors’/supervisors’ reflective practices such as action research, reflective journals, and teachers’ reflective “circles.”

Syria: National and Educational Profiles

Syria: geography, economy and population.

In order to critically and rhetorically discuss the centralized educational system of Syria in general and the phenomenon of teacher supervision/evaluation/inspection, it is first necessary to briefly discuss the overall profile of the Syrian Arab Republic. Geographically, Syria is bordered to the north by Turkey, to the west by the Mediterranean Ocean, Palestine and Lebanon, to the south by Jordan, and the east by Iraq. Roughly the size of North Dakota, USA, Syria has a predominantly mountainous southern region, a western coastal plain, and a dry eastern plateau. Generally speaking, the climate is mild and arid, and the lands are fertile. According to World Health Organization’s Regional Office of Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO) Health Systems Profile of Syria (2006), administratively speaking, Syria is divided into 14 Governorates (Muhafazat), and each Governorate (Muhafaza) is normally divided into areas (Manatik), which are further divided into smaller units (Nawahi) and lastly come the villages (Qura), the smallest administrative units (p. 3).

The World Health Organization (WHO) profile of Syria also states that there are 14 Directorates of Health in the 14 Governorates of the country, one Directorate per each Governorate (p. 48). The same profile applies to the Ministry of Education (Wazaret At-Tarbiya). In other words, there are 14 Directorates of Education (Mudeeriyaat Tarbiya) in the 14 Governorates of Syria. It is also important to mention that Syria, compared to other Arab countries, e.g. Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait, is a relatively poorer country,

with agriculture making up 24% of the economy (CIA, 2005 & Worldinfozone). As Table 1 shows, the Gross Domestic Product per capita (2006 census) is significantly lower in Syria than in other countries. This economic fact is significant, because the educational system in Syria is government-run, for the most part, and therefore, has less funding than educational systems in other countries and experiences more intervention in the classroom.

Table 1

GDP Per Capita

Country	Syria	USA	UAE	Japan	UK	Saudi Arabia	Italy
GDP Per Capita	\$4,100	\$43,800	\$49,700	\$33,100	\$31,800	\$13,800	\$30,200

According to UNESCO's International Bureau of Education and its Syrian Arab Republic profile, the country's budget is the main source for financing and funding education at all stages, and the role of the private sector in education is "negligible" (2007, p. 6). According the Central Census Bureau, the number of Syrians registered in the records of civil affairs at the beginning of 2009 amounted to 23.027 million, 11.567 of them males and 11.460 females. However, Syria is currently hosting an estimated 1.3 million Iraqi refugees, and as is understandable, this large influx of immigrants is straining Syria's economic resources, not to mention the educational system as well. An additional 1-2 thousand Iraqis flee to Syria every day, so it is hard to estimate the true numbers with much certainty.

General description of Syria's educational system.

Educationally speaking and as in many other Arab and non-Arab countries, children in Syria go to school starting at the age of six where they learn different subjects for a possible twelve years (currently mandatory through the ninth grade). According to the Syrian Arab Republic's profile of education (2007) by UNESCO's International Bureau of Education (IBE)

and in Law No. 32 of 2002, basic education is being implemented starting from the school year 2002-2003. Basic education is free and mandatory, and it includes the primary (1-6 grades) and intermediate (7-9 grades) stages. So currently, the educational system in Syria consists of two main stages, namely the basic learning stage (basic education) and the secondary learning one. The former consists of two parts or cycles: the first cycle comprises the first through fourth grades, whereas the second includes the grades five through nine (International Conference on Education,, 2008). The latter, the secondary learning stage, has three grades — the tenth, the eleventh and the twelfth — and is divided into several branches: general, industrial, agricultural, vocational, female arts, religious, and commercial. According to the same conference on Education, the last two years of the general secondary stage are divided into scientific and literary streams.

Entrance into a specific branch of these mentioned above entirely depends on the student's score in the ninth grade (the last grade in the basic education stage; the first most important exam). In Syria, as is the case in Oman, for instance, the third preparatory examination "is centrally written", and depending on students' scores they go to commercial, vocational, literary, or scientific schools. The same applies to the third secondary examination, the twelfth grade, or as it is called "bakaloria" (baccalaureate) (British Council 1985). However in Oman, for example, there is always a "resit" session unlike in Syria (one time and that is it). Table 2 shows the weekly lesson timetables for general secondary education (10-12 grades).

Table 2

The Number of Class Periods from 10th through 12th Grades by Subject

General secondary education: weekly lesson timetable					
Subject	Number of weekly periods in each form				
	I	II		III	
		Scient	Liter.	Scient.	Liter.
Religious education	2	2	2	2	2

Arabic language	6	4	7	4	8
Foreign language	5	5	8	5	7
Principles of philosophy and sociology.	1	-	-	-	-
Logic and humanities	-	2	-	-	-
Arab society, principles of economics, and general philosophy	-	-	3	-	-
History	-	-	-	-	5
Philosophy	2	1	3	-	5
Geography	2	-	3	-	3
Mathematics	4	6	-	8	-
Computer science	2	2	-	-	-
Statistics and science	-	-	2	-	-
Physics	2	4	-	5	-
Chemistry	2	2	-	2	-
Biology	2	3	-	3	-
Art education	1	-	1	-	-
Physical education	1	1	1	-	-
National socialist education	1	1	1	1	1
Military training	2	2	2	2	2
Total weekly periods	35	35	33	32	32
<i>Source: Ministry of Education, 2011. Each teaching period lasts 50 minutes.</i>					

(UNESCO, IBE, 2007, p. 11)

The academic year (for elementary and high schools) is divided into two semesters, and in each semester, students have two main tests other than the main end-of-semester exams. So every year students take six exams other than quizzes conducted by teachers. It might be worth mentioning that this educational system is nine years old; before 2000 it used to consist of three main stages: Elementary (1st through 6th grade), preparatory (7th through 9th grade) and secondary (10th through 12th grade). This division is similar to that of other Arab countries though the names and sub-divisions might be different. In Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, for example, they have the same divisions, but the middle stage (age 12 to 15) is called "intermediate" and not "preparatory" as in Syria. In Iraq, however, they have a primary stage (age 6 to 12) and a secondary one which in turn is subdivided into intermediate (12 to 15) and preparatory (15 to 18) (British Council 1985).

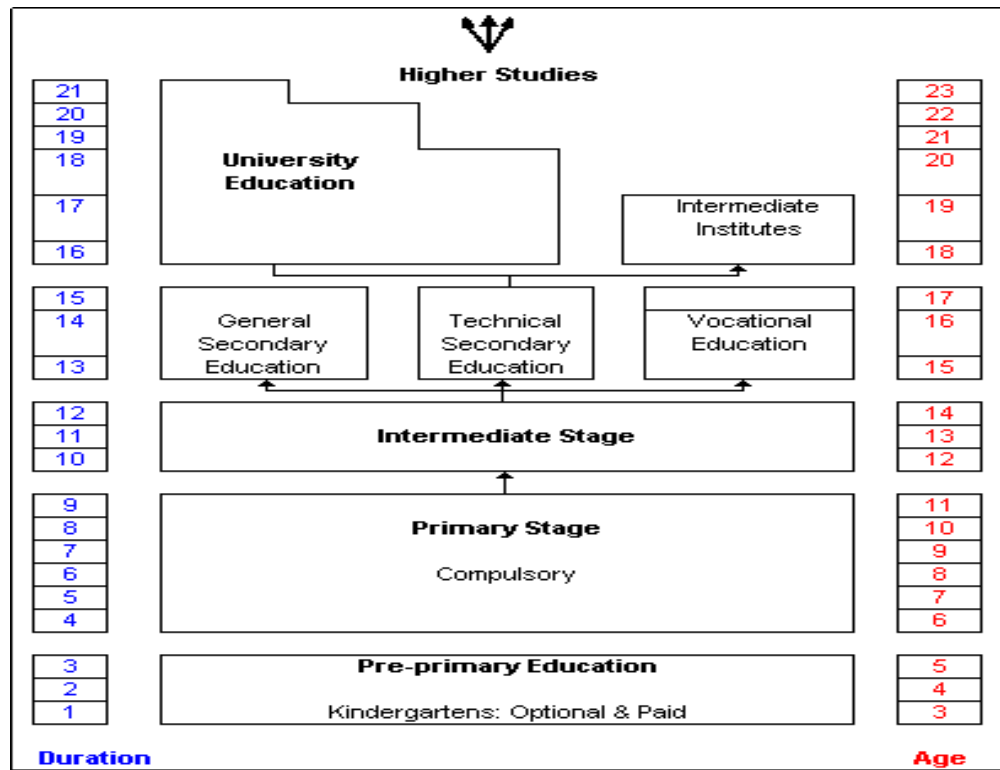


Figure 1. Structure of the educational system in Syria

(UNESCO, IBE, 2007, p. 5)

The concept of *Mufadhala*: A supply-and-demand gate-keeper.

Entrance into a university or institute, after a student has completed the secondary stage, depends on the twelfth year's main final exam conducted and administered by the Ministry of Education. Every year, the Ministry of Education publishes the *Mufadhala*, a list of the minimum grades required for every single college or institute. The *Mufadhala* is published in the national newspapers and on television and radio programs. Based on their high school scores, students submit up to fifteen choices for the post-high school programs that they want to study. After all submissions are tallied, the Ministry of Education issues a second *Mufadhala*, and students use this as a basis for knowing which program they have been admitted to.

For example, I finished high school and applied to Damascus University's English Department. According to the first *Mufadhala* published, I needed a minimum score of 27/30;

however, based on national scores and students' interests, the second publication required at least 29/30 (based somewhat on supply and demand). If Damascus University wants to admit 1,000 new English majors and they receive 4,000 applicants based on the original minimum *Mufadhala* score, Damascus University can then raise the required score to 29 or even 30 out of a possible score of 30, as a way to limit enrollment to the highest scorers. This procedure is followed by all colleges, universities, institutes, and programs of study all over Syria.

Table 2 shows an abbreviated version of 2009-2010 academic year's *Mufadhala* results for those who want to major in English and English literature at government universities. Please note that the total possible score for English in the 12th grade is 30 points, and 240 refers to the total points of all the subjects in 12th grade. The Wish Number column refers to the number of what students want to, or think they can, pursue based on their subject (English) final grades as well as on the total score if other students have the same subject score. For instance, the wish numbers for majoring in medicine at Damascus University and Aleppo University are 1 and 2, respectively.

Table. 3

The Mufadhala Results for the 2009-2010 Academic Year

Wish Number	Department	University/City Name	Minimum Score in English	Total Score
160	English	Damascus	30/30	190/240
161		Aleppo	29/30	179/240
162		Idleb	29/30	163/240
163		Lattakia	29/30	169/240
164		Tartous	29/30	178/240
165		Homs	29/30	181/240
166		Hama	29/30	167/240
167		Deir Azzour	29/30	149/240

EFL Teachers: Kinds, Academic Levels and the Selection Process.

Teachers of English in Syria are of three different academic levels. The first academic level comprises those who teach at the university level, and they should at least have an M.A. in English (there are cases when some B.A. holders are teaching assistants, depending on their grade point average for the B.A. degree). Most university professors received their educations at British universities and were on scholarships from the Syrian Government. The teaching assistants of today are the university professors of tomorrow. The second level includes B.A. holders who can teach English from the first grade through the twelfth; however, they are mainly preparatory and secondary teachers. According to UNESCO's International Bureau of Education and its Syrian Arab Republic profile (2007), the qualifications required for teaching at the different levels in Syrian schools are as follows:

1. Primary stage: primary teaching certificate (teacher-training schools),
intermediate teaching certificate (teacher-training institutes).
2. Intermediate stage: intermediate teaching certificate (B.A. or B.Sc. with a
diploma of education).
3. General secondary stage: B.A. or B.Sc. with a diploma of education.
4. University: M.A. or Ph.D.

(UNESCO, IBE, 2007, p. 15)

Every two years or so, the Syrian Ministry of Education announces a contest/competition for selecting school teachers. Supposedly, this contest is conducted to give a teaching license to those who "pass." According to Arends (2006), this license received by those who "pass" is like a "dividing wall" between the qualified and the unqualified (p. 17). As is the case with all other teachers, teachers of English are to "pass" two exams: a written exam and an oral one. The

written exam includes grammar questions (mainly from the textbook of the twelfth grade) and an essay question. However, the oral test takes no more than 2-3 minutes if you are very lucky and is always conducted by an inspector and/or a top-tier teacher who asks you one or two questions. The third level of teachers has a two-year diploma from a government English institute and can teach English up to the ninth grade (the end of the basic-education stage).

It is important to note that, as in Syria, in Egypt many unqualified English teachers are assigned to teach English in remote areas, especially in the countryside, or what is called in Syria “developing Syrian regions” (British Council 1976). Similarly, according to Low Khah Gek, the director of curriculum, planning, and development for the Singaporean Ministry of Education, the selection of teachers is heavily directed by the central government, specifically the Ministry of Education, and the teachers selected are “elite” (from the top third of graduating classes).

In the “interview” conducted by inspectors in a Ministry of Education contest for selecting high school teachers, the following three questions are most common, despite the fact that the answers to the first two are already known by the interviewer. The third question is reported by Sedlak (1989) from the Maine test for teachers developed in the 1840s (as cited in Arends, 2006, p. 6).

1. What is your name?
2. What was your GPA?
3. How would you deal with a student who was:
 - a- Obstinate disobedient
 - b- Physically and mentally indolent
 - c- Addicted to falsehoods
 - d- Impulsive

Darling-Hammond (2001) discusses the three areas in which teachers are assessed: content knowledge, teaching knowledge, and actual teaching performance (as cited in Arends, 2006, p. 12). As for the first area, in the high-school-teachers-selection contest in which I came in first, teachers were given almost 100 multiple-choice and other questions dealing with space-filling, tenses, prepositions, relative clauses, derivatives and so on. The third question above is a teaching-knowledge question frequently used in selecting teachers in licensure interviews. Unfortunately, the third area—namely, the actual teaching performance—is never tested in teacher selection contests in Syria, because of the large number of applicants and the small number of the places used to conduct such tests (usually one school is designed for selecting English teachers). The following two content-based questions are examples of the kinds of questions asked of prospective teachers to measure their knowledge of grammar:

- If I (a- had studied, b- studied, c- have studied, d- study), I would have passed the exam.
- I recommended he (a- went, b- go, c- goes, d- has gone) home before dark.

Moreover, the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* provides an extensive overview of testing in professional and occupational credentialing and licensing. Such tests are designed by the employing company (the Syrian Ministry of Education, in this case) to determine whether an applicant has the essential knowledge and skills in a certain domain, such as teaching. Knowledge refers to content areas, whereas skills refer to performance (pp. 155-158). The Geneva (2008) International Conference on Education reports in detail the development of education in the Syrian Arab Republic, especially in relation to the employment and the distribution of teachers.

Employment of teachers

- The employment takes place according to a competition on the basis of the Basic Law of Workers in the State No. /50/ dated /2004/.
- The regulations of the Internal System of the Ministry of Education which was issued in the Decision No. /1269/443/ dated 1988.
- The instructions of the Prime Ministry Council. - Announcement of the competition where employment takes place according the succession of success for those who have high degrees: (doctorate – master’s degree - diploma of educational rehabilitation – diploma of high studies – then those university graduates and that due to the need and vacancy).

Distribution of teachers

Distribution is being done due to the need after issuing a decision of the male and female teachers [*sic*] success where the declaration of their appointment will be issued due to the need in the Directorates of Education. (Syria’s National Report, 2008, p. 63)

Recent advancements in Syrian education

Syria has witnessed a great process of modernization on all levels over the past 10 years or so, especially in regard to education. New textbooks are introduced every year. The educational system in general and English language teaching in particular have received much attention on the part of the Syrian government. The new textbooks are interactive and require EFL teachers to look for ways of developing and updating their knowledge and teaching methods. This also would require students to rely more on themselves insofar as exam formats are unpredictable and more innovative. A Ministry of Education website of great importance to Syrian EFL teachers’ development has been recently designed where English textbooks with

answer keys as well as audio CDs are uploaded. This website is a work in progress by *Syrian Educational Publishers*: <https://www.syrianep.com>. Despite the fact that English textbooks are predominantly British, audio-wise (by York Press), significant short novels from American literature are also there like, Washington Irving's *Rip Van Winkle* and Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer*.

Statement of the Problem

This rhetorical study seeks to analyze, examine and critique the ELT/EFL phenomenon of teacher supervision in Syria in order to establish the likely empirical research to follow. There is a need to critically and rhetorically examine how and why EFL teacher inspection is done in Syria. In addition, it is also important to explore what are some of the attitudes and perceptions that Syrian EFL high school teachers have towards inspectors' supervisory practices and those that inspectors have towards teachers' pedagogical practices. This rhetorical inquiry lays the groundwork for a future empirical examination of the teacher inspection phenomenon.

There is also not enough literature on EFL educational advisors' theories and practices, especially in centralized educational system as in Syria. Important to note is that the proposed empirical study would examine how novice and experienced Syrian EFL teachers' beliefs and perceptions about inspectors and teacher inspection compare and contrast. It would also look into how teacher supervision influences teachers' development, and this is why it is necessary that the consequences of such a phenomenon on teachers be rhetorically examined. Based on all these issues, there will be a discussion on whether or not there is a need to reform Syrian EFL supervisory and inspectional practices.

Purpose and Rationale of the Study

There is an urgent need to unveil and shed light on the mysteries of the educational system in the Syrian Arab Republic, as it is an under-studied country within the Arab world. Rarely is the Syrian teaching and learning situation examined in relation to English language teaching practices, which might be the result of recent political animosities between the United States and Syria, especially considering the U.S. Government officials' labeling of Syria as part of the "Axis of Evil" and allegation of Syria's sponsorship of terrorists and terrorism. The term "Axis of Evil" was first used in 2002 by the former U.S. President George W. Bush to include three countries: Iran, Iraq, and North Korea and was then used by the United States UN Ambassador John R. Bolton to include three more, what he calls "rogue" states: Libya, Syria, and Cuba. This study will definitely add to the field of TESOL insofar as it will give insights into a never-studied ELT phenomenon in a country very poorly known, and more generally this scholarship will help advance the understanding of EFL and ELT in Syria. My purpose for conducting this rhetorical exploration on Syrian EFL is two-fold and goes as follows:

Experientially personal and professional connections.

Having been the "victim" of some inspectors' practices, I have an insider-perspective on the Syrian EFL enterprise regarding teacher inspection. However, this study will rhetorically and critically help readers and myself better understand and explore more deeply the reality of teacher inspection and the EFL enterprise in Syria as well as propose an outline for the future examination of the issue. . I was previously an EFL teacher and student in Syria. This is why I will be having an insider/outsider positionality. I will be an "insider" inasmuch as I have previous understanding and experience; however, I will be an "outsider", as I have been removed physically from the Syrian reality, and I am examining the issue at hand from another culture.

This is in accordance with Merton's definition of an "insider researcher," in which Merton describes an insider as an individual who has a previous close knowledge of the community and its members where a given study takes place. I can also be considered to be an outsider researcher since I have not been a member of the Syrian EFL context for the last five years, neither as a student nor as a teacher. I strongly believe that my relationship to the research at hand as well as to participants can be summarized by this description of the researcher's perspective(s) from Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997):

The researcher is the stranger, the newcomer, the interloper—entering the place, engaging the people, and disturbing the natural rhythms of the environment—so her presence must be made explicit, not masked or silenced (p. 50).

Raising awareness and consciousness.

This study is aimed at raising stakeholders', teachers', inspectors', as well as students' awareness about the ELT enterprise in Syria, in general, and teacher inspection, in particular. I will reveal power imbalances and hegemonic discourse as they pertain to teacher-inspector relationships. For instance, some inspectors get engaged in the classroom communication and try to "correct" the teacher when the teacher seems to be making a "mistake." For instance, I taught English in the army for two years during my military service. Every now and then, I was observed by the head of the cultural section at the military college, and he was a general-lieutenant. He used to interrupt me all the time while I was teaching. I was once explaining to the cadets that despite the fact that the words "lift" and "elevator" mean the same thing, the former is British and the latter American. Though I was right, that military inspector interrupted and said: "No, I think it is the other way round." I did not want to argue with the General-Lieutenant inspector, obviously a higher rank than mine at the time, and I remained silent.

In addition, it is hoped that this study will bring about transformations in the teacher-inspector interactions and relationships. In this study, I aim to transform the relationships between teachers and inspectors from their current state of “top-downness”, so to speak, and bureaucracy, moving toward a more collaborative and dialogue-based approach (Hatch, 17).

Research Questions

Carspecken (1996, p. 28) encourages “general” and “flexible” *what* and *how* questions (p. 28). After carefully examining the teacher-supervision literature, I have found there is a need to explore such a phenomenon in Syria, and consequently formulated the following four questions:

- What are some of the Syrian EFL educational inspectors’ theories and practices?
- How do the Syrian EFL teachers’ beliefs and perceptions about inspectors and teacher inspection compare and contrast?
- What are some of the Syrian EFL educational inspectors’ beliefs about Syrian EFL teachers’ practices?
- What are some of the consequences of inspection on Syrian EFL teachers’ development?
- How might the use of the principles related to critical pedagogy influence supervisory practices in Syria and how might that affect students?

In addition, it is essential to note that the fundamental question that can be best answered using rhetorical inquiry has to do with the banking model of education and political and educational oppression on both the micro and macro levels. Oppression affects not only schools but also society at large. Therefore, I strongly believe that it is very important to have the following question:

- How and why do supervisors reinforce a banking model of education in Syria that continues to oppress students and train them to be oppressed in the larger society?

Significance of the Study

From an insider's perspective, this study will unveil the mysteries of the educational system in the Syrian Arab Republic, an infrequently-studied country within the Arab world, especially in relation to the phenomenon of teacher inspection. Through my rhetorical analysis, my study will shed light on an important English-language-teaching (ELT) phenomenon in an under-studied and misinterpreted Arab country. This study explores the phenomenon of teacher inspection in Syria and proposes a future empirical study wherein such a phenomenon could be examined through individual interviews, focus groups, and personal narratives.

Moreover, this study is not actually building on previous research or extending present investigations into the Syrian educational system and the perceptions of EFL teachers and inspectors; it is starting from scratch, so to speak, to provide a “unique” source of rhetorical knowledge of a little or rarely studied country. The proposed study has been approved by the Syrian Ministry of Education, and the officials there expressed interest in such research: “This is what we really need,” said a senior Ministry-of-Education educational advisor. This response was given by that educational advisor when my colleague was at the Syrian MoE discussing the possibility for my future empirical research. This is partly why I have no doubt that my rhetorical examination and empirical plan will lead to effective changes in EFL teachers' and inspectors' attitudes in Syria in order for more “effective” and “better” pedagogical as well as supervisory practices to take place.

Benefits of Rhetorical Research: Limitations of Empirical Study

Because this study starts, as all rhetorical research does, with dissatisfaction over the effects of teacher supervision in Syria, it offers a solution to problems of oppression in the Syrian educational system by studying it in light of critical pedagogy. This approach works the

shortcomings of empirical research methods as discussed in this section. From the perspective of its limitations, empirical research might end with no greater insight than rhetorical inquiry. We cannot generalize from most, if not all, studies, and the present study is no exception. This study's limitations have to do mainly with external validity or generalizability. A limitation of an empirical study is the sample size. A very small sample loses validity with respect to the overall larger population. The participants are purposively selected to represent those teachers and inspectors who meet the biographic data criteria and will be information-rich: age, gender, experience, and the number of times an EFL teacher has been inspected. The small number of participants, beyond doubt, affects the number and thus the quality of responses. If I were going to empirically the findings of rhetorical research, I would need to have more participants, and thus more data to analyze.

Group interviews have their limitations as well. For example, group interviewing discussion (focus group) method, which empirical research is apt to employ, is limited, according to Carey and Smith (1994): "the major pitfall of the focus group technique is censoring and conforming" (as cited in MacDougall and Frances Baum, 1997, p. 533). There might be problems of gender: male participants talking in front of and with female participants and vice versa. Such problems may arise from the cultural and/or religious backgrounds of the participants or the fact that they are being watched by the researcher or by their fellow participants. Moreover, there is a chance that the whole talk may be dominated by one or two participants and not the others. Thomas (2008) examines whether focus groups constitute a "culturally sensitive" method of data collection in educational leadership, management and related areas in Arabian Gulf countries: Bahrain, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Kuwait (p. 77).

Wimmer and Dominick (1997, p. 461) state that some researchers claim that the focus groups are not a “good” research methodology. Their reasoning is that there is always a potential influence of one or two participants on the other focus group participants. This influence would, beyond a doubt, affect the number, the diversity and thus the quality of the responses, and even if I were to “regulate” this in one way or another, the focus group participants both active and passive might not take what I say as I intend it, and this would create tension and uneasiness on my part and that of the participants. Another limitation to conducting research using focus groups is that the participants might conform to one another’s responses due to cultural reasons or to the fact that the topic under study is “sensitive” (Fortana & Frey, 1994, as cited in MacDougall & Baum, 1997, p. 533). The topic I am exploring, teacher inspection, is highly sensitive insofar as it is political and conducted by the Ministry of Education – a political institution.

It is also noteworthy that in relation to conformity or groupthink, Thomas (2008) examines whether research paradigms derived from “Western” values (individualistic voices) could be appropriately used in other cultural contexts where collectivistic and in-group driven voices are dominant (p. 88). For Hofstede (1997), Shah (2003) and House et al. (2004), Arab culture is seen as “collectivistic” and as such different from that of USA or UK which is individualistic (as cited in Thomas, 2008, p. 85).

As far as the interview technique, it is semi-structured and has some limitations as well. The power relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee could be a significant factor. Power here is two-way, so to speak. Also, tension and uneasiness might surface during the interviews. Another issue that should be taken into great consideration is that the interviewees’ responses might be as conforming as the responses of the focus group members. The

interviewees represent and echo the political system, so to speak, and thus it might be difficult to get “actual” data. By “actual,” I mean responses that echo the true situation and the true workings of teacher supervision in Syria. A teacher- or inspector-participant’s response might be as follows: “Everything is great, perfect and flawless. We do not have any problems whatsoever.”

A limitation to the narrative story technique might be the “conforming” nature of the participants since the topic to be examined is a sensitive one. Riessman (1993) states that participants’ stories do not mirror the world “out there,” but rather they are “constructed,” “creatively authored,” “rhetorical,” “interpretive,” and “replete with assumptions” (pp. 4-5). Therefore, there might be also this dichotomy between what really happens in supervisory practices and what participants think or assume happens and narrativize about “creatively.” An overarching and key limitation is that the responses participants give in one data collection technique might influence the responses generated in another.

Theoretical Framework

Grounded in critical/feminist theory, this rhetorical research hopes to critique teacher evaluation or inspection in the Syrian EFL milieu. It is my goal to critically and rhetorically understand: (1) Syrian EFL inspectors’ theories and practices, (2) Syrian EFL teachers’ beliefs and perceptions about inspectors and inspection, (3) inspectors’ beliefs about Syrian EFL teachers, and (4) possible consequences of inspectors’ practices on teachers’ development. I am grounding my study on Freirean critical pedagogical theory that has dominated the teacher-inspector literature. As a result of this study, it is my hope to raise consciousness on the part of both teachers and inspectors as well as on the Syrian educational institutions and Ministry of Education at large.

My aim is to suggest ways to “transform” the seemingly predominant relationships between teachers and inspectors in Syria (Hatch, 2000, p. 17). Similar to Hatch’s idea, Creswell (1998), in discussing feminist approaches to research, argues that there is one ultimate goal behind such critical research, to establish and promote “collaborative and non-exploitative” relationships and to avoid top-downness and whatever forms it might take (male-oriented, white-oriented or teacher-inspector-oriented as is the case with this research at hand) in order to revolutionize and transform the dominant relationships (p. 83). The present study is feminist in the sense it is an effort to undermine current hierarchy in the Syrian EFL.

According to Guba and Lincoln (2004), critical inquiry is aimed at not only critiquing but also transforming and not maintaining the status quo, be it cultural, political, economic, ethnic — or educational for that matter. They suggest that, for this end to be reached, there should be “engagement in confrontation, even conflict” (p. 30). However, the important point I want to make is that I do not intend to put the blame on one side or the other; my role is not that of an “instigator.” Rather my hope is to raise consciousness and actively advocate the concerns and worries of those at the bottom of the educational hierarchical system, teachers. In other words, my role is that of a “consciousness raiser” and “transformation activist and facilitator” rather than that of an “instigator” or even a “problem-maker.” It is very important to mention that I am not calling for a drastic change - a bottom-up (student-oriented) model of teacher supervision but rather for reconciliatory, dialogue-based, democratic, collegial, equal, trust-driven, and situated relationships between teachers and all stakeholders: teacher supervisors, principals, parents and above all students. This can only occur if the current civil unrest results in changes in how those in power conceive of education’s role in liberation. Change is possible everywhere.

The theoretical framework of this research revolves around the idea that teacher supervision/inspection/evaluation is not bad or good as a concept; however, the way it is implemented and utilized can have positive or negative effects on not only teachers but also on academic institutions at large and, therefore, on students and how they come to live in society. As Freeman (1994) argues, supervisors and all of those in charge of teaching and learning should look at teaching as a “social practice,” and that such a practice is very situational and contextualized time-wise, place-wise and people-wise (p. 15). Supervisors should take into consideration that teachers may know more than what supervisors may think they do with special attention being given to the fact they may know less as well.

In addition, it is also vital for teachers to learn and go through self-assessment processes via reflections and action research, to engage in what Huot terms “instructive evaluation” where both students and teachers are in charge of their own learning and teaching. Though Huot was dealing with students’ “instructive evaluation,” the same, I believe, could be applied to teachers and inspectors and their teaching and supervisory skills, respectively, inasmuch as they will be able to “identify” and benefit from what goes wrong and right in their respective teaching and supervisory situations. Another important issue explored in this research has to do with the need for elevating supervisory practices in Syria on a continuum from judgmentality, directiveness, and prescriptiveness to collegueship, non-directiveness, collaboration as well as descriptiveness.

At the heart of “ideal” supervision is Williamson’s (2009) notion of trust. Teacher evaluators are to begin a trust relationship with the teachers observed as much as the teachers are to be trusted in assessing and evaluating students’ learning development. Such trust is the foundation of critical pedagogy. If teachers are to liberate their students, their evaluators must liberate them. As Henry Giroux terms it, supervisors must be “emancipatory authorities.”

According to Green & Snyder (1996), what is wrong with current supervisory practices in the USA is that:

- Practices utilize a single paradigm
- Practices lack collegiality
- Practices lack self-reflection
- Practices do not direct professional growth
- Teachers sometimes:
 - put on a “show” by dusting off a “tried and true” lesson (This is particularly obvious when teachers know that inspectors are visiting their classes beforehand.)
 - weave teaching to demonstrate a current district initiative

This complaint applies equally well to supervisory practices in Syria. My own interpretation of what “ideal” or “effective” teacher supervision and evaluation need to accomplish and be like in Syria is based on these ten pillars that will be discussed extensively in Chapter Two. These pillars are: trust-driven, reflective (auto-evaluative), non-judgmental, non-directive, collegial, democratic, growth-oriented, dialogue-based, situated, and less inspection-like. These pillars complement one another, and with the absence of any, teacher supervision becomes shaky and does not achieve what it is intended and designed to.

Definitions of Terms

Critical pedagogy:

Critical pedagogy is a philosophy of education embraced by pedagogues like: Henry Giroux, Paulo Freire, Ira Shor and others. Basically, this philosophy concentrates on how students can be helped to critically express themselves without the fear of authoritarian and autocratic

practices imposed on them. In this rhetorical inquiry, I am applying this philosophy to the teacher-supervisory relationships existing in the Syrian educational system. Principles of critical pedagogy include the following: dialogue, mutuality, ethics, free will, love, difference, democratizing education, liberating education as well as humanizing education.

English as a foreign language (EFL).

EFL is an acronym for English as a Foreign Language and refers to countries where English is not an official language nor is it the main means of communication as is the case in Arabic-speaking countries. Gebhard (1996) defines EFL and distinguishes it from ESL (English as a Second Language) based on context. In other words, students from non-English-speaking countries and studying English in the United States, for instance, are referred to as ESL students. However, if the same students are studying English in their home countries, they can be considered to be EFL students.

Teacher evaluation.

Teacher evaluation, for the purpose of this study, will be defined as “an organizational function designed to make comprehensive judgments concerning teacher performance and competence for the purposes of personnel decisions such as tenure and continuing employment” (Nolan and Hoover, 2004, p.26). According to Vier and Dagley (2002), teacher evaluation is one of the primary means of improving educational services and justifying removal of “substandard” teachers. This is why I believe Berliner (1991) states that, based on his experience, he has been convinced that teachers – like students – can be “at risk.” Teachers can have “rough” and “bad” days, and sometimes they can be labeled as under-achievers or ineffective teachers. So he extends the concept of an at-risk student to at-risk teachers to encompass an at-risk classroom as well (pp. 75-76).

Similarly, Darling-Hammond (2006) states that teachers on a daily basis are confronted by having to make complex decisions that may lead to high-stakes outcomes for students' futures. The same type of decision-making can be applied to the relationship between teachers and inspectors (p. 301). Danielson (2001) states there are three purposes of teacher evaluation. First, teacher evaluation, as policy makers see it, aims at "quality assurance." Second, it is indispensable, as Danielson argues, to guarantee that there are competent teachers in classrooms. And the third purpose is to promote, recognize, and develop good teachers' pedagogical and instructional skills (as cited in Williams, 2007, p. 12).

Teacher supervision.

Teacher supervision is defined by the roles it has historically played, and as such it has six definitions or acts. According to Wiles and Bondi (2000), supervision can be seen as an act of administration, curriculum work, instructional function, human relations, and management as well as an act of leadership (p. 7). This is why supervision is seen as a "people position" and supervisors are to be naturally "self-actualized" persons in the sense that they must be "humane" in their jobs, to be able to identify with others, allow "free speech," place the individual above the organization, see each person supervised as unique, "provide for the right to make mistakes" and ultimately allow the teachers supervised to assume responsibility (pp. 237-238). Similarly, the two authors see supervisors as real communicators/human relations workers, staff and curriculum developers, planners, motivators, organizers, problem-solvers as well as evaluators of both programs and teachers (pp. 19-22). So an important role of supervisors is to evaluate and assess teachers' performances, competencies, texts, materials (e.g. lesson plans).

EFL teacher inspection.

Teacher inspection refers to the process of visiting “random” classrooms “unannounced” while teachers are teaching in order to make sure that the standards and expectations set out and outlined by an educational institution are satisfied, met, and followed to the letter. This process can be done by internal inspectors (principals) and external inspectors (Ministry of Education specialist supervisors – *Muwajjihoon Ikhtisaseeyoon* - or inspectors – *Mufattshoon Tarbaweeeyoon*). It is done also to ensure that teachers are not using too much first language (L1) as they interact in an EFL class, teachers are familiar with the subject matter, and teachers are preparing their lessons and so on.

Teacher development.

Teacher development is seen as a process teachers go through in their careers. In this study and many others, the aim or purpose of teacher evaluation is to bring out, improve or develop effective teaching practices, to boost teachers’ professional practices and ultimately to effect their development (teacher quality). Teacher development is defined by Glatthorn (1995) as “the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically” (as cited in Mak, 2010, p. 3). Teacher professional development is viewed as a process that is ongoing or one that has been completed but not entirely.

Mufadhala.

The *Mufadhala* refers to a list of the minimum grades required for every single college or institute. This list is published in the national newspapers and on television and radio programs. The results of this *Mufadhala* determine which program of study a student has been admitted to and the university or institute where that program of study is provided.

This chapter provided an overview of the study (what, how and why it examines what it examines). A real-life scenario in Syria's EFL was given to illustrate the topic under study in this research. The context of the study was extensively described, especially in relation to the national and educational profiles of Syria. Problem statement, rationale and purpose, significance, and limitations were also discussed and illustrated. Four rhetorically-oriented research questions were formulated to cover the phenomenon of teacher inspection and the perceptions of those involved, especially with regards to English language teaching (ELT) in Syria's EFL. Finally, the theoretical framework in which this research is grounded, is explained and so are key terminologies pertaining to teacher inspection. The following chapter is the review of teacher inspection and supervision literature, modes, models, trust issues, practices, theories, and teachers' professional and leadership growth and development.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Teacher Inspection: Historical Background

In this rhetorical study, the terms “teacher evaluation,” “teacher supervision,” “teacher observation” and “teacher inspection” are interchangeably used for two reasons. First, there is limited research conducted on teacher inspection as such. The term “inspection” is used in Syria, but it does not surface much in literature. The terms that surface in literature are teacher supervision and school in section. Second, teacher supervision and evaluation are done by the inspector. In other words, the out-of-school person who comes to a classroom to oversee how and what the teacher is doing is called “Mufattish Tarbawee” (educational inspector) by teachers and students and “Muwajjih Ikhtisasee” or “Mushrif Tarbawee” (educational supervisor/advisor) by supervisors, teacher evaluators and Ministry-of-Education (MoE) officials.

In a phone conversation I had with a fellow teacher in Syria (Sameer, a pseudonym), he told me that in my letter to the Ministry of Education for the proposed empirical study approval, I needed to change the word “Mufattish” (inspector) to “Mushrif” or “Muwajjih Ikhtisasee” (Supervisor or Specialist Directors), based on what a MoE senior official told him when he was helping me get the study approved. That MoE official told him that “inspector” is only used in elementary schools, whereas in the secondary stage, Supervisor or Specialist Director is used. The interesting thing is that all supervisors are called “inspectors” by both teachers and students. Nonetheless, I chose to abide by their terminology in the MoE letter.

Resorting to a draft from the 1982 Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) Yearbook on supervision, Wiles and Bondi (2000) also mention that by the word “supervisor” is meant not only those who have such a title but also principals, superintendents, department heads and those in charge of helping other staff members develop

and improve their job performance. For these very reasons above, I will provide an extensive literature review in relation to supervision and evaluation, taking into consideration that they are directly related to inspection, the terminology used in some EFL contexts such as in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Indonesia and Syria, just to name a few, according to the British Council (1985, 1984, 1976).

Waite (1995) states that despite the fact that times change, current trends in teacher supervision and evaluation are highly influenced by “old” and “then-popular” supervisory practices and that newer evaluative approaches do not dispense with older ones. In this sense, the history of supervision effects and brings to light the presence of current trends (pp. 95-96). According to Bolin and Panaritis (1992), teacher supervision came to light as a disciplined field of practice or profession around the turn of the 20th century. They also state that, before that, teacher supervision had an “inspection-like” nature (inspecting whether teachers were doing their jobs). This concept of inspection is also similar to what Waite calls “administrative monitoring” that paved the way for other modes of supervision (p. 96). These inspectional practices were conducted by ministers, headmasters and others. So during that time, this process of inspection was done both internally and externally. Supervision, then, as the researchers state, used to involve close observation of not only the instructional practices of teachers but also of school facilities. They also explain that this method of supervision lasted in the United States until the middle of the 19th century.

Glanz (1995) indicates that inspection-like and monitoring supervision was considered to be the predominant method used in school systems until mid-20th century. The researcher also makes it clear that students are also part of today’s evaluation practices. According to Kelehear (2006), part of classical organizational theory in supervision was the view of teacher supervision

as inspection. By inspection, Kelehear means that teachers were usually paid “surprise visits” by community members “charged with the task of getting rid of ineffective teachers.” (As cited in Minnear-Peplinski, 2009, p. 15). Similarly, according to (Glanz, 1991, 1998) and Hanson (1996, 2003), bureaucratic supervision resulted in summative evaluation methods that were highly based on teacher inspection that was considered to be the main tool in this type of supervision. So the bureaucratic model resulted in inspection-oriented methods to teacher supervision or what Robinson (2009) calls “inspection-and-surveillance methods” employed and utilized by teacher appraisal systems (p. 16). Glanz comments that bureaucracy has impacted “the underlying structure and form of schooling by creating a centralized, standardized, hierarchical administrative structure” (p. 24). He also sees bureaucracy and professionalism as “complementary” and affecting American education and not as “contradictory” or “entirely separate.” In other words, the professionalization of public school supervision has brought about “monopolistic” as well as “dominant” relationships among what he calls “occupational groups” (pp. 24-25).

Similarly, Wiles and Bondi (2000) give an extensive overview of the history of supervision in the United States and trace it back to 1872. They give a long list of what supervisors needed from and were asked to reinforce in teachers. Supervision then, as they discuss it, was inspection-like and enforcement-like. In addition, they state very clearly that the first supervisors were nothing but administrative “extensions of principals and superintendents” (p. 7). The interesting thing is that no item from the list below stresses that teachers should be doing a good job teaching and developing students’ learning. Thus, in the United States in the late nineteenth century, supervisors needed to make sure that:

1. teachers are filling lamps, cleaning chimneys and trimming wicks on a daily basis.

2. teachers are bringing a bucket of water and a scuttle of coal for the day's session.
3. teachers are making pens carefully and whittling nibs to the individual taste of pupils.
4. teachers are spending the remaining time reading the bible or other good books.
5. men teachers take one evening for courting purposes or two evenings if they go to church regularly.
6. women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be dismissed.
7. teachers are given a 25 cents increase per week if they do their jobs "faithfully" and "without fault" for five years; however, the Board of Education has to approve the raise first.

(Wiles & Bondi, 2000, pp. 4-7)

Figure 2 shows the historical development of emphasis on supervision and its roles from mid-nineteenth century to the early twenty-first century (Wiles & Bondi, 2000, p. 8). As the figure shows, supervision was equivalent to inspection (e.g., are teachers doing a good job?) and moved towards bureaucracy and sole emphasis on curriculum (e.g., are teachers following the curriculum?).

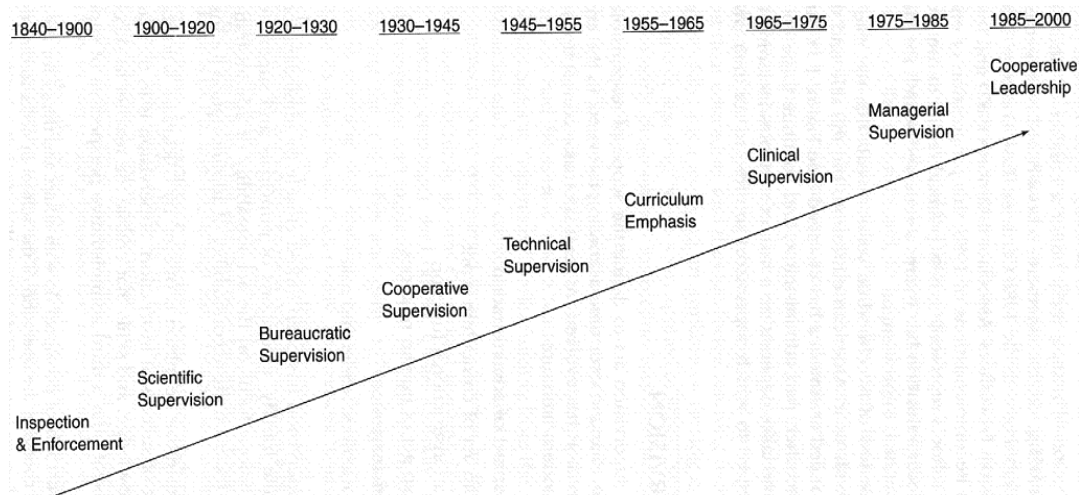


Figure2. The historical development of emphasis on teacher supervision

Evaluation, Supervision and Inspection: Three Sides of the Same Equilateral Triangle?

Evaluation to supervision to inspection: An entire cycle.

Teacher assessment or evaluation is closely related to classroom observation and supervision and has been given the negative connotations of the word “inspection”, in the EFL contexts I have mentioned and will mention throughout this study. Teacher evaluation is mainly top-down, power-based and hierarchical (bureaucratic). Glanz (1998) defines bureaucracy as consisting of “a hierarchy of authority, prescribed rules, centralized decision-making and procedural specifications” (p. 45). Likewise, Robinson (2009) states that when we think of supervision, we view it in terms of “control,” “hierarchy,” and “authority.” Teacher evaluation as such is seen in a negative sense; teachers consider it to be “a pro-forma task” as well as “impersonal and artificial” in its practices (p. 13). Pertaining to the concept of bureaucracy in education, Freire (1985) states:

The more bureaucratic the evaluators are, not just from an administrative point of view but above all from an intellectual view, the narrower and more inspectionlike [sic] the evaluators from outside will be. Through inspection, educators just become objects of vigilance by a central organization. (p. 23)

So if teacher evaluators do their jobs on a bureaucratic basis (they do what they are asked to do), teacher evaluation tends to be concerned with nothing but seeing whether teachers are doing a good job as set out by a “central organization” such as a Ministry or Department of Education.

Characterization of teacher supervision and teacher supervisors.

According to Brimblecombe, Ormston and Shaw (1995), school inspection is a very stressful experience for teachers and other school personnel. They add that an inspector's behavior is an important factor in the degree of that stress and anxiety. Inspectors are described by Brimblecombe, Ormston and Shaw's teacher-participants as anything from "reassuring, helpful or supportive to cold, confrontational, rude, openly critical and hostile" (p. 57). The researchers say that the results of their survey confirm the latter group of inspectors (openly critical and hostile) is a minority (only 8% of inspectors as condescending and 3.4% as being openly critical of the teacher in the class). The researchers "bravely" admit that, despite this fact, teachers' stress and anxiety levels still increase no matter who inspects their teaching. One teacher described an inspector as a "pain in the backside," whereas another said "what a little shit the inspector was" (p. 57). In the same vein, Swearingen (1985) mentions a wide range of different terms for the word "supervisor," and such terms are given by teachers working in supervisory situations. The following terms represent the first four or five words or phrases that come to the teachers' mind when they have heard the word "supervision."

... helper, advisor, resource person, visitor (to my classroom), coordinator, curriculum consultant, leader, dictator, fear, a place or person to consult, stimulator of creativity, one who requires actions of teachers, one who puts direction into activities (p. 5)

I found especially interesting and distressing the following words and phrases: "dictator, fear, one who requires actions of teachers and one who puts direction into activities." From my experience, I feel that these words describe many teachers' views of supervisors and the process of supervision at large. A supervisor can be seen as a "dictator" who tells teachers what they should and should not do. Supervision or inspection evokes fear on the part of not only the

teachers but also the school principal or headmaster. A school's entire reputation will be at risk if inspectors turn in "bad" reports to the Ministry of Education, resulting in the teacher or the principal being fired or warned for a bad job and not taking care of what and how the teachers teach and conduct lessons in their classrooms. Despite this fear present in student-teacher-principal-supervisor relationships, Potter (1961) states that school administrators and inspectors in Syria were beginning to understand the meaning of teacher supervision as providing assistance and encouragement to teachers, and not as "policing" and "non-constructive criticism." Despite that, the researcher admits that this "change" was still far from complete (p. 36).

Moreover, Marshall (2009) distinguishes between what she calls "rookie" and "veteran" teachers in the way they see teacher supervision. For rookie teachers, these two words, "fear" and "loathing," describe how rookies see supervision and supervisors (p. 2). It is also seen as every teacher's "nightmare", or I would say an "all-day-mare", so to speak. "Every teacher's nightmare is to botch one lesson and have the rest of the year painted with the same evaluative brush." "One screwed-up lesson and the other 99.9% of the year will be painted with the same evaluative brush" (p. 24). In another study, Marshall (2005) describes the "evaluation visits," paid internally or externally, as tools that distort and misrepresent the real practices of a teacher in a very negative way. The lesson observed is to be seen as an important building block for teachers' teaching and students' learning and not as the only basis to evaluate. The researcher suggests that "to grasp the bigger picture, a principal needs to know more" (p. 729). As argued by Marshall (2005), the issue of ineffectiveness in teacher evaluation based on "random" visits is visually depicted (p. 728) as follows in Figure 3.

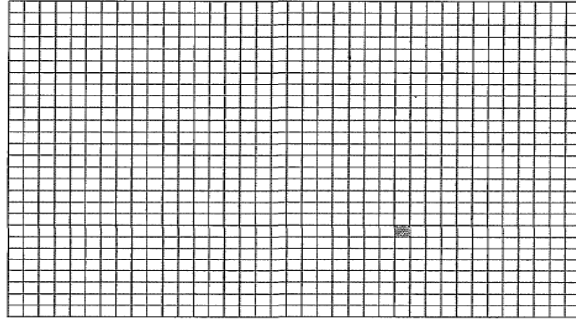


Figure 3. A random supervisory visit throughout a whole year

The concept of trust in supervisor-teacher relationships.

Glickman (1995) gives different teachers' views towards supervisors and the job they do. One of the teachers views supervisors as “detached” individuals with very little knowledge about and concern for the everyday problems of teachers in the field. They are mainly concerned with whether teachers are meeting their mandated goals and following the syllabus and the curriculum (pp. 82-83). Beyond doubt, this emphasis on fear-based relationships relates to the important idea of trust; trust and fear seem to be dichotomous, as I will explain.

Williams (2004) argues that if there are no trusting relationships within an educational organization, supervision and evaluation become nothing but “meaningless rituals” (p. 2). Tshannen-Moran (2004) wrote an entire book on the concept of trust – a binding organizational and societal factor among people: he addresses trust between families and schools, among teachers, teachers themselves, teachers and principals as well as schools and educational institutions at large. So a key element of trust is interdependence, and this is manifest in the school system. The writer recommends that the teacher-principal relationship be built and established on trust (p. 18).

According to Baier, trust is defined as “the assurance that one can count on the good will of another to act in one’s best interest” (as cited in Tshannen-Moran, 2004, p. 15). Trust is also both metaphorically and paradoxically seen as “glue” and a “lubricant” – “glue” in the sense that

without which all things will fall apart and “lubricant” in the sense that without which “friction” and “heat” tend to surface and lead to foiling the entire school organization (pp. 15-16). There are instances when principals do not trust teachers (as is the case with having “spy students” in class), and this generates fear or a principal-is-always-there-to-get-me attitude. There are also other instances of “spy teachers” at school. The same applies, I believe, to the relationships existing between some school systems and the Department of Education or Ministry of Education at large.

Effectiveness vs. ineffectiveness in supervisors’ practices and their ends.

Kramer (2007) conducts a survey-based research study to examine and investigate the perceptions of elementary teachers of what “effective supervision” should be like. This study was conducted in Westchester County, New York. The effectiveness was seen in terms of a number of variables such as purpose, collaboration, trust, feedback, continuity as well as reflective thinking. The researcher collected the data from 96 respondents and revealed that a number of supervisory practices were being carried out in Westchester County. Teachers' perceptions, as the study shows, indicated that when the process of supervision was “comprehensive,” greater levels of trust, purpose, collaboration, continuity, and instructional development were present among both the teachers supervised and the supervisors themselves. By “comprehensive”, the researcher recommends that the principal engage in “appropriate” as well as “continuous” supervisory behaviors in order for trust to be there and thus for instructional improvement to come to light. Such behaviors are trust-driven, collaboration-oriented, purposeful, regularly conducted and nonjudgmental. Mutual respect must become a goal of a liberated Syrian educational system as well.

Kramer's study showed that teachers require supervision that is "appropriate" to their needs as educators and that the particular supervisory practice and behavior implemented is to be agreed upon during pre-supervision conferences between the teacher and the internal supervisor, the school principal or the headmaster. This approach places emphasis on the fact that the relationship between the principal and the teacher should be collaborative and dialogue-oriented in nature. This collaboration, as seen in Kramer's study, aims at making clear what purpose a supervisory practice should have in relation to bringing about improvement in the teaching and instruction of the teachers internally supervised. Likewise, for Nivo (2001) it is important that the interaction between internal and external evaluators be based on a "two-way" flow of information in a process that leads to the learning and the development of both. He states that though external and internal evaluators are not necessarily equal in authority, they still can learn from, and teach, one another (as cited in Blok, Slegers, & Karsten, 2007, p. 383). In short, as long as supervision is not comprehensive or based on trust and with an unclear purpose, the instructional improvement of the teachers will continue to be minimal.

Kramer's study, though conducted in a context different from the Syrian EFL context, nonetheless raises issues of purpose, comprehension and trust among a school staff represented by teachers and the internal supervisors. Its findings may be seen as important, necessary and indispensable in teaching contexts where trust is rarely, or never there, where supervision continuity is never there (5-10 minutes an entire year or longer) and where purpose is always to "inspect" teachers and to literally "hunt" for their teaching and content knowledge "mistakes." This idea of supervision continuity relates to Ferguson, Earley, Fidler and Ouston's (2000) stress on the fact that, in their inspection missions, inspectors aim to make sure educational standards are met and make judgments about the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Moreover,

inspectors are required to “take account of so many facets of school life in a relatively brief time period” (p. 15). The above authors state that inspectional visits and practices are characterized by “brevity” or “short-livedness.” They admit that the observation of teaching stands out as both a “challenge” and a judgment-making situation.

Democratic supervisor-teacher practices and relationships.

Sullivan and Glanz (2005) discuss the fact that clinical supervision has emerged from the “dissatisfaction” with traditional, supervisory, directive, judgmental and prescriptive methods. They also discuss that supervision has changed both functionally and conceptionally. Supervision in the United States in the late 19th century used to be monopolized by selectmen, committees or clergymen, then it had an inspectional function in a search for “errors” and “mistakes,” and later it was seen as a bureaucracy-oriented practice and finally it embraced “democratic theory,” a view that is far-fetched in many teacher supervision practices (pp. 24-25). By supervising in democratic ways, Waite (2005) means two things: inclusion and self-determination. Inclusion refers to having the teacher observed participate in the evaluation decisions and become an active participant in evaluation conferences. A democratic supervision has to honor the teacher’s self-determination and tries to answer questions such as the following:

1. Who is he/she I am observing and supervising?
2. What does he/she want to become?
3. How can he/she be helped to develop teaching and learning skills?

So it seems that, as Waite argues, democratic supervision should be looked upon as a learning, educative process for not only the teacher but also for the evaluator (pp. 42-42). This concept might be even more important in an evolving system such as the Syrian educational system. In their study conducted in India, Dyer et al. (2002) seem to be taking democratic

approaches to teacher development and not autocratic, mandated ones. For them, a democratic approach to teacher development necessitates participatory and research-based relationships among teachers, on the one hand, and those in charge, on the other. A democratic approach is very similar to the concept of “occupational socialization” in Brouwer and Korthagen’s (2005) longitudinal (4.5 years long) study of 24 graduate teacher education programs in the Netherlands. By “occupational socialization,” Brouwer and Korthagen refer to the situations where the teacher and the teacher educator negotiate and discuss all ways possible for the development of teachers and consequently the school or institution they work in. Dyer et al. (2002) also examine collaborative action research projects with teacher educators in an effort to promote teachers’ teaching and thus students’ learning. Collaborative action research is viewed as a significant factor in developing teachers’ autonomy as well as critical reflexivity, and these two concepts constitute what Dyer et al call for, democratization of teacher education.

Top-down, hierarchical and bureaucratic supervisory practices.

As argued by Dyer et al. (2002), there is a strong relationship between the decentralization of the educational system and the democratization of teacher education and development. Their research sheds light on the idea that with democratic approaches to developing teachers, or what they call “Modus operandi,” teachers should be autonomous and self-reflective professionals as well as critical thinkers who share power with stakeholders as represented by principals and teacher supervisors (pp. 349-350). Unfortunately, this democratic approach could be seen as a taboo in centralized teaching and learning contexts such as Syria where everything follows a top-down hierarchy. And that is why rhetorical research of the sort undertaken here must be seen as a starting point where teachers and stakeholders share power and decision-making processes.

In relation to the concept of top-down hierarchy, O'Neal (2008) conducts a qualitative multiple-case study to provide elaborate descriptions of school teachers' perceptions and understandings of what teacher supervision is or even should be. This study's participant sample was purposefully selected and composed of four middle school teachers (1 sixth-grade teacher, 2 seventh-grade teacher, and 1 eighth-grade teacher) working in a rural school district in a Mid-Atlantic state in the United States. The data was primarily collected by conducting semi-structured in-depth, open-ended-question interviews. In addition, secondary methods of observation, field notes and a focus group interview, were also used as supportive means. The analysis of the data was constantly coded according to thematic categories in relation to how these teachers perceived and understood supervision and how supervision could be utilized to foster their professional growth and development.

O'Neal's (2008) study concludes that supervision, as seen by all of the four middle school teacher participants, is a top-down, hierarchical, evaluative, and judgmental as well as non-supportive practice. Such supervision is termed "traditional" and seen as having "little value" to the teachers instructionally. This supervision is done once or twice a year, characterized by a post-conference and a few words written on a generic checklist (p. 72). In addition, O'Neal's research places emphasis on the urgent need for supervisors who are well-informed and driven by support and significant feedback in order to raise awareness rather than prescribe what should be done. Moreover, it calls for more collegial and collaborative supervisory model practices on the part of the supervisors. In other words, for supervisory feedback to be effective to the professional development of teachers, it needs to be highly collaborative and dialogue-oriented rather than hierarchical (pp. 74-75).

Teacher Inspection

What are its kinds? Who does it?

Not only in Syria, but also in some other Arab and non-Arab countries, the people who come to oversee teachers' lessons from time to time are called “inspectors,” which implies that teachers are suspected of doing something wrong or something that needs to be investigated anyway. As a matter of fact, this concept of inspection relates to Tshannen-Moran’s (2004) and Williamson’s (2009) notion of trust. In other words, teacher evaluators are to begin a trust relationship with the teachers observed as much as the teachers are to be trusted in assessing and evaluating students’ learning development. Teacher inspection takes two forms: internal and external.

By the internal form, I mean teacher evaluation as done by the school headmaster or principal, who requires teachers to show him/her their lesson plans and students’ performance grades on all levels (oral and written). However, by external I mean government inspection and supervision of the classroom. “Inspectors,” or nicely put “supervisors,” “*Muwajjiheen Ikhtisasiyeen*,” are supposed to be experienced teachers – hence the word “*Ikhtisasiyeen*” that means “specialists.” By “internal” and “external,” I mean inspection by school personnel (the principal) and inspection by MoE personnel. The school headmaster or principal requires teachers to show him/her their lesson plans and students’ performance grades on all levels (oral and written) in a grade book that is mandated by the MoE.

The International Conference on Public Education convened by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Bureau of Education (IBE) in Geneva, Switzerland in 1956 conducted a comparative “comprehensive” study of the phenomenon of inspection by sending a 5-section, 23-question survey to the

Ministries and Departments of Education in 75 different countries. Despite the fact this book-shaped research is old, I believe it is the only study to have documented teacher inspection and supervisory practices in a large number of countries around the world. The sections the survey included, are:

1. Inspection of primary education
2. Inspection of secondary education
3. Inspection of art education
4. Inspection of vocational education
5. Inspection of higher education

(IBE, 1956, pp. 9-11)

In the response to that survey by the Syrian MoE, we come to know the two kinds of supervision/inspection in Syria, with “a” being the internal and “b” being the external. The MoE response goes as follows:

The officials entrusted with the supervision of primary education are (a) headmasters who supervise the professional activity of the teachers; (b) primary inspectors who supervise the headmasters and teachers (p. 308).

Judgmentality (should/should not, good/bad, right/wrong) is a main characteristic of teacher evaluation in Syria. Here is an example of what I mean. An “inspector” once watched ten minutes of my lesson and then passed judgments about my teaching style and knowledge. He told me what I should and should not have done. Yet, what he thinks of as “right” or “wrong” in the classroom does not necessarily have validity and workability in my classrooms; he/she just theorizes and idealizes what he thinks my class should be like. Inspectors in Syria idealize about how classes should be conducted without taking into consideration the number of students is,

whether classrooms are segregated, what the physicality of the classroom, just to name a few items. For instance, a specialist inspector once observed the last 15 minutes of my class and then told me the following:

“You have covered so much in this class; this is too much. Minimize your use of Arabic in the classroom and divide the chalkboard into three sections: one for vocabulary and opposites, one for questions and answers from the textbook, and one for derivatives.”

What does the inspector do?

In Algeria, the textbooks are "centrally prescribed by the inspectorate" (British Council 1984). The same is true in Tunisia: textbooks and syllabi are controlled by a committee of officials and inspectors (a chief inspector assisted by one *Conceiller Pedagogique*, who is a senior English teacher) (British Council 1975). In their "inspections," they usually make sure that the syllabus is adhered to completely content-wise and time-wise. For instance, if the syllabus says that on November 13th the class should cover pages 50 through 57 in the textbook, then this assignment is nonnegotiable. Texts mainly consist of literary, scientific, and commercial passages followed by some content-based questions. A second textbook is a grammar book dealing with tenses, sentence types, clauses, phrases and the like. There is also a section of supplementary reading passages, mainly short stories, for example.

In observational missions-possible, inspectors comment on the teacher's use of English (e.g., did the teacher use Arabic too much or too little in the explanations?), how well the teacher got the students to interact with him/her and with peers, oral fluency of the teacher and class, as well as the techniques of the teacher (e.g., did the teacher use pair work, conversations, media, etc.?). Inspectors also check to see how active or passive the students are, how much they participate, and so forth. All these observations are reported by the inspector to the Ministry of

Education, and they are recorded in the teacher's personal file. Over time, these reports can negatively (or positively) affect a teacher's career, and teachers who "pass" the inspections are sent thank you letters for a job well done.

The same study by the International Bureau of Education (IBE) and UNESCO specifies a number of duties/roles played by the Syrian educational inspectors, whether primary inspectors or secondary school specialist inspectors for educational or administrative matters. These duties are:

- Visiting schools
- Attending lessons
- Making verbal or written observation reports (the latter is recorded in the register of a given school)
- Arranging refresher courses from time to time
- Proposals for teachers' appointment
- Transfer of teachers from one school to another/Preparing annual lists of transfers
- Promotion of teachers/Preparing annual lists of promotions
- Collaborating in the drawing up of syllabuses
- Collaborating in the publication of educational textbooks
- Participating in examinations

(IBE, 1956, pp. 308-309)

So Ministry-of-Education inspectors in Syria have appointment, promotion, training, examination, observation, and supervision responsibilities. This is why teachers need to be on good terms with inspectors, and any miscommunications can be detrimental to teachers' careers. I am not exaggerating here; I am sure there have been instances when teachers' got "demoted,"

because inspectors turned in to the MoE “bad” reports about a teacher’s teaching or language knowledge. Before I came to the United States and during a grading session, an acquaintance (Ghassan, a pseudonym) told me he was observed by an inspector who was not so pleased with his teaching and language proficiency. As a result, Ghassan was given an administrative job at the Damascus Suburbs Directorate of Education instead of teaching, because the inspector was not very pleased with him. The interesting thing is that Ghassan was happy with this decision, because he did not need to do any teaching anymore and that his new office job was much “easier.”

Teacher supervision in the Middle East.

Glickman (1995) narrates what supervisors see when they are on their supervisory tasks and missions at Germando Elementary School. Glickman states that supervisors see that not only the same textbooks are being used but also the same pages are being followed according to the syllabus and curriculum (p. 3). The same is true in Syria. So Syrian EFL teachers are expected to use the same books and to teach the same thing at a given time in accordance with the standardized curriculum and syllabus. Every week or so, the principal asks teachers to show him/her their daily lesson plans, because if the principal or school headmaster does not do this, he/she will get in trouble when inspectors come to oversee how teaching is conducted in a certain school.

Thus, teaching can sometimes be referred to as a “fear-driven profession”, meaning that teachers are afraid of principals who are in turn afraid of inspectors at the branch level who are afraid of those at the Ministry-of-Education level and so on. Daresh (2005) states that the decisions made by an individual evaluator to inspect how good or how bad teachers are doing in their classrooms are based on neither a “personal philosophy” nor “personal preference”. Rather,

these decisions are mandated and defined by the state, school district, or even country at large. Teacher evaluators do what they do because they have to, not necessarily because they believe in the values they impose. This is what I have referred to as “fear-driven” (p. 15). Glickman describes students and teachers in the presence of supervisors in the classroom. Students, for Glickman, are “quiet but restless” and appear “attentive,” whereas teachers are “business-like”.

Teachers in Egypt, as in many Arab countries, especially Syria, are at the bottom of a hierarchical educational system. The hierarchy is as follows from top to bottom: Dean of English inspectorate, eight inspectors general, senior inspectors, inspectors, senior teachers, teachers (British Council 1976). In Kuwait, the inspectorate is 44 in number divided into four groups; each with a senior inspector, and all of them are headed by a chief inspector whose tasks include in-service training, curriculum development, and information and contact outside Kuwait (British Council 1986). In the Sultanate of Oman, materials are written by the chief teacher trainer who runs a seminar attended by regional inspectors to learn what and how to use the materials (British Council 1985).

In Saudi Arabia, inspectors' tasks include writing reports on teachers' performance, ensuring that teachers follow the syllabus as laid down in the syllabus document sent to all headmasters by the Ministry of Education, and setting the third year national certificate examination, whereas the examinations in the first and second years are done internally within the school system by the school teachers of English (British Council 1980). So the first two "tasks" mentioned above are more or less universal in the Arab World; however, in Syria, the third task is not only limited to inspectors. In other words, school English teachers can take part in the baccalaureate English examination. Nevertheless, in no way do teachers question the

suitability and effectiveness of the syllabus; they have to follow the textbook in the content and on schedule.

Teacher Inspection: Models and Modes

Judgmentality and prescription.

Gebhard, Gaitan and Oprandy (1990) argue for discussion or dialogue between the teacher and the supervisor calling for mutuality of the sort consistent with the goals of critical pedagogy. This approach to teacher supervision is what Waite calls “dialogic supervision” through taking a Bakhtinian epistemological perspective and basing his view on the Bakhtinian dialogic and social principle (pp. 120-124). For Gebhard, Gaitan and Oprandy, the more discussion and dialogue regarding classroom observation between the observer and the observed, the more effective teaching will be, the more creative and autonomous teachers will become. And through dialogue, teachers become aware of a multiplicity of options in relation to their teaching behaviors.

The interesting point to be made is that, as Gebhard, Gaitan, and Oprandy suggest, when teachers feel that they or their teaching is constantly judged in terms of “good” or “bad” and “right” or “wrong”, such teachers either hold back their ideas or resist “dictatorship.” This also directly relates to the notion of teacher resistance. Waite (1995) argues that there is always room for resistance on the part of the teachers observed despite the fact that a “communicative hegemony” permeates a pre- or a post-observation conference (p. 89). It is also important to note that these two critical ideas of “resistance” and “communicative hegemony” are Foucault’s (1981) and Briggs’s (1986), respectively. As such, both concepts denote power relations and an “oppressor-oppressed” relationship. Communicative hegemony is a term first used by Briggs (1986) to refer to “the researchers’ efforts to impose their own communicative strategies on their

subjects or consultants regardless of the possibility that these techniques may be incompatible with those persons' own communicative repertoire" (p. 90).

Moreover, Gebhard, Gaitan, and Oprandy discuss the effects of the supervisor's silence in the classroom he/she observes. The supervisor's silence in the classroom brings about discomfort to novice teachers; however, I have come across inspectors who would get involved in the communicative process of the classroom, and this also used to make me uncomfortable with their presence (pp. 23-25). As I have noted, some inspectors get engaged in the classroom communication and try to "correct" the teacher when making a mistake.

For Brimblecombe, Ormston and Shaw(1995), classroom observation is considered to be one of the most "dreaded" aspects of inspection and is highly affected by the teacher's lesson preparation as well as by the behavior of the inspector present in the classroom. Classroom observation is a "scary" experience for teachers insofar as they feel they are "put on the spot" and somebody is out there to get them. So by advocating the observation dialogue and negotiation, the three researchers above (Gebhard, Gaitan and Oprandy) elevate the job of a teacher from a passive recipient to an active investigator of teaching behaviors and practices.

Gebhard's supervision models.

For Gebhard (1990), teacher supervision or inspection can fall into the following six models: directive, alternative, collaborative, non-directive, creative, and explorative (self-help). The first model, the one that best captures the Syrian supervisory method, the directive supervision, has serious shortcomings, and unfortunately is sometimes the sole model adopted by supervisors and inspectors in supervisory practices. As the name suggests, "directive" indicates that the supervisor or the inspector directs what the teacher observed should or should not have done. In a directive supervisory model, Daresh (2006) explores the different roles of the

supervisor: directing, standardizing, and reinforcing. These three roles are characterized by power relations and experienced-novice dichotomies (p. 21). Problems pertaining to this model, as discussed by Gebhard, have to do with judgmentality, teachers' sense of defensiveness and low-esteem, as well as with who is in charge of what goes on in the classroom (pp. 156-157). This sense of defensiveness on the part of the teachers is a direct result of the ongoing tension between teachers and supervisors or what Bloomberg (1980) calls "a private cold war" due to supervision being portrayed as "snoopervision" by Schön (as cited in Bailey, 2006, pp. 5-6).

A directive supervisor is one who imposes his/her ideas on teachers being observed without taking into consideration that teachers have a valid voice in deciding what they should do in the classroom. Such a supervisor believes in nothing but "good" teaching methods and practices; however, the question to be raised is what "good" teaching is or means. This pertains to what Cruickshank and Haefele (1991) call for. They state that the main "problem" with teacher evaluation is that there is no consensus on what "good" or "effective" teaching is (p. 34). They also make it clear that it is the "significant others" — be they students, parents, superiors, colleagues, and the public at large — that judge teachers and make or label them as effective or not provided that their expectations are met.

What is effective teaching and what makes an effective teacher?

According to Kyriacou (1997) and consistent with the goals of critical pedagogy, for teaching to be effective and for teachers to be effective, teachers have to respect students as learners and as individuals (student autonomy). So there should be "mutual respect and rapport" between teachers and students, and teachers should demonstrate "genuine care" for students' individual progress (as cited in Campbell, Kyriakides, Muijs, & Robinson, 2004, pp. 457-458). This view of effective teachers is shared by Shishavan and Sadeghi (2009) who study the

characteristics of effective English language teachers as perceived by Iranian teachers and learners of English. For Iranian learners of English, an effective teacher should have a good and caring personality (p. 135). They find there are some significant differences between teachers' and learners' views on some characteristics of effective teachers, especially in relation to assignments, lesson plans, mastery of English, use of Persian (L1) in the English (L2) classroom, and personality. Below is a university student's response to what makes an English language teacher effective:

A teacher's personality is very important and could influence their efficacy a lot. When I was in high school I had an English teacher who was very knowledgeable as well as kind and caring about her students. She was loved by her students and everybody was learning her lessons well. She had such a good personality that I always wished to be a teacher like her. So, I made her a role model for myself and came to university to study English.

(Shishavan & Sadeghi, 2009, p. 135)

According to Ceia (2009), teacher effectiveness is one part or one dimension of teacher quality. Teacher quality is three-dimensional and involves teacher effectiveness, teacher competence and teacher performance. Ceia cites Michael J. Dunkin's definition of teacher effectiveness, performance and competence:

Teacher effectiveness is a matter of the degree to which a teacher achieves desired effects upon students. Teacher performance is the way in which a teacher behaves in the process of teaching, while teacher competence is the extent to which the teacher possesses the knowledge and skills (competencies) defined as necessary or desirable qualifications to teach. (Ceia, 2009, p. 24)

The superiority of a supervisor brings about defensiveness on the part of some teachers and low-esteem on the part of others. If the former (defensiveness) takes place, teachers can get fired or even sued because the inspector is always right in what he/she does, and the teacher is the one who must “obey.” However, if the latter (low-esteem) occurs, the teacher will lose incentive to teach or exert efforts for the benefit and good of the students or the school at large. “Why should I do my best or even care about how I teach if nobody appreciates what I do?” may be an accurate summary of how a teacher with low-esteem might describe his/her lack of motivation.

Glickman’s supervisory beliefs.

Glickman (1995) points out three supervisory beliefs in relation to educational development: directive, collaborative, and non-directive. Glickman looks at these three beliefs in relation to educational philosophy (essentialism, experimentalism, and existentialism) as well as control or authority in the classroom. Unlike the non-collaborative belief or model, in a directive belief the teacher’s control is low and the supervisor’s control high, and this is the predominant supervisory belief in many EFL contexts. On the other hand, a collaborative belief indicates an equality in the teacher’s and the supervisor’s control (pp. 92-93).

Goldsberry’s models of supervision.

Goldsberry (1988) identifies three models of educational supervision in relation to purpose, reasons, and aim. These three supervisory models are nominal, prescriptive, and reflective. The first two seem to dominate teacher supervision. The nominal model, as argued by Bailey, aims at maintaining the status quo and complying with legal requirements in order to be certain that what teachers do in the classroom is done in accordance with the curriculum and the syllabus laid out by the legal institution represented by the Ministry of Education. Otherwise,

teachers are held accountable for not meeting the expectations. The second model, the prescriptive, denotes what the teachers should and should not do in order to promote “uniform” and “standard” practices among all teachers. The reflective model is what teachers as well as supervisors are lacking but need. Less prescriptive supervision is what teachers need in order to develop their teaching practices and attitudes (pp. 9-10).

Freeman’s approaches of teacher supervision.

Bailey discusses Freeman’s (1982, 1989) three options for or approaches to classroom observers’ roles and tasks: the supervisory option, the non-directive option, and the alternatives option. By “supervisory,” Freeman means the traditional approach where the supervisor is considered to be the “expert” who prescribes what should or should not be done in the classroom. So, unlike Gebhard, Goldsberry and Glickman, Freeman’s supervisory model is not viewed as the umbrella term but rather as one approach to classroom and teacher observation, meaning “prescriptive”, “directive” and “judgmental”. The “non-directive” option is quite the opposite and is both descriptive and non-judgmental in nature.

On the other hand, the “alternatives” option is a dialogue-based approach between the supervisor and the teacher observed and is, thus, consistent with the methods advocated here. In such an option, the supervisor “suggests” to the teacher other alternatives in relation to teaching practices and does not impose his/her views on the teachers supervised. Through this approach, both the supervisor’s and the teacher’s awareness of teaching is heightened, their positive attitudes are fostered, and their supervisory and teaching skills and autonomy are developed (pp. 45-46). What distinguishes these three options has to do with the concept of power, meaning that there is little to no student “power” in the supervisory (prescriptive) approach, for instance, as is the case in many supervisory situations (as cited in Bailey, 2006, pp. 13-14)

Inspection and Teachers' Growth and Professional Development

Improvement and development: are they the same end of evaluation?

As is discussed earlier, the aim or purpose of teacher evaluation is to bring out, improve or develop effective teaching practices, to boost teachers' professional practices and ultimately to effect their development (teacher quality) and thus enhance students' learning. This is well-documented and over-researched by a host of scholars, researchers and teaching- and learning-oriented professionals such as Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Edgar, 1972; Ferguson, Earley, Fidler, & Ouston 2000; Evans 2003; Glanz & Sullivan 2001, 2005; Harris 1986; Johnson & Maclean 2008; Kelly 2005; Tucker & Stronge 2005. Teacher development is defined by Glatthorn (1995) as "the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically" (as cited in Mak, 2010, p. 3).

Linda Evans (2002), for instance, makes it clear that the goal of any evaluation system is to improve teachers' professional practice and not simply to punish its absence. She takes a research-based perspective to teacher evaluation, meaning that evaluation has to be "actionable" and "evidence-based". She states that definitions of teacher development are "almost entirely" absent from the literature (p. 124). In defining teacher development, Evan (2003) builds on Hoyle's (1975) identification of two "distinct" aspects of teachers' professional lives: professionalism and professionality. Professionality, as defined by Evan, as "an ideologically-, attitudinally-, intellectually- and epistemologically-based stance on the part of an individual, in relation to the practice of the profession to which s/he belongs, and which influences her/his professional practice" (p. 130-131). She also views or interprets teacher professional development as a process that is ongoing or one that has been partially completed.

Similarly, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2001) state that, although professional development is viewed as “a process of moving away from the status of novice to that of an expert,” it should go beyond and transcend this novice-expert dichotomy and distinction in the sense that teachers — both novice and expert — are to be involved in “similar intellectual work.” This is what they refer to as “inquiry communities” — communities in which teachers engage in intellectuality by posing problems, identifying any differences between theories and practices, challenging routines, just to name a few (pp. 52-53). By the same token, they discuss the idea that practice is not only doing and acting; practice is not looked at as the other extreme of theory. Professional development as such is no longer about the best practice, whatever this means, but rather and more importantly about how we, teachers, form and re-form frameworks to understand what we do; practice is no longer practical if it refers to nothing but doing and not understanding and thinking about doing (inquiry) (pp. 54-55).

What do teachers need to develop professionally?

McLaughlin and Zarrow (2001) provide a cycle of inquiry needed by teachers and schools at large to develop themselves professionally as Figure 4 below shows. For instance, if teacher used too much L1 in his L2 class, focusing such a problem (if we take for granted that this is a problem or if the research on L1 use in L2 classes is definitive) would be specifying what occasions L1 is excessively used (in a reading class? Writing class?). After the problem has been focused, goals should be set as to how to minimize the use of L1 in an L2 reading class. A concrete plan of action to take might be that the teacher can ask students to explain specific words while reading rather than the teacher providing the meanings of all of the words in a reading passage.

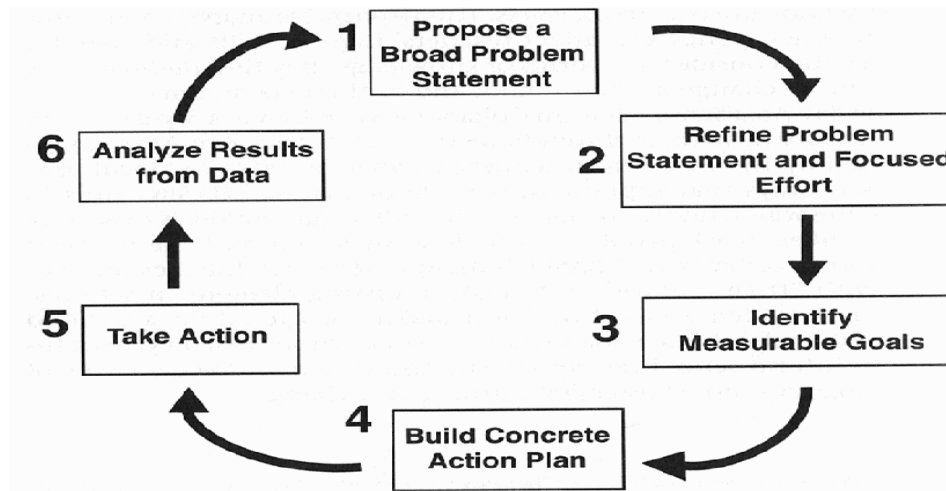


Figure.4. The Cycle of Inquiry

The above two scholars also discuss Borko and Putnam’s (1995) four “truisms” or conditions without which professional development is no longer “effective.” These truisms are:

1. Treating teachers as active learners
2. Empowering teachers as professionals
3. Situating teacher education in classroom practice
4. Treating teachers the same way teachers are expected to treat students

Evans (2002) calls for the urgent need of teachers developing their instructional and pedagogical practices. This is partly why I like this stance of Evans’s: [She does not view “development” and “improvement” as if they are one and the same.] Personally I believe they are different, and I have crossed the word “improvement” out of my teaching lexicon. I have replaced it, however, with “development,” which I think is more neutral and process-oriented, and I refer to development here in terms of professionalism and personality. As teachers, we are supposed to develop ourselves: in other words, developing what I am as a teacher (professionally) in relation to who I am as a person (personally).

So I strongly believe that it is very important that this dichotomy or distinction be made, and rarely do researchers take that into consideration, especially in relation to teacher supervision, the end and purpose of which should be to “improve” teachers’ teaching practices. This is not to say that Evan completely abandons the idea that teacher development is non-finite; she sees development as a process and not as a product. So development is an on-going process that teachers, educators and even supervisors go through, or should go through, in their daily professional lives

In addition, in her research, Evans (2002) links teacher development to schools’ performance and success. The researcher suggests a number of features of teacher development such as the concept of “conceptual clarity.” This feature, as argued, takes time to achieve because it depends upon teachers’ accumulated knowledge. This evolutionary process is partly why I see development as different from improvement insofar as developing oneself is a never-ending process that teachers should undergo all of the time. By the same token, teacher supervision should be viewed as an important brick in building and promoting teachers’ skills (i.e., development) and not as the only brick that does that (i.e., improvement).

Supervisory practices and teachers’ professional growth and development.

Mandell’s (2006) research study touches upon issues of collaboration, supportive trust, choices, teachers’ individual differences as well as the complexity of teaching. It explores and examines the fundamental relationship between supervisors’ practices and teachers’ professional growth. It is aimed at investigating the effect of supervision on teachers’ professional development from the internal supervisor’s perspective embodied by the school’s principal/headmaster. The researcher, bravely, interviews ten high school principals in a semi-structured, open-ended format.

Mandell's study finds that despite the fact the principals interviewed feel that supervision is a necessary factor that has an impact on teacher's professional growth, the level of development is highly dependent on which supervisory model is taken into consideration. The "walkthrough model" is viewed as the most "effective" method in helping to advance and develop teacher's skills; however, time is considered the biggest barrier and bitterest enemy in meeting such a goal. The Walkthrough Model, as Manell discusses, refers to principals' "utilization of look-fors" of specific instructional aspects and strategies, be they weaknesses or strengths when they go on their supervisory tasks (p. 65). Such a model entails "brief, unscheduled classroom visits, where the principal looks for evidence of student learning" (p. 68).

An important issue discussed and investigated in Mandell's study is that for supervision practices to be effective, they should "respect" and consider seriously two important things: the teachers' individual differences and the complex nature of teaching. Without such considerations, supervision would be considered to be a negative experience that not only the teachers supervised but also their supervisors go through, ultimately affecting students' learning. Such a study, I hope, provides me with extensive literature in relation not to what supervision should be like but rather to the fact that teachers are differently and pedagogically "poly-skilled" in a teaching and learning culture that is very complex.

In addition, supervisory practices, as argued by Mandell, must recognize that there is no one way or no best way to teach content to children, for instance, and therefore supervision is to be seen as multi-leveled in order to bring about teachers' professional growth and development. For Mandell, collaboration-based and discussion-oriented approaches to supervision permit teachers to get involved in negotiations regarding teaching and learning not only with supervisors but also and more importantly with their peers or fellow teachers who share the same

pedagogical concerns. Moreover, I especially appreciate and like the word “choices” in supervisory practices and the fact that such choices result in the development of teachers’ instructional strategies as they try new teaching methods that they find effective in promoting students’ learning.

Similarly, Piraino (2006) aims to investigate the effects that a differentiated teacher supervision model has on developing classroom instruction. The most important objective of differentiated supervision, as the researcher argues, is to meet the needs of all teachers in a school culture by promoting supervision and professional growth activities that match their individual needs. The researcher conducted personal interviews as well as document analysis. This research is an in-depth exploration of high school principals’ perceptions on differentiated supervision’s ability to develop teachers’ classroom instruction. It is intended to shed light on teacher supervision based on teachers’ diverse needs. Such a differentiated supervisory approach seems to be essential to EFL contexts where all teachers are supervised more or less in the same manner. A need for contextualizing supervisory and inspectional practices seems to be urgent not only for the sake of teachers but also and more importantly for students.

The need for situated supervisory practices.

Peterson and Peterson (2006) state that teachers are not all to be evaluated the same way, because they do not “foster” the learning process of their students in the same way. Though they were talking about principals’ (internal inspectors’) roles of teacher evaluation, the two researchers add and stress the fact that teachers would “accept” evaluation more if it relates to their own situations and not according to a universal standard (p. 5). For them, it is fair not to evaluate teachers in the same manner; however, for others it is quite the opposite; fairness means to evaluate teachers the same way. In addition, in his online essay “The Ten Myths (and Truths)

of Teacher Evaluation,” Kenneth D. Peterson considers it to be a myth or a fallacy that “a uniform system of teacher evaluation is essential: all teachers should be evaluated the same way.” His reasoning is that teachers are “good” in their own unique way; they work in different settings, with different kinds of “demands and criteria for quality.”

Piraino’s study is based upon Danielson’s (2002) Four Domains of Instruction: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. Piraino’s study finds that principals strongly prefer differentiated teacher supervision to other kinds of supervisory practices. The internal supervisors, the principals, point out that differentiated supervision is so effective that it fosters the school as a highly collaboration-oriented, professionally-driven and improvement-committed culture. Another finding is that teachers’ reflective portfolios are seen as invaluable evaluative instruments in shaping and promoting their formative professional development and more effective instructional development. In addition, the study finds it most necessary that school professionals (teachers as well as stakeholders) work collaboratively to advance teachers’ professional growth and students’ learning needs and performance.

The shift from an evaluation that improves practice to a practice that develops evaluation.

In <http://www.teacherevaluation.net>, the website that Kenneth D. Peterson continuously maintains and updates, he proposes eleven “new” practices as to how principals (teacher evaluators) improve teacher evaluation. Such practices are great, but are they really practical or are they still too theoretical? For teacher evaluation to be changed, Peterson (2000) suggests that teacher evaluators are to:

1. Emphasize the function of teacher evaluation to seek out, document, and acknowledge the good teaching that already exists.
2. Use good reasons to evaluate.
3. Evaluate to reassure teachers and audiences (parents, legislators) that good work is going on.
4. Place the teacher at the center of evaluation activity.
5. Use more than one person to judge teacher quality and performance.
6. Limit administrator judgment role.
7. Use multiple data sources to inform judgments about teachers.
8. Use variable data sources to inform judgments about teachers.
9. Spend the extensive time and other resources needed to recognize good teaching.
10. Correctly use research on teacher evaluation; examine "research based" claims.
11. Attend to the sociology of teacher evaluation.
12. Use the results of teacher evaluation to encourage personal professional dossier building.

Inspection and Students' and Teachers' Learning

Kocak (2006) conducts a study to examine whether teachers' evaluation or inspection is closely related to their performance in their teaching contexts in the Turkish educational system. He concludes that inspector-focused evaluation practices are highly subjective, unreliable as well as dysfunctional. For the quality of education in Turkey to be improved, this study urgently calls for multi-faceted, data-driven, participatory, functional, objective and reliable teacher evaluation procedures. The researcher conducted his research on 261 high school students in downtown Tokat, Turkey in the 2004-2005 academic year.

Kocak's research raises fundamental questions to do with issues such as who is to conduct the evaluation, what are the criteria against which teachers evaluated, who will evaluate the teacher as well as when will evaluation be conducted. Another finding this study shows is that the evaluation of teachers' teaching performance is so peculiar and complex that it cannot be equated to the evaluative procedures embraced and adopted by other professions. The evaluative process of teachers' performance is unique, because it cannot be used as a criterion for measuring the performance of employees in other professions. This study explores the idea that hierarchy-driven evaluation systems will never get to the bottom of any effectiveness issues. To put this differently, the researcher unravels superintendent- or inspector-focused evaluation and sees it as "ineffective" and "invalid" as well as "unreliable" in the Turkish educational system.

In Rossi's (2007) qualitative study, the purpose was to empirically explore the effectiveness of elementary school principals' classroom walkthrough in advancing student learning. The Walkthrough Model investigated in this study is the Walkthrough Observation Tool adopted by the Principals Academy of Western Pennsylvania. This investigation of effectiveness was taken from the elementary school principals' point of view in relation to their perceptions of the effects of such a supervisory model. Participants were interviewed in a face-to-face semi-structured format. The data collected was analyzed to reach common individual themes. The researcher's rationale has to do with the accountability for student achievement and the constant focus on teachers' pedagogical quality.

The Walkthrough Model, as the researcher argues, can be used as a tool for instructional leaders (school principals) to be more directly involved with developing students' learning and advancing teachers' teaching (professional) development. Such a model is seen as an instructional culture that brings the teacher and the principal together in relation to one mutual

goal: enhancing students' learning. The study shows that elementary school principals strongly believe that the classroom walkthrough model did influence teachers' instructional practices and students' achievement. It also recommends hiring principals who understand the teaching and learning processes. What I find of great significance in this study is that it calls for mentoring, coaching, and collaborative relationships between teachers and principals. In other words, the walkthrough is to be seen as collaborative rather than inspectional. I appreciate the idea that when principals and supervisors spend more time in classrooms coaching and conferencing with teachers, teacher performance is enhanced and developed and so is students' learning.

Teacher Inspection and Reflective Practice

Marshall (2005) raises a very critical and important statement, that teacher supervision needs to be redefined and refined, because the process of evaluating and supervising most teachers is "inefficient" and "ineffective." If the whole purpose of teacher supervision is to lead to effective teaching practices on the part of the teacher, how can this be fulfilled if the means is ineffective, as Marshall argues? I really like the example that the researcher illustrates visually as well as in written format. Most teachers have five classes a day, and this means almost 900 periods every academic/school year. Important issues of ineffectiveness come to light when a principal (an internal evaluator) or a supervisor or inspector (an external evaluator) evaluates a teacher based on one full class period a year or five to ten minutes of a "random" class.

Likewise, in a "shocking" report, a nonpartisan New York Research Group called "The New Teacher Project" conduct a study titled "The Widget Effect." This study is based on surveys of more than 16,000 teachers and administrators in four US. States: Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois and Ohio. This Research Group "identified" the problem in teacher appraisal systems and evaluative practices as it pertains to the fact that evaluation sessions are "short," "infrequent" and

“pro forma.” Such issues of effectiveness and ineffectiveness, though discussed in the United States educational system from an internal evaluation perspective, can be, and are much more evident in centralized educational systems on both the internal and the external levels of teacher evaluation.

Similarly, Rooney (2005) starts his paper with a very powerful question regarding the workability and effectiveness of teacher supervision – a question that resulted in laughter on the part of stakeholders, as he states. This question is related to whether teacher supervision is working and achieving what it is supposed to (do a supervisor’s annual classroom visits and follow-up conferences help teachers become better?). I really appreciate the researcher’s existential view of teacher supervision. Rooney’s research is set in the United States, and he raises what he calls “existential” or “foundational” questions in relation to supervision, questions that transcend when and how many times a supervisory task occurs each year. Such foundational questions involve issues to do with what actions on the part of school members in general and supervisors in particular will most help improve the teaching skills of teachers and consequently the learning of students as well as how the principal or supervisor can also be “accountable” for their practices.

Unfortunately, principals and supervisors are redlines that no teacher is allowed to cross due to issues of power as well as fear, as I have already mentioned. Rooney’s research also highlights and stresses teachers’ “voice” in developing their own teaching skills and methods, especially in relation to collaboratively working with other peers as well as principals and supervisors. The argument Rooney is proposing seems logical and evident in revolutionizing teacher supervision despite the fact that it cannot be implemented effectively unless all those involved share power and make the good of students and their own conscience their top priority.

So in a way this article “puts its hand on the wound” in relation to inspectional/supervisory practices in contexts that are characterized by top-down hierarchies.

Chapter Two was the review of teacher inspection and supervision literature, modes, models, trust issues, practices, theories, and teachers’ professional and leadership growth and development. A historical overview and background of teacher supervision were first given both textually and graphically. Extensively discussed and looked at descriptively, comparatively and contrastively were phenomena like teacher evaluation, teacher supervision, and teacher inspection. In addition, types and kinds of teacher inspection were illustrated. The models and modes of teacher supervision/inspection were extensively examined and so were the supervisory/inspectional theories and practices. Examples from literature included: Gebhard’s (1990) supervision models, Glickman’s (1995) supervisory beliefs, Goldsberry’s (1988) models of supervision, and Freeman’s (1982-1989) approaches of teacher supervision. Chapter Three is the rhetorical research methodology. It will discuss narratives as a rhetorical research method as well as Lauer and Asher’s (1988) five acts of rhetorical research.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

As indicated before, I proposed to do an empirical study on teacher supervision and the beliefs of all those involved: teachers and inspectors. However, because of civil unrest in Syria as of May 15, 2011, I decided to explore similar questions rhetorically, using the works of world-renowned liberatory pedagogues like Freire, Shor, and Giroux, to name a few.

So my plan A was to empirically investigate the phenomenon of teacher supervision in Syria. However, taking into account the continuing unrest in Syria as of May 15, 2011, a plan B was a must. The research questions were critically and rhetorically examined in the form of a political memoir detailing my experiences as an expatriate and an outsider during the civil uprising that was unfolding in my home country, Syria. I am doing historical research to establish myself as a credible historian of Syrian culture and politics.

Lauer and Asher (1988) assert that "empirical research is only one of several types of research being conducted in composition studies. Other modes of inquiry include historical, linguistic, philosophical, and rhetorical" (p. 3). For them, rhetorical research or inquiry "entails several acts: (1) identifying a motivating concern, (2) posing questions, (3) engaging in heuristic search (which in composition studies has often occurred by probing other fields), (4) creating a new theory or hypothesis, and (5) justifying the theory" (p. 5).

In short, I do not believe in House's (2005) "methodological fundamentalism," which is to say, I do not believe there is one best method to conduct research in order to derive the "truths" of a given topic (p. 99). Rhetorical research is as effective as empirical research, and both complement one another or can stand alone. A study can be quantitative, qualitative or both,

and the same could be applied to Lauer and Asher's rhetorical mode of inquiry. Below is an analysis of Lauer and Asher's rhetorical-mode-of-inquiry five acts.

Identifying a motivating concern: Act One

The motivating concern for this rhetorical inquiry is oppression in Syria in the micro (schools) and macro (society at large) levels. My questions include how Freire's critical pedagogy might help combat oppression in Syria and how dialogue and trust, not dictatorship and fear, can put an end to oppression. This will be discussed in the form of a pseudo political and personal narrative memoir full of liberatory poetry and real-life instances of the Arab Spring revolts that have been sweeping the Arab World in the last year or so, beginning January 2011.

Posing questions: Act Two

This rhetorical inquiry's question are based on the concept of oppression in both the educational as well as the political lives of all those involved in the phenomenon of teacher supervision. In addition, it is essential to note that the fundamental questions that can be best answered using rhetorical inquiry has to do with the banking model of education and political and educational oppression on both the micro and macro levels. Oppression affects not only schools but also society at large. Therefore, I strongly believe that it is very important to have the following two questions:

1. How might the use of the principles related to critical pedagogy influence supervisory practices in Syria and how might that affect students?
2. How and why do supervisors reinforce a banking model of education in Syria that continues to oppress students and train them to be oppressed in the larger society?

Engaging in heuristic search: Act Three

This very heuristic search of mine is discussed in the works of Freire, Shor, and Giroux and in the application of their theories to the Syrian context. Such great pedagogues' works on critical pedagogy, liberating pedagogy as well as democratizing pedagogy drive and influence my search for a theory that best describes what Syrian education and pedagogy should be like.

Creating a new theory or hypothesis: Act Four

My new theory is that liberatory educational practice may not only alleviate oppression in Syria but, if practiced by supervisors as well, reduce the use of banking in teaching. Without any doubt, Freire's theory of liberatory education will work in Syria as it has worked well in Brazil and currently is used widely in other countries, including the United States. My concentration in the rhetorical research undertaken here is based on using Freire's critical pedagogy as a model of supervision in Syria and on how the current unrest in Syria can result in an evolution in the thinking about how liberatory teaching democratizes politics.

Justifying the theory: Act Five

Dialogue, trust, mutuality, democratization, and love are unfortunately absent, or made absent by those in power, from teacher-supervisor relationships in the Syrian educational system. Should the Syrian educational system properly function, democratic, descriptive, trust, and love relationships should replace the seemingly predominant autocratic, prescriptive, fear, and hate relationships unfortunately existing over there. The dichotomy of the-supervisor-knows and the teachers-do not-know autocratic attitudes should be abolished. This study rhetorically and critically shows that democratizing and humanizing teacher-supervisor relationships is

essential to a better and healthier education. This dialogue should also serve as the first building block in solving political crises of the sort going on currently in Syria.

Rhetorical Inquiry Method: Narratives

Narrative is a strong writerly tool and is described by Clandinin and Connolly (1998) as “experiential artifacts: monuments constructed out of the internal and existential histories of the [people] involved” (cited in Marshall & Case, 2007, p. 5). Similarly, Ershler (2001) views narratives as “experience texts” with teachers writing accounts of different events and instances of their teaching and professional lives as well as writing themselves into texts (pp. 167-169). Although the researcher advocates the use of the narrative methodology in teachers’ learning groups, I want to use it to gain written insights on Syrian educational and political spheres. I would add the word “personal” to the list. So narratives are experience texts of personal as well as professional lives. Narratives help not only enhance but also, and in most cases, establish and build voice (p. 171), and through multiple *voices*, the reader can get a deeper and more diverse understanding of the political and social unrest that has been sweeping the Arab World.

According to Pagnucci (2004), narratives are also great tools and open spaces to “taking risks, conquering risks and defining friendships” (p. 73). Therefore, the narrative I have written has literally put an end to my fear of speaking up. I cannot believe I have written what I have written; I never thought I would be able to write that. I know that many people would agree or disagree with what I have said in my memoir; my memoir is open to multiple interpretations, and other possibilities of seeing my narrative are always welcome. It is very important to note that I have not tried to reach a “fixed truth” about the situation in Syria.

Pagnucci (2004) also states that “in a narrative world, there is no such thing as a fixed truth” and that “stories are always fluid, moving, changing” (p. 50). The fluidity of truth and the

resistance to closure make a narrative what it is. I was not able to “contain” everything that was going on in Syria and other parts of the Arab World during the hard times they had gone through. I had to seek advice of writing professionals and professional writers as how to go about this. They all recommended I use a time frame for my political memoir since nothing was resolved in Syria by the time I submitted my dissertation and since no settling solution seems to be in the horizon.

Pedagogical research in politically unstable countries is dangerous to both the researcher and the participants; therefore, this study seeks to answer traditionally empirical questions using rhetorical means while suggesting and outlining a future research plan. This rhetorical examination is not only timely considering the ongoing unrest in the Middle East as of May 15, but it also adds to the field of TESOL and composition studies as a study of this nature has not been conducted before. 2011 The questions are rhetorically examined in the form of a political memoir detailing my experiences as an expatriate and an outsider during the civil uprising that was unfolding in my home country, Syria.

This chapter probed the researcher’s relationship and position to the phenomenon researched. It gave a description of how the rhetorical inquiry works, based on the work of Lauer and Asher and their five acts of such research. It also stated why narratives are great tools in such inquiry and how experience and historical research do play a key role in rhetorically and critically analyzing teacher supervisory practices as well as the concepts of democratic and liberatory pedagogies needed in the Syrian educational system.

CHAPTER FOUR:

A CRITICAL AND RHETORICAL OVERVIEW OF ARAB SPRING REVOLTS AND THE ROLE OF EDUCATION: THE CASE OF SYRIA

Introduction

When the wild fire of revolutions, known as the “Arab Spring الربيع العربي”, engulfed Tunisia and spread to Jordan, Algeria, Egypt and Yemen, I did not worry. I watched in fascination, but I could not imagine much would come of these popular uprisings. While the long-standing dictatorships of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and Hosni Mubarak got burnt like firewood, I was pricing airplane tickets for my upcoming research trip to Syria. My wife, Amanda, nervously asked me if I thought it was still safe to travel. I told her the Arab Spring would never come to Syria. How wrong I was. The dry heat of oppressed people in my home country ignited like a struck-match. Protests began in earnest, predominantly surfacing as small flare ups following mid-day prayer on Fridays. Oddly the regime did not strike immediately. If it had, perhaps the protests would have been extinguished, as much by the government’s retribution as by the people’s own fear. Once the status quo of fear was reestablished, Syria would have returned to normal, most likely no better or worse than before. However, completely out of character for a regime known for arbitrarily arresting people for any infraction—imagined or real—there was no immediate response. I believe that decision will be the undoing of my country as I remember it. When the people realized that the protestors were (at first) left otherwise unharmed, it encouraged and emboldened more and more to protest.

The demonstrations started slowly but quickly gained momentum, and soon the size and frequency were such that it could not be ignored. The spark spread from one city to another and from one neighborhood to the next. The instability of my home country, especially when I needed to make travel arrangements, placed my personal life in turmoil. I worried about my

family back home in Syria and about my research data collection scheduled to start in the summer of 2011. My wife and in-laws were pressuring me not to travel, fearing for my safety, but I had been planning this trip for over a year, and I was not eager to delay. I knew doing so would jeopardize everything that I had been working on. I was at a point in my dissertation that I needed to conduct my research in order to move forward and graduate on schedule.

As the violence escalated, I began to waver. I was living two lives in two countries simultaneously. My laptop streamed videos around the clock. I watched every newscast from every network that followed the situation in Syria. I changed channels hoping that I would hear better news if only I switched to a different station. What worried me most was that I started to recognize faces in the crowds. I watched a paramedic get shot and killed on a video uploaded to *Facebook*. He had only been trying to reach an injured protestor. I watched his funeral on YouTube, regime snipers on rooftops to manage the crowds and security vehicles on each city block.

The time for a decision had finally come... book a plane ticket or commit to not going. The worry was straining my marriage. So after a great deal of “hopeful” procrastination on my part and much worrying by my wife, I sent the following email message to my dissertation director on April 9, 2011 outlining my dilemma:

I hope you and the family are fine. I am writing to you on a matter of concern to both my wife and me. As I am sure you are already aware, things in the Middle East have been going downhill.

In particular in Syria, over the past month, peaceful protests have broken out in most cities against the regime, demanding reform, freedom, and new leadership. The situation is mirroring what happened in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. Even though President Asad has demanded that his cabinet resign and reform to take place, protesters are increasing and violence is also unfortunately increasing. I have been watching, hoping

that things will settle down, but it looks doubtful that a peaceful resolution will occur in the near future.

To get to my point, my original plan was to travel to Syria mid-June through July to collect data. Amanda is of course worried about my safety, and it has come to a point that I think it would be beneficial to discuss other options. I would like to outline my concerns. One, my data collection involves focus groups, and currently any gathering of people is being viewed as a threat to Syrian national security. It may be difficult to meet even individually with people, because subjects may be unwilling to speak openly while being recorded for fear that they'd come to harm, and likewise, I might get into trouble by security men for recording or meeting in groups. Two, while my topic could previously be viewed ambivalently, I think that any criticism or appearance of anti-government statements would not be tolerated, especially during these hard times. Three, if there is reorganization in the ministry, my previous contacts and tentative approvals for my research may be jeopardized. With all that said, my number one concern is that there are shootings and people getting injured and killed for just being in the street, and it is like a war zone. Just yesterday, fifty people were killed and hundreds more injured. The city in which I was supposed to collect my data has the most protests and so it is now surrounded by the army and security forces. As more people are killed, more protests and anti-government demonstrations break out. The situation is getting worse every day. Things started with a few hundred protesters demonstrating and now there are thousands or even hundreds of thousands across the country in the streets. The government-owned news channels are not telling the truth, so it is hard to get the whole picture. I can't even call my family and speak frankly, because all communication is being monitored. I know this might come to you as a surprise, or as a situation you may have never dealt with before. I think it is hard for many Americans to understand truly the critical situation over there, because it is outside their realm of experience. Indeed, the Syrian government and news is blaming "Western influence" as the root of this civil unrest, claiming even that Western money and support have been given to those protesting in the streets. I am not even sure how I would be received, having lived in the U.S. for the past five years, and being in between citizenships as it were. I would be traveling as a U.S. Permanent Resident. The truth is that these protesters are peacefully demonstrating for good causes,

but they are being labeled by the government as "bad", "evil" and "lackey to the West", which apparently gives them [the government] license to kill them.

I have been wishing for a different outcome since the first uprisings started in Tunisia, but things in the Middle East are breaking down. I didn't think it would even come to Syria. It is like a domino effect from one country to the next. It is scary to think of my homeland as being in regional/sectarian fighting like what is happening now in Libya and Yemen.

I am willing to meet with you and the other committee members to discuss what options I have with salvaging my dissertation topic, maybe coming with an alternative to traveling. Amanda and I are both disheartened that I may have to change my topic entirely after I have worked so hard, but I am willing to do whatever is necessary. At this juncture, it seems unwise and dangerous to move ahead with my travel plans, as I don't see a resolution happening in two months.

The responses to my email were overwhelming. The support and guidance I received was heartening. With my dissertation in limbo, a creative solution was devised. Since I had already passed my three-chapter defense, I was thrilled to adapt rather than abandon my approved topic. My dissertation chair, committee members, and I agreed on an altered course of action that would turn lemons into lemonade, so to speak. The new plan would incorporate my original three chapters. The fourth chapter, rather than focusing on my previously outlined original research, which aimed at rhetorically and critically defining the relationship between Syrian EFL teachers and supervisors, would instead examine the political and civil unrest in the Middle East, with particular emphasis on Syria, as well as, through a personal memoir and analyzing the recent popular uprisings, discuss the risks researchers encounter when conducting international research in politically unstable countries.

Actually, the change in topic makes my dissertation quite relevant considering the shifting political climates across the globe, and it highlights an area of educational interest that

heretofore has been little discussed or researched. So instead of having one mode of inquiry (empirical research), another mode (rhetorical inquiry) and proposed empirical research turned out to be the two models I would be following. In sum, chapter four is a pseudo-political memoir detailing my experiences as an expatriate and an outsider during the civil uprising that currently plagues my home country.

In addition, I will discuss the role of education in these popular uprisings, how it is impacting and instigating the “change” revolutionaries are calling for, and the role of intellectuals in these “common man” movements. I will conclude my dissertation with broad conclusions in chapter five, specifically discussing critical pedagogy under government supervision and the role of teachers as intellectuals in political change.

This change, the current civil unrest in Syria, serves and provides me as a naturalistic opportunity where the situation is unfolding by itself without me triggering it. This opportunity allows me to apply the principles of critical pedagogy to teacher supervisory practices in Syria as a way of liberation that is in protest now due to the oppressive practices of society as mirrored by oppressive practices in the Syrian educational system. The educational and the political mirror one another, and the shortcoming and successes of one undoubtedly shape, and are shaped by, the other.

Modern and Contemporary Syria

Before I discuss the current politically unstable situation in Syria and other Arab countries, it is relevant to consider Syria’s standing within the greater global context throughout its history. From its ancient origins through 1946, Syria was a consistently occupied country—a colony of a foreign power. Considering its strategic location next to the Mediterranean Sea, governmental control of Syria was transferred from one invading army to the next, from the

Canaanites in the second millennium BCE to the Phoenicians and Arameans, later the Egyptians, Sumerians, Assyrians, Babylonians, and Hittites. Syria passed into the hands of the Persians, then the Greeks, and subsequently to the Romans and the Byzantines. In the thirteenth century, the Mongols arrived, carving a path of destruction, and from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, Syria existed as part of the Ottoman Empire until the end of World War I. Following the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the Arab World became a war-bounty grab bag that was greedily divided into post-war colonies, predominantly by France and England. Syria remained under French Mandate until 1946.

Having lived in the United States for the past five years, I have noticed that Americans celebrate their early heritage as colonies as well as their independence from England. The American understanding of colonialism differs in extreme from the reality of colonies in Africa, Indo-China and the Middle East, and this maybe because they see themselves as victors. Whereas, the original thirteen colonies in North America were predominantly Anglo-Saxon peoples relocating in the hopes of new found freedoms, other colonies in third-world regions found a more oppressive rulership. American colonies shared the same language, culture, and for the most part religion with England. Furthermore, American colonies were generally self-governed, with the freedom to micromanage their daily existence. In contrast, the colonization of other regions led to a parent-child relationship in loco parents, wherein colonized peoples were generally prohibited from holding government positions, and the indigenous cultures, languages and religions were considered inferior to those of the colonizer.

For that reason, Syria has historically been oppressed by some outside influence, limiting the Syrian people's abilities to self-govern. Therefore, it should not be surprising to note that following its liberation from France, Syria underwent a series of military coups, which brings us

to its modern history. What I have outlined for Syria also relates to other Arab countries, insofar as each country was ruled by an authoritarian figure or other centralized power (in the form of a colonial government). Without the “parent” (e.g., England, France, etc.), the countries experienced a power vacuum, wherein whoever controlled the largest army, controlled the government. Now, after decades (or centuries) of oppression, people in the Arab region are rising up and protesting for democracy and self-governance (or at least some form of government that allows for basic freedoms and input by its populous).

One of the main reasons behind civil uprisings and protests in the Middle East, and Syria in particular, is the populous’ call for democracy. According to Petsinis (2010), this call for democracy and the movement or transition from one-party autocracies or dictatorships (authoritarian regimes) to multi-party democracies is called “Transitology,” a concept or term known in comparative politics or political science studies. However, Kamrava (2007) states that any democratic transition in the Middle East cannot be actualized until authoritarian and autocratic regimes are confronted with “a crisis of power” (p. 207), which we are witnessing in the form of Arab Spring protests. Arabs have been protesting en masse against their respective authoritarian regimes, and in some cases have won the support of their military. So, whenever there is a shift of power, democratization and political change becomes a reality, as we saw happen in Tunisia and Egypt. However, now that these dictators have been overthrown, it is still yet to be seen whether or not democracy will prevail or if another autocratic power will fill the political vacuum.

According to Damascus Spring (Rabee’ Dimashq or ربيع دمشق) activists and protestors, Syrian President Bashar, al-Asad has promised reform and modernization on all levels but achieved none. In an interview, the Syrian President calls for a democracy that is specific to

Syria, since in his opinion, a western-like democracy can never be applied to his country. Asad states:

We cannot apply democracy of others onto ourselves. Western democracy, for example, is the outcome of a long history that resulted in customs and traditions that distinguish the current culture of western societies. In order to apply what they have, we have to live their history with all of its social significance. As this is obviously impossible, we have to have our democratic experience that is special to us and that is a response to the needs of our society and the requirements of our reality.

(Lesch, 2005, p. 82)

This logic only reinforces Asad's oppression and dominance by discrediting the belief that self-governance is possible for Syria. Interestingly, Asad does not outline what kind of democracy is possible for Syria, in his opinion. Therefore, it is clear that what President Asad is really saying is that democracy—western or otherwise—is impossible, because basic freedoms undercut oppression, and oppression and control are the basis for authoritarian regimes. What he is unwilling to acknowledge is that some democratic ideals can be universal to all cultures, because all people want liberty and the freedom to live without fear or want, as well as the freedom to express oneself without fear of retribution. These basic freedoms are not incompatible with Syrian people. What is incompatible is that (1) Syrians have never in their long history experienced freedom or self-governance, and (2) freedom cannot be limited; thereby, destroying the possibility of absolute control and domination.

What is the antithesis of freedom? Simply put, it is fear. According to Nicolo Machiavelli (1515), if “he” (the prince, president, king, leader and so on) “has the people for an enemy,” he

“thus cannot hope for any escape” (pp. 89-90). This is why Machiavelli suggests that the prince ingrains fear in his people so that they obey him.

A prince ought to inspire fear in such a way that, if he does not win love, he avoids hatred; because he can endure very well being feared whilst he is not hated, which will always be as long as he abstains from the property of his citizens and subjects and from their women.

(Machiavelli, 1515, p. 80)

Perhaps the reason that Syrians, and other Arab people, have so long lived under the constraints of their masters is that while they fear the regime, they also fear life without it.

According to Henry and Springborg (2010) and Bronson (2000), from 1949 to 1970 (in pre-Asad Syria), the country had witnessed a number of military coup d'états carried out by ambitious groups of military officers, making it the most “unstable” state in the region. These rebellions were short-lived, and one coup did not even last a single day (p. 140). For that reason, the “stability” brought about by Hafiz Asad and continuing on to his son, the current ruler, is in some ways preferable (in the eyes of the people) to the chaos that results from power struggles and shifting leadership that was so common immediately following the colonial era. Basically, better the devil you know than the devil you don't know.

According to Angrist (2010) , many Middle East and north African régimes fall into three basic categories: single party dictatorships, monarchical dictatorships, and democratic or semi-democratic. For him, Syria, pre-2003 Iraq, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, and South Yemen fell under the first category (pp. 18-19). In such countries, the following points are very evident:

- 1- the military supports the political and vice versa
- 2- young people are socialized into the ideals of the régime

- 3- parliaments or rubber-stamp institutions where the ruling party wins either all or the vast majority of the parliamentary seats
- 4- the agenda followed is socialist economic in nature
- 5- key ideals pertain to the pan-Arab nationalism

In Syria, all five points hold true. In fact, President Asad is the leader of the government, the army, and the ruling party in general, which does not leave much room for dissention.

The ruling party in Syria is the Socialist Arab Ba'ath (Ba'th) Party "hizb al-baath al-arabee al-ishterakee". The word "Ba'ath" means "resurrection" in this context. The enduring party slogan is "Unity, freedom and socialism". Whereas American students recite the Pledge of Allegiance every morning in school, I remember that each day, one student would say loudly, "Our goals?" (ahdafuna أهدافنا), and we would chant "Unity, freedom and socialism" (Wihda, Hur-riya, Ishtirakiya وحدة، حرية، اشتراكية). These three words have been indoctrinated into the Syrian people despite the fact that they have not been actualized, as scholars and intellectuals contest. This reminds me of Freire's banking model of education, an education which relies heavily on giving answers and not asking questions as is the case in Syria where teachers are seen as the knowledge givers and spoon feeders and students as the spoon-fed. Due to the hierarchical educational system, teachers themselves are spoon-fed, and their spoon feeders are supervisors and so on. This model of teaching is also called by Freire (1989) as the "castration of curiosity" (p. 35). A Syrian activist in a video posted on YouTube talks about how these slogans have been stripped of their real essence. She describes the Syrian people in general and students in particular before the March 15 Revolution as having "castrated mouths" that have been passively repeating and chanting slogans of the Socialist Arab Ba'ath Party. Unity, freedom and

socialism, as she sees them, have been replaced by segregation, oppression and dictatorship, respectively.

Lawson (2010) states that in March 1963, a group of military officers seized control of Syria, governing the country in the name of the Socialist Arab Baath party. This coup paved the way for the current regime. Also, this was the start of what is today known as “the emergency law” (EL), which effectively turned Syria into a police state, wherein security forces, also known as Mukhabarat (secret police), control and monitor all aspects of life and have been “reliable instruments of coercion” (Hinnebusch, 2001, p. 5). This emergency law is one of the leading causes of the recent Syrian uprising in March 2011. In response to continued oppression, thousands of “peaceful” protestors have taken to the streets, demanding non-sectarianism, freedom, and an end of corruption, oppression, and the EL. Of course, these protests and mass demonstrations are viewed differently by Syrian national media and other media worldwide, as I will explain later on, which is why I use the term “peaceful”. One person’s terrorist, is another person’s freedom fighter.

General Hafiz al-Asad came to power in 1970 through a military coup as well and ruled Syria for thirty years with an iron fist, maintaining “firm discipline” among all political allies (pp. 412-413). According to Hinnebusch (2001), in 1970, Hafiz al-Asad and his allies ousted radical Ba’ath party members and characterized their November 16, 1970 coup as “the Corrective Movement” or “al-Haraka al-Tasheeheeya” (p. 65). This “Corrective Movement” and the history of the Socialist Arab Ba’ath Party are mentioned in the preamble to the Syrian constitution. It is stated in the Syrian Constitution that the Socialist Arab Baath Party is the first movement in the Arab World which gives Arab unity its sound revolutionary meaning and connects the nationalist with the socialist struggle. The constitution adds that through the party's

militant struggle, the Corrective Movement responded to the Syrian people's demands and aspirations and was an important “qualitative development” as well as “a faithful reflection of the party's spirit, principles, and objectives”. The party’s objectives are: Unity, freedom and socialism. It also placed stress on the joint Arab struggle against imperialism, Zionism, regionalist disputes, and separatist movements, domination and exploitation. Moreover, the Corrective Movement paved the way for the consolidation of national unity for the Syrian people.

Hinnebusch (2001) uses the word “ousted” to describe what Hafiz al-Asad did to his allies and radical Ba’ath party members. It is a very important word, because it describes the lack of dialogue that took place in the early 1970s between the Socialist Arab Ba’ath leaders and other existing political parties. Freire argues that a revolution is different from the military coup in the sense that it is dialogue oriented. The earlier and more comprehensively that dialogue takes place among people and conflicting parties, the more revolutionary an uprising can be. He says that coups are aimed at legitimizing one party over the other as well as repressing other parties.

Dialogue with the people is radically necessary to every authentic revolution. This is what makes it a revolution, as distinguished from a military *coup*. One does not expect dialogue from a *coup* - only deceit (in order to achieve “legitimacy”) or force (in order to repress).

(Freire, 2000. P. 128)

Freire’s assertion can be illustrated by the difference between the Russian Revolution of 1917 in which the people demonstrated and eventually overthrew the Tsarist autocracy and the internal coup of Hitler’s regime, specifically the Night of Long Knives, in which a massive purge occurred and dissenters were executed without trial. Again, the Russian Revolution was

dialogue-oriented insofar as the initial push for reform and freedom from tsarist rule; unfortunately, what it eventually morphed into was not so indicative of open discussion between people and rulers. In contrast, Hitler's regime was more aimed at making the Nazi party *the* dominant and superior party, without contestation from even its military.

What makes the Syrian regime even more volatile is that it is ruled by a minority group, the Alawis, which constitutes approximately fifteen percent of the population. For that reason, it is often referred to as the Alawi (Alawite) regime or "Nizam Alawi" (Phares, 2010, p. 89). Alawi is a controversial minority sect within Islam, which melds beliefs and traditions from multiple religions. For that reason, many fundamentalist Sunni Muslims do not consider Alawis to be true Muslims, and resent being ruled by a minority group. Phares (2010) states that the Alawi elite have controlled the Ba'ath Party, the government and the military since 1970. Sectarianism or *asabiya* is a crime punished severely by Syrian law, and this has given privilege, predominance and strength to the Alawite minority according to Hinnebusch (2001). Similarly, according to Leverett (2005) Hafiz al-Asad transformed Syria from "a coup-ridden semi-state" into "a veritable model of authoritarian stability." The author says that by doing so, the Late President of Syria paved the way for and passed his legacy onto his son, Bashar al-Asad (p. 23). As I mentioned earlier, the fear of no-regime has helped to substantiate the current regime, because a power-grab could possibly result in worse conditions than currently exist.

The former Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad was in power from 1970 until his death on June 10, 2000; at which point, according to Bronson (2000), Syrian Vice President Abdelhalim Khaddam designated Asad's son, Dr. Bashar al-Asad, as chief of staff and of the armed forces. In addition, as Hemmer (2004) states, on June 17 of the same year, the ruling Socialist Arab Ba'ath Party, nominated Asad for president. He was also selected to replace his father as the Secretary

General of the Ba'ath Party. In order to ensure the hereditary passage of power from father to son, the Syrian Parliament amended the constitution to change the minimum age for the presidency from 40 to 34, which was conveniently Bashar's age at that time. Prior to the constitutional amendment, Part 2, Section 1, Article 83 clearly stated that eligible candidates for president must be "an Arab Syrian, enjoying his civil and political rights, and be over 40 years of age."

This nomination was seconded unanimously by the Syrian Parliament or Majlis al-Sha'b al-Soori (p. 222), which is no surprise considering that the Arab Ba'ath Party is the majority within the Parliament. The following Arabic excerpt is taken from the Syrian Parliament's official website and is clearly indicative of the amendment of the Syrian constitution on June 10, 2000 after the death of the former Syrian president. Please be advised that the translation follows the Arabic text.

**قانون رقم 9
تاريخ 2000/6/11**

نائب رئيس الجمهورية
بناء على أحكام الدستور وخاصة المادتين 88 و 149 منه
وعلى ما أقره مجلس الشعب في جلسته المنعقدة يوم السبت الثامن من ربيع الأول 1421 هـ الموافق للعاشر من حزيران 2000م
يصدر ما يلي
المادة الأولى
تعديل المادة 83 من دستور الجمهورية العربية السورية وتصبح كما يلي
(يشترط في من يرشح لرئاسة الجمهورية أن يكون عربياً سورياً متمتعاً بحقوقه المدنية والسياسية متمماً الرابعة والثلاثين عاماً من عمره)
المادة الثانية
ينشر هذا القانون في الجريدة الرسمية

دمشق في 1421/3/9 هـ الموافق 2000/6/11م

نائب رئيس الجمهورية
عبد الحليم خدام

Law # 9: 06/11/2000

Vice-president

Based on the laws of the constitution and articles 88 and 149 in particular
And based on what the People's Assembly issued in their session on Saturday, June 10, 2000

Article One:

Article 83 is amended in the constitution of the Syrian Arab Republic and becomes:

A candidate for the presidency must be an Arab Syrian, enjoying his civil and political rights, and be over 34 years of age.

Article Two:

This amendment is to be published in the official newspapers.

Damascus, on June 11, 2000

Vice-President

Abdelhalim Khaddam

The Muslim Brotherhood (MB)

The Muslim Brotherhood (حركة الإخوان المسلمون) was started in 1928 in Egypt by Hassan al-Banna. Originally created as a group concentrated on religion, their mission expanded into social services and education. Eventually, they reformed their beliefs and began constructing themselves as a political and social reform group. The Brotherhood began to preach the use of the Qur'an (the holy book in Islam) in all parts of life, including the government, and their goal has always been the establishment of a religious government or Hukooma Deeniya. They are in a way a reaction to secularism in governments or secular governments that separate religion (specifically Islam) from politics, because they firmly believe that the Qur'an determines the perfect way of life for society and politics.

According to their website, Ikhwan Web, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) have two main principles based on the five pillars (or tenets) of Islam. The first principle is that the MB want Islamic Shari'ah (religious law of Islam) as the basis for conducting all affairs of the state and society. Currently Arab governments will not commit to becoming religious states, since their populations are not homogenous. This is in spite of the fact that the majority of the populations of these countries are in fact Muslims. More to point is that religious principles are historically

separate from socialist principles, because religion demands a people's devotion and submission to a higher power separate from and not subordinate to the state, and in socialism, the state wants to be the sole higher power. The MB states very clearly that 97% of Egyptians are Muslims, and any non-Muslim laws will create "a state of alienation" between what people believe in and any forms of laws contradictory to their creed. Basically, the MB believe that the most ideal and functional government would be one that is in accordance with rather than in opposition to the beliefs of its people (mainly religious). The second basic Muslim Brotherhood principle is they want to "achieve unification among the Islamic countries and states, mainly among the Arab states, and liberating them from foreign imperialism." This "unification", as the Muslim Brotherhood sees it, is a way to face all foreign invasions, and on their website, they give examples of working together to fight British imperialism in Egypt in the 1900s.

According to Egyptian media, in the late 1940s a truck was stopped which contained documents about the Brotherhood's secret military wing, the "Special Apparatus". This led to assassinations of many of the Brotherhood's leaders, and eventually their disbanding by Egypt. The Brotherhood retaliated by assassinating the Prime Minister of Egypt one month following that incident. The government responded by murdering the MB founder or spiritual father, Hassan al-Banna. The MB has since been seen as an illegal organization with violent tendencies, and even though this is no longer the case, today they are periodically subjected to mass arrests. The Brotherhood is the largest opposition in Egypt, and they have a widespread presence and representation in many Western Asian countries such as Bahrain, Syria, Palestine, Jordan, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. The Brotherhood also expanded outside Western Asia to Libya, Tunisia, Somalia, Sudan, Algeria, and almost eighty total countries.

Muslim Brotherhood in Syria

The Syrian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood can be traced back to the late 1930s. According to Angrist (2010), due to the severe economic situation then, wealthy Sunni Muslims set up a number of political and social societies, and it was not until one of these societies moved from Aleppo to Damascus that this society merged with other Muslim associations and called themselves the Muslim Brotherhood, selecting Mustafa al-Siba'i as the general supervisor (pp. 425-426). Like any other religious group, the MB called on the government to foster Muslim values and morals and to do its best to achieve national independence from France. The Muslim Brotherhood was opposed to Communists and Ba'athists and favored "Islamist socialism". Because of the predominantly Muslim population of Syria then and now, the MB in Syria was also opposed to the 1973 overtly secular constitution, which sparked mass demonstrations that led to stipulating that any president of Syria be Muslim.

Angrist (2010) adds that an important phase in the development of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood was the call for armed struggle against the Ba'ath-dominated political order in Syria, and an end of corruption and the increasing influence of rural Alawis. As a result of the horrific events that occurred in the early 1980s, Syrian authorities issued a decree that anyone proved to be a Muslim Brotherhood member would be punished by death (pp. 426-427).

Hama Massacre(s) in the Early 1980s

The Syrian regime and military underwent a two-week military operation against the strongholds of "terrorist" groups located in the Syrian City of Hama and represented by Muslim Brotherhood (MB) members or al-Ikhwan al-Muslimoon. Of course, according to the Syrian regime, the Muslim Brotherhood members were armed and had been responsible for the killing of a few Syrian government officials and a bombing at the Artillery Academy in the City of

Aleppo. In spite of which group was literally responsible for the initial violence, many human rights groups believe that the reaction of the Syrian regime was preposterous and tend to call what happened in Hama “massacres” rather than a single “massacre.”

According to Syrian Human Rights Groups (SHRC) and Amnesty International (AI), in 1982 the Syrian authorities initiated a twenty-one-day military operation against the Muslim Brotherhood and the cities where they were located, especially Hama. The regime massacred an untold number of citizens, with statistics ranging from ten to forty thousand, and arrested and tortured tens of thousands more. Mosques and churches were destroyed, an entire city was leveled to the ground, and people were humiliated and tortured. SHRC and AI tally the massacres at eighteen in number and give them names, based on their whereabouts or the victims. The following are just a few examples:

The massacre in the new Hama district

The massacre in the Sooq Alshajarah district

The massacre in Al-Bayadh district

The massacre in Sooq Altaweel

The massacre in the Dabagha district

The massacre in the Bashoorah district

The massacre in the Aseedah district

The massacre in the North district

(<http://www.shrc.org/data.aspx/d5/2535.aspx>)

The Arab Spring

During the Arab Spring, people across the Arab World have been protesting peacefully and very energetically for freedom, democracy, political change and a better life on all levels and against oppression and corruption. This movement is not unique to one sect, age group, culture or intellectual level; rather, all people alike are united in their mission for democracy through

peaceful demonstrations. Protestors all over Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Libya and now Syria have called for peacefulness, seeing it as the true soul and essence of the change they are seeking, rather than meeting cruelty from the regime with violence from the people. Government media, however, has described those protestors as saboteurs, destabilizers, deunifiers, foreign powers, conspirators, traitors, agents of destruction, agents of Israel and the West, members of terrorist organizations, infiltrators, and religious fundamentalists, just to name a few. Since the Syrian press is government-owned, the world should be skeptical of any official accounts, since the press is a mouthpiece of the regime. The idea of labeling is also shared and discussed by Freire. Even in traditional colonial examples, the oppressed are never called by their oppressors as such; they are “those people” or “the blind and envious masses” or “savages” or “natives” or “subversives” (p. 56). So when the oppressed call for freedom, reform and change, they are undercut by demonizing nicknames by the regime. Syrian citizens are countrymen and countrywomen as long as they do not speak up and call for any change, because the moment they do, they are labeled destabilizers and sedition invokers.

Organization is also a key characteristic of these civil protests and uprisings. *Facebook*, *YouTube* and *Twitter* are some forms of the social media utilized by these protest coordinators before and during the demonstrations. Also consistency has been a major theme in particular, with demonstrations held every Friday after noon prayer. Because protestors rely on mass participation as a measure for public safety (e.g. a crowd of twenty can be easily identified and dealt with, whereas a crowd of 10.000 or a million has some level of anonymity), holding protests at the same time or on the same day every week, allows for more and more people to participate, because they can easily rely on people showing up. For this reason, Arab

governments have shut down the internet and other means of communication, as well as attempted to prevent people gathering in public.

In Syria, in particular, no non-Syrian television channels, reporters or correspondents are permitted in the country. Since the start of the uprising, Syria has been incommunicado, and most of the visual news that is leaked to the outside world cannot be authenticated by a traditional news source. However, this by no means signifies that protestors have lost ground. On the contrary, songs, news, and videos are being uploaded to the web through satellite cell phones that currently are outside of the control of the media blackout. Protestors have uploaded videos and live protests, which document the atrocities committed by security forces and regime-lackey forces (“Shabeeha”). The Arab Palestinian intellectual, Azmi Bishara, describes these Shabeeha as “death squads” in an interview on *al-Jazeera* news channel. These Shabeeha are semi-military forces who work hand in hand with security forces to stop people from demonstrating and chanting anti-regime slogans. Bishara (April 29, 2011) poses a very important question: “If there are fundamentalists and saboteurs in Syria, why would the Syrian authorities not allow the news agencies to report from Syria?” Furthermore, he poses this question: “How would we [the world] believe what the Syrian regime is saying if nobody is allowed to broadcast and report what is happening in Syria?”

Azmi Bishara (April 29, 2011) is an intellectual who is often on *al-Jazeera* and comments on the Arab Spring revolutions. Known for his political commentaries on the Arab-Israeli struggle, for the past year he has focused on the discussion surrounding Arab world uprisings. He comments on the situation in Syria by stating that despite the Syrian authorities, security forces and army, even with whole cities under siege, including Dar’a, more and more people take to the streets and protest against the regime. He also adds that “any attempt to resort

to security measures to stop protests is doomed to fail and has failed” and that “the number of the killed, the wounded, the detained, the tortured in Syria is unprecedented.”

In reply to the *al-Jazeera* interviewer’s statement that the number of Syrian protestors is small, Bishara (April 29, 2011) retorted that such a claim is wrong, and though it is counterintuitive to think that people would protest in any part of the world where a lot of killing takes place, these protests have proven just the opposite, and as the killings increase, more people are protesting in response. Funerals resulting from deaths at demonstrations will and have turned into protests against the regime, because those who die at the hands of the regime are seen as martyrs by other protestors. Further, security forces have been firing on funeral crowds, which have resulted in Syrian protestors carrying signs with slogans, such as “Only in Syria do people die twice” and “Only in Syria do we pay for the bullets that kill us”.

Bishara (April 29, 2011) goes on to remark that there are more people demonstrating in Syria than in any other country affected by the Arab Spring, and this is despite the fact that security forces are under orders to begin shooting on crowds as soon as a small protest forms. Additionally, Bishara notes that all pro-regime demonstrations are allowed, encouraged and covered by the Syrian news media. Therefore, considering the grave risk to life, property and family members, hundreds of thousands are still taking to the street, but Bishara states that “Had the Syrian authorities allowed everybody to protest and say their mind without being killed, arrested or beaten, people in millions would have taken to the streets and nobody would have stayed at home.” The Syrian regime alleges that there are “armed gangs” amongst the peaceful protestors who are shooting security forces, army, police and anti-regime protestors. The regime is using this as a pretext to place whole cities under military control, as well as to use force to crush the uprising. Bishara (al-Jazeera Interview on April 29, 2011) questions the validity of

such statements, because there have been pro-regime protests without any reports of “armed gangs”, and he wonders why anti-regime armed gangs would fire on anti-regime protestors. More likely than not, these “armed gangs” are either a total fabrication or they are pro-regime armed gangs (Shabeeha) who are attempting to undermine the peaceful protests. In response to the regime labeling protestors “lackeys to the West and Israel” and “infiltrators”, Bishara argues that the Syrian people simply want freedom, human rights and life without humiliation. Furthermore, he states that protestors have never objected to the regime’s foreign policy. To the contrary, protestors have accused the regime of not defending their country or liberating the Golan Heights from Israel. He also adds, “Let’s imagine there was a foreign conspiracy to destabilize Syria, this by no means can be used as a pretext to step on people and their dignity, and even if that was true, it is nothing but a justification for the regime to oppress and suppress the Syrian people.”

In the same vein, Peter Clarke, a Media and Communications Officer at Amnesty International’s European Union Office, says to *Euronews* that his organization wants a “crimes against humanity probe” into the Syrian regime, because there are clear indications that crimes against humanity have been committed on a large scale. On July 6, 2011, *Euronews* reported that tanks were stationed just outside Hama, in response to the widespread protests occurring there against President Bashar al-Asad. Considering the 1982 Hama Massacre, it is interesting to note that the largest rebellions are occurring in Hama now. Clarke (July 6, 2011) also adds that Amnesty International has “compelling evidence showing government crimes against humanity” in the city of Tel Kelakh and other cities in a “devastating security operation that appeared to be part of a systematic and widespread attack on the civilian population.” Peter Clarke adds that AI has evidence of arbitrary detentions, deaths in custody, as well as torture, and is calling on the

Security Council of the United Nations to bring this situation before the international criminal court.

As a matter of fact, the Syrian official narrative has always been contradictory to what has been shown on other TV channels and websites. CNN reporter Arwa Damon states that all YouTube videos showing a military crackdown in Hama cannot be verified and authenticated; therefore, she requested the Syrian Foreign Minister, Waleed al-Muallem, for further information. According to the Foreign Minister, “There is no military offensive on Hama. Yes, there are demonstration [sic]. Last Friday were thousands and were peaceful demonstration and nobody attacked them [sic]”. Foreign Minister al-Muallem denies that the Syrian army entered the outskirts of the city (Hama), and he refutes any deaths, stating any such reports are inaccurate. Contradictorily, he adds that “maybe some military were moving towards Idlib. They have to cross near Hama, but there is no military campaign against Hama.” While the Syrian President is talking about building a “new and more democratic Syria,” the world is actually waiting for reforms to be implemented. In fact, Arwa Damon notes that a National Dialogue Conference was called to assist in laying out what the Syrian Foreign Minister calls “a road map”. Proposed reforms include: revisiting or redrafting the entire Syrian constitution, setting up a multi-party political system, and changing the media laws to allow for more freedoms. Such reforms would dismantle the current stronghold held by the Ba’ath party, and therefore, it seems unlikely that any of these would be actualized.

Directly following the first uprising in Dara’a, tanks began to arrive, and a few youths were arrested under suspicion of having graffitied, “The people want the downfall of the regime,” on a city wall. The report by AI urged the Syrian government and authorities to “rein in the security forces, cease unlawful killings and other excessive force, and for independent

investigations and accountability – with those responsible for human rights violations being brought to justice.” AI states that many people have been arbitrarily arrested and detained incommunicado.

Despite AI’s plea for sensible and responsible government intervention to the uprising, Syrian forces and secret police continue to detain, kill and torture more and more citizens. Martin Fletcher, a *Times* news reporter who covered both uprisings in Libya and Egypt, discussed his detention in Homs, Syria with *Sky News*. Personally, I am not a follower of *Sky News*, as I do not find their reports to be unbiased. Fletcher managed to enter Syria despite the ban against foreign media by posing as a history professor on a tourist visa. As Fletcher describes it, police and security forces were carrying guns at every corner and tanks were stationed at every major intersection. He adds that he fell under suspicion at a security check point, when his passport was found to have the stamps of Libya and Egypt. Fletcher and his taxi driver were taken to a windowless “civil detention center” in the basement of an anonymous apartment block. Scores of people within “fighting age” were also taken there, and presumably this was one of many such centers. It is very important to note that Fletcher distinguishes two types of fear currently existing in Syria. The first is fear of the regime, and the second is fear of no-regime which is to say, fear of what is going to happen if the Syrian President falls. He adds that both fears have been effectively maintained by the regime since the President is seen as the only person standing between the country’s security and its falling prey to sectarian warfare as it happened in Syria’s neighboring countries of Iraq and Lebanon. In the post-Saddam Hussein Iraq and in the late 1970 Lebanon, sectarian and civil fighting took place between Sunni and Shiite Muslims and between Christian and Muslims, respectively. Security seems to be more important than freedom on both the part of the government and the people, which reminds me of a famous quote by Benjamin

Franklin, who said: “Those who would give up essential liberty, to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety” (Platt, 1989, p. 201).

In May 2011, Martin Fletcher estimates (in his opinion) that probably twenty percent of the Syrian population love the President, fifteen percent hate him and the rest are fed up with what is going on and want to get back to their normal lives. In the forty-one years of the Asad dynasty, Fletcher notes that what Syria is witnessing these days is the largest challenge to their power; however, he adds: “I don't get the sense this is an insurrection catching on across the country.” His reason lay in the fact that the political makeup of Syria is different from that of Egypt, because the military and the political head support one another, whereas the Egyptian army was at first neutral but later stood with the people. Despite Fletcher’s report of waning and spotty protests, a few weeks later, approximately a million Syrian protestors took to the streets in just two cities alone, according to the Syrian Observatory of Human Rights. Perhaps his short stay in my homeland did not give him a wholly accurate understanding of the magnitude of the uprising.

Personal Memoir

Political poetry has opened my eyes, has opened my heart and mind, and I would like to share a poem I have written about what has been sweeping the Arab World.

I have a big question for you, dear friend.

Have you ever thought somebody might be killed, or only wounded and arrested if lucky, for saying a word of right?

For being in a peaceful protest? For trying to help a wounded person? For being in an ambulance? For being in a hospital? For mourning at a funeral? For praying at a worship place? For lifting a sign saying "Freedom"? For daring to ask for reforms? ...For calling for non-sectarianism? For chanting an

end to injustice and oppression?..... For saying "We are all one"? For saying "No to Oppression"? For saying "No to corruption"? For saying "Yes to democracy and reform"? For just being in the streets? ... For merely being at home? For having a *facebook* page? For having a *twitter* account? For having a blog? For being a nurse? For being a physician? For talking to a news channel? For recording atrocities? For being a relative of somebody in jail? For being an acquaintance of somebody in jail? For being an acquaintance to that acquaintance? For protesting for a better tomorrow? For? For?? For? For? For?? For? For? For?? For? ...For? . For? For being a seeker of freedom and dignity?

Honestly, I have.

And you should see that yourself.

You know why?

This is why.

To know the truth. And feel for others. And know what it means "to die is better than living in humiliation" And believe in the power of people. And that they can do the impossible. And that through the martyrdom of a bunch of roses comes life for us all.

As I write, the sounds of Syrian national songs and protests are in my ears. I hear the music, words, cries, and chants – all are clear to me though the distance is great. The social momentum of the internet is sweeping together all the far-flung and displaced people of my home land. While we remain physically disconnected and the movement at foot, we are nonetheless emotionally and intellectually connected through the digital network, which is flooded with thousands of uploads. Despite the physical barrier, our souls chant freedom, justice and equality. The slogans they chant back home resonate in my heart and soul. The stories they tell and the atrocities they live break my heart and bring tears to my eyes. The humiliating and torturing scenes I watch on the news make me a braver person – though momentarily and inwardly.

I have always loved Arabic political poems, because I can identify with what they say and what they say is lived by Arab countries. Below is a poem by an Iraqi poet, Ahmad Matar, and it is called “The Missing” or (Mafqoodat مفقودات) or “My Friend, Hasan”. I provided the translation line by line as it appears in the original Arabic version.

زار الرئيس المؤمن
The trusted president visited
بعض ولايات الوطن
Some states in the nation
وحين زار حينا
And when he visited our neighborhood
قال لنا
He told us,
هاتوا شكاكم بصدق في العلن
Tell me your complaints openly
ولا تخافوا أحد فقد مضى ذاك الزمن
And do not be afraid of anybody ... the time of fear has passed and is over
فقال صاحبي حسن
My friend Hasan said,
يا سيدي
Sir.
أين الرغيف واللبن ؟
Where is bread and milk?
وأين تأمين السكن ؟
And where is the provision of housing?
وين توفير المهن ؟
And where is the provision of job opportunities?
وأين من
And where
يوفر الدواء للفقير دونما ثمن ؟
The provision of free medicine to the poor?
يا سيدي لم نر شيئا ابداً
Sir, we have not seen anything of that.
قال الرئيس في حزن
The president said in grief
احرق ربي جسدي
May the Lord burn my body
أكل هذا حاصل في بلدي ؟
All this happening in my country?
شكرا على صدقك في تنبيهنا يا ولدي
Thank you for your honesty and for bringing this to our attention, my son
سوف ترى الخير غدا

You will see good things tomorrow
 وبعد عام زارنا
 A year later, he visited us
 ومرة ثانية قال لنا
 And again told us,
 هاتوا شكاكم بصدق في العلن
 Tell me your complaints openly
 ولا تخافوا أحد فقد مضى ذاك الزمن
 And do not be afraid of anybody ... the time of fear has passed and is over
 لم يشتكي الناس
 Nobody said anything.
 فقمتم معلنا
 So I said,
 أين الرغيف واللبين ؟
 Where is bread and milk?
 وأين تأمين السكن ؟
 And where is the provision of housing?
 وأين توفير المهن ؟
 And where is the provision of job opportunities?
 وأين من
 And where
 يوفر الدواء للفقير دونما ثمن ؟
 The provision of free medicine to the poor?
 معذرة يا سيدي
 Sorry, sir
 وأين صاحبي حسن .. ؟
 And where is my friend, Hasan?

I am a person who has been away from his home country for five years. The only way to connect with what is going on in Syria and other countries in the Middle East is through Arabic news websites. I have a folder on my computer that is always there whenever I need to restore to factory settings, which is quite often. This folder has shortcuts and is named shortcuts. Some of the shortcuts are: *Al-Jazeera Arabic*, *Al-Jazeera Arabic LIVE*, *Al-Jazeera English*, *Al-Jazeera English LIVE*, *Al-Arabiya*, *Al-Arabiya LIVE*, *DamasPost*, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Netflix*, *IUP Webmail*, *IUP URSA*, *IUP Moodle*, *Penn State Email*, *IUP Libraries*, *Papa John's*, *Pandora*, *HigherEdJobs* and others.

Peaceful protests and demonstrations have been taking place in a few countries within the Arab World in the last six months or so. Personally, I have had mixed feelings about what has been happening; I am happy, sad, optimistic, pessimistic, afraid, brave, and so on. I kept calling my family day and night to see how things were and how they were doing. I was often disconnected in the middle of the phone calls, and I was not able to reach anybody at times. At the beginning of the Syrian uprising, I was told everything was fine though *al-Jazeera* and other non-Syrian channels said otherwise. I knew that they could not talk openly about what was going on in Syria. As the uprising progressed, I called them and told them I was not going to Syria this summer, and they told me this was a good decision on my part. It is important to note that not all my family members were willing to speak openly. By “speaking openly”, I do not mean they criticized the regime and were disapproving of what was happening; speaking openly was just to tell me I was right in my decision not to go to Syria during such times. A close relative of mine was arrested the day before the Ramadan of 2011 started, and nobody told me about that, and only his eldest son was brave enough to tell on the phone that his father had been arrested after security people raided the house. This made me cry, and I could sense he was very sad and down as his voice faded away while breaking this horrible news to me.

Moreover, I have been stunned by the fact these protests are very peaceful and organized despite all the killing and bloodshed. Protestors remained peaceful, organized and energetic. In the beginning there was Tunisia. December 17, 2011 was a life-changing day for me in relation to getting glued to the internet’s news channels websites. On that very day, I read a news report on Al-Arabiya about a young man who had been slapped on the face by a 35-year-old female police officer, and he subsequently set himself on fire in reaction to the humiliation he felt. Another officer present at the time did not do anything to help that young man. I read not only

the report but also the comments and the analysis that followed it. Not even two weeks had passed following that horrific incident, that the Tunisian Revolution began on January 14, 2011.

I watched Tunisia's news attentively, read more about Boazeezi's story, and talked to family, friends and students about it. Meanwhile I was reassuring my wife, who was over-worried about my scheduled research visit in the summer of 2011, telling her that things were going to be fine and that Syria was immune to such incidents and demonstrations. Finally, I heard that the former Tunisian President, Zein El Abdeen bin Ali, had fled to Saudi Arabia and the Tunisian people were full of joy and roamed the streets cheering his downfall and their victory.

The Tunisian spark set its neighboring country, Egypt, afire, and so began the Egyptian Revolution on January, 25 2011. The word "revolution" seems a little controversial here. The recent uprisings in the Arab World can better be called "civil resistance movements" where people take the streets and peacefully call for freedoms, reform, ending corruption, equality and so on. Now the reaction of the regime is not always welcoming to these calls and slogans. I watched Egypt's news attentively and admired the Egyptian army's role in such protests. I cried and cried when seeing people tortured, shot at, bullied, humiliated, and arrested. The domino effect is not really only in relation to one regime to another; it is more importantly from one city to another. Protests started in hundreds and ended up in millions. Protests started in one or two cities and ended up in most cities. At first, protestors called for reforms and democracy, but when confronted by the killing and humiliation, they changed their demands to include the end of the regime and the trial of Egyptian President Housni Mubarak, his regime and family.

Despite the sadness, anger, concern I had about what was happening then, I kept reassuring, or in truth lying to, my wife that Syria was immune to such things and that Syria

enjoyed unshaken stability. Maybe most surprising is that these regimes that had stood for so long, fell in short order. The thirty-year reign of the National Democratic Party in Egypt fell after eighteen days of constant protesting. Egypt is almost 80 million people and those who took to the streets were almost 10 million. Yemen and Libya came next, and the situation there is still unresolved (as of July 1, 2011).

In Libya, it turned out to be armed struggle between those supporting Muammar al-Gaddafi, the Libyan leader and those who are against. Those who are supporting him are his security forces or squads (kata'eb amniya كاتائب أمنية). Those who are against are doctors, students, engineers and non-military people as well as dissented army people. The NATO and France in particular backed up the anti-Gaddafi forces and declared Libya a no-fly zone after the security forces had bombed Libyan cities. The situation in Yemen seems to be less military. However, an attempt on the life of the Yemeni president in his palace was made, and he was taken to a hospital in Saudi Arabia, a neighboring country. It is very difficult to predict what will happen next in these two countries.

The Syrian protests for reform, democracy, and liberty broke out on March 15, 2011 in the City of Dar'a. Two weeks after the outbreak of the Syrian protests, my wife learnt from her mother what was going on, and she was upset I did not tell her. The following conversation occurred:

Amanda You know about what is going in Syria? The government and security people are shooting people over there in the streets. How dare you not tell me!

Me (Not saying a word) Sitting on the chair and shaking his leg.

Amanda Why don't you talk to me? Why didn't you tell me? I had to hear it from my mom!

Me It's is not that bad, okay? And I didn't tell you because I didn't want you to worry.

After that very quick conversation, there was a pause for ten minutes while Amanda was upstairs, and I was downstairs lying on the couch very sadly. What I said to my wife was not a sufficient answer for her for a few minutes. Five minutes later, she came downstairs and told me she understood, hoped my family was fine and told me to call them right away. I was very obsessed with watching videos, songs and news on the Syrian protests. The angrier I get from watching the news, the more I want to watch what is going on and the other way around. The relationship between getting sad and upset and watching the news on Syria became symbiotic. When watching the news minute by minute, I was filled with mixed and contradictory feelings: love, hate, anger, anxiety, worry, moodiness, patience, impatience, suspicion, fear, and disgust. Protestors raised signs and chanted slogans such as:

Freedom, freedom, freedom.

Allah, Syria and freedom and nothing else.

One, one, one, the Syrian people is one.

Killing, torturing, lying media, and armed gangs equals the Syrian Regime.

Peaceful demonstrations against sectarian slogans.

The people demand the régime to step down.

We'd rather die than live in humiliation.

We want our detainees to be released immediately.

To security forces: please use rubber-coated bullets against us.

No to killing. No to sectarianism. No to the lying Syrian media.

Who is killing the members of the Syrian army???? The security forces???? Or al-Shabeeha (the death squads)????

We will go to heaven as martyrs in millions.

The Syrian flag is 2300 meters long. Is it long enough to make coffins for our martyrs in Dar'a and Jisr al-Shughoor???

The Arab World, as the Syrian poet, essayist and playwright Nizar Qabbani (March 21, 1923 – April 30, 1998) puts it, is characteristic of oppression and lack of freedoms. He labels Arab countries as “oppression-lands”. He uses the Arabic word (Qam’a قمع) and the Persian word or suffix (Stan ستان) that means (home of or place of) as in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Kazakhstan. The word he made is (Qam’astan قمعستان). The following is the original Arabic poem together with translation. The translator here used “suppression” to refer to the Arabic word “qam’a”. However, these three words “oppression”, “suppression” and “repression” can be translated into Arabic as (qam’a قمع).

مواطن يسكن في دولة قمعستان

هل تعرفون من أنا ؟
مواطن يسكن في دولة (قمعستان)
وهذه الدولة ليست نكتة مصرية
أو صورة منقولة عن كتب البديع والبيان
... فأرض (قمعستان) جاء ذكرها
في معجم البلدان ...
وأن من أهم صادراتها...
حقائب جلدية
مصنوعة من جسد الإنسان
الله... يازمان

A Citizen Who Lives in the State of " Suppression"

Do you know who I am?
A citizen who lives in the state of " Suppression"
This state is not an Egyptian joke
Nor an image taken from books of metaphors and rhetoric,
The land of "Suppression " was mentioned in "The Countries Guide"
Its main exports are
Skin bags
Made from human bodies
Oh God, what an era

هل تطلبون نبذة صغيرة عن أرض (قمعستان)؟
تلك التي تمتد من شواطئ القهر ، الى شواطئ
القتل

...الى شواطئ السحل ، الى شواطئ الأحزان

هل تعرفون من أنا ؟

مواطن يسكن في دولة (قمعستان)

مواطن ...

يحلم في يوم من الأيام أن يصبح في مرتبة

الحيوان

مواطن يخاف أن يجلس في المقهى ... لكي

لاتطلع الدولة من غياهب الفئان

Would you demand an excerpt about the land of "Suppression " ?
That country which extends from the shores of vanquishing to the
beaches of murder, to the beaches of sadness

Do you know who I am?

A citizen who lives in the state of "Suppression"

A citizen who dreams that one day he would reach the rank of an
animal

A citizen who's afraid of sitting in a café ... so that

The government won't come up through the duskiness of the cup

: يا أصدقائي
 إننى مواطن يسكن فى مدينة ليس بها سكان
 ليس لها شوارع
 ليس لها أرصفة
 ليس لها نوافذ
 ليس لها جدران
 ليس بها جرائد
 غير التى تطبعها مطابع السلطان
 عنوانها ؟
 اخاف أن أبوح بالعنوان
 كل الذى أعرفه
 أن الذى يقوده الحظ الى مدينتي
 يرحمة الرحمن....

يا أصدقائي:
 ماهو الشعر إذا لم يعلن العصيان؟
 وماهو الشعر إذا لم يسقط الطغاة ... والطيغان ؟
 وماهو الشعر إذا لم يحدث الزلزال
 فى الزمان والمكان
 من أجل هذا أعلن العصيان
 باسم الملايين التى تجهل حتى الآن ماهو النهار
 وماهو الفارق بين القمر الأخضر والقرنفلة
 وبين حد كلمة شجاعة ،
 وبين حد المقصلة....
 من أجل هذا أعلن العصيان
 باسم الملايين التى تساق نحو الذبح كالقطعان
 باسم الملايين التى انتزعت اجفانهم
 واختلعت اسنانهم
 وذوبوا فى حامض الكبريت كالديدان
 ...باسم الذين مالهم صوت
 ولا رأى ...
 ولا لسان ...
 سأعلن العصيان
 :يا أصدقاء الشعر
 إنى شجر النار ، وإنى كاهن الأشواق
 على يدى ينام أهل الحب والحنين
 فمرة أجعلهم حماما
 ومرة أجعلهم أشجار ياسمين
 يا أصدقائي
 اننى الجرح الذى يرفض دوما
 سلطة السكين

Dear friends
 I'm a citizen who lives in a city with no inhabitants
 No streets
 No pavements
 No windows
 No walls
 No newspapers
 Except the ones printed at the Sultan's printing house
 Its address?
 The one whose luck drives him to my city
 May God have mercy on him!

Oh , my friends
 What is poetry if it doesn't declare disobedience
 And what is poetry if it doesn't overthrow tyrants and tyranny
 And what is poetry if it doesn't cause an earthquake
 In time and place
 Therefore, I declare disobedience
 On behalf of the millions who ignore till now what the day is
 And ignore the difference between the green moon and the carnation
 The difference between the edge of a courageous word
 And the edge of the guillotine
 Therefore, I declare disobedience
 On behalf of the millions who are driven to slaughter like herds
 On behalf of those whose eyelids were removed
 And whose teeth have been pulled out
 And those who were melted in sulfate acid like worms
 On behalf of those who have no voice
 No opinion
 And no tongue
 I shall declare disobedience
 Friends of poetry
 I am the fire tree and I am the longing priest
 On my hands sleep people of love and yearning
 Once I make them pigeons
 And another I make them Jasmine trees
 Oh, friends,
 I am the wound which rejects
 The dominion of the knife

In the poem below, Qabbani describes how his poetry and prose are condemned by governments due to the lack of freedom of speech. He also tells the reader that he is seen as “a

trouble maker” since his poems that do not praise politicians make oppressive regimes angry and force them to often summon him to court.

قصائد سياسية قصيرة

أنا رجل لا يريح ولا يستريح

أنا رجل لا يريح ولا يستريح

فلا تصحبيني على الطرق المغممة

مدان فشعري

..... ونثري مدان

ودربي الطبيعي بين القصيدة والمحكمة

يشرفني انني ما قبلت وساما

يشرفني انني ما قبلت وساما

فاني الذي يمنح الاوسمة

ولم اك بوقا لاي نظام

فشعري فوق الممالك والانظمة

Short Political Poems

I am a trouble maker

I am a trouble maker

So do not accompany me on the dark roads

Because my poetry is condemned

And my prose is condemned

And my usual road is between the poem and the court

It honors me that I have never accepted a medal

It honors me that I have never accepted a medal

Because I am the one who gives medals

And I have never been a trumpet for any regime

Because my poetry is above kingdoms and regimes

Nizar Qabbani also writes a very powerful poem on freedom of speech, how this freedom

has been forbidden and how those who speak up are treated. He says:

The Governor and the Sparrow

I wander through the Arab homeland

To read my poetry to the public.

I am satisfied

That poetry is a loaf baked for the public,

And I have been satisfied from the beginning

That letters are fish

And that the water is the public.

I wander through the Arab homeland

With nothing but a notebook.

One police-station sends me to another,

One army throws me to another,

Yet I carry nothing in my pocket but a
sparrow.
But the officer stops me
And wants a pass for the sparrow;
In my homeland speech needs
A travel-pass!

I remain discarded for hours
Waiting for the chief's edict,
Looking at sandbags
While the tears in my eye are like seas
And before me a signboard rises up
Talking of "One Country",
Talking of "One People".

While I, like a rat, am sitting here,
Vomiting up my sorrows,
Treading underfoot all the chalk slogans
And remaining at the gate of my country,
Discarded like a broken glass.

(Al-Shahham. 1989, pp. 206-207)

The Role of Education in Political Change and Freedom-Seeking

On the topic of freedom, Freire (2000) writes:

Freedom is acquired by conquest, not a gift. It must be pursued constantly and responsibly. Freedom is not an ideal located outside of man; nor is it an idea which becomes myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion. (Freire, 2000, p. 47)

For Freire (2004), teachers are to ingrain hope in the “educands” (his term for students) that a better tomorrow is on the horizon and that democracy and political change will always be a possibility no matter how hard the oppressors, who by so doing are deprived of their humanity, oppress the oppressed. He says that “inasmuch as the violence of the oppressors makes of the oppressed persons forbidden to be, the response of the latter to the violence of the former is found infused with a yearning to seek the right to be.” (p. 82). The word “forbidden” is of great

significance here. The Syrian uprising has been described as “unorganized” and “with no clear agenda” by Bassam Abu Abdullah, a professor of political science at Damascus University in a phone call with *al-Jazeera*. Assuming what Abu Abdullah says is true, it can be explained by Freire’s (2004) assertion that authoritarianism and oppression make and foster the forbidden-to-know status through preventing people from “reading the world” curiously, critically and collaboratively, and they do so by ingraining in them “ideological propaganda” and “political sloganizing” (p. 90). Therefore, if people do not know what they want and how their society works, this does not mean that they are naturally inept and incompetent. And, as I mentioned earlier, Syrian people have historically been prevented through colonialism and authoritarianism from recognizing their own potential and participating in their own government.

Freire does not take a simplistic view of freedom; rather, he takes a complicated one based on revolutionizing education and deeming it the tool needed and necessary for any calls for freedom and political change. Freedom is in the human nature and not something that is bestowed to the people by governments and regimes, let alone oppressive ones. It is not an abstraction but rather a concrete thing that should be practiced and lived in and for. If it were not for freedom, humanity would have no meaning, and we as humans would not be complete in our humanity. This is to say, freedom precedes governments as something inherent and natural. In contrast, oppression, then, is unnatural, and it is through education that we are led back to our natural condition. We must not allow governments to give freedom or rights to the people, because that gives governments the ability and authority to take those said freedoms and rights away and to make freedom something invented or manmade. Rather, the people should permit the government to do or not do certain things, as they the people deem necessary and appropriate. This reminds me of Henry David Thoreau’s saying “that government is best which

governs not at all” (Thoreau, 2005, p. 4). A government is there for the people, and if it cannot do what the people want, another government chosen by the people should come to life. This is very dangerous to say, or even merely think about, in authoritarian regimes.

In addition, Friere asserts that “in order for the oppressed to be able to wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform” (p. 49). Basically what Friere is saying is that oppression is like an abusive relationship. Abuse is a systematic and continual state of oppression and control in which the abuser indoctrinates the abused to feel that he/she is inadequate, lesser and in general incapable of leaving the relationship. Even when help is offered (e.g. a police officer intervening in domestic abuse), the abused will in most cases reject proffered help, feeling that either the situation is sustainable or bearable, or that even with help there is no way to fully escape. Until the abused is open to the idea that (1) something is wrong, and (2) something can be done, the situation will remain unchanged and static. Likewise, in Syria, people have lived under oppression for so long, that until there was hope that change could occur, there were few movements for change. When Syrians witnessed other countries undergoing revolutions that resulted in the downfall of similar hard regimes to that of their own, it opened their eyes to the reality that they had the power to effect positive change. As Friere notes, education is the key to this hard closed door, and by educating people and engaging in constructive dialogue, freedom becomes a reality to all irrespective of race, culture, religion, class and so forth. It is very important that he admit that the road of liberation is not an easy one.

Freire describes this road as “a very painful childbirth”. Despite this hard road, the new baby—freedom—comes to life and is celebrated by all (p. 56). What is so important here is that Freire argues that it is only the oppressed, by freeing themselves, can free their oppressors.

Freedom of the oppressed is of a great significance, because it leads to the freedom of all people, oppressed and oppressors alike. Unlike the oppressed, the oppressors are the ones who cannot lead to the freedom of any, including themselves. Freire also adds that liberating education is a social act of illumination (p. 109). So for liberation to take place, it is not enough to theorize about it, but rather and more importantly to practically get involved in it. Liberation involves the participation of all people and needs the willingness and determination of all people alike, irrespective of their differences. This is very reflective what is going in Syria where all people, old and young, educated and uneducated, teachers and students, have taken part in this process of liberation.

A humanizing education is the only way for the oppressed to redeem their humanity and bring about liberation and freedom. Once the oppressed recognize that they have been “destroyed”, the road to freedom becomes crystal clear. Using the same means employed by the oppressors such as propaganda, management, manipulation and any form of domination, the oppressed would not be able to make the dream of freedom come true (p. 68). Calling for freedom is the first step in redeeming their own humanity that has been stolen and destroyed by their oppressors. He sees dialogue as the only effective instrument in the humanizing pedagogy whose ultimate goal is freedom.

On the topic of dialogue between teachers and students, Freire (2000) writes:

In order to understand the meaning of dialogical practice, we have to put aside the simplistic understanding of dialogue as a mere technique. Dialogue does not represent a somewhat false path that I attempt to elaborate on and realize in the sense of involving the ingenuity of the other. On the contrary, dialogue characterizes an epistemological relationship. Thus, in this sense, dialogue is a way of knowing and should never be

viewed as a mere tactic to involve students in a particular task. We have to make this point very clear. I engage in dialogue not necessarily because I like the other person. I engage in dialogue because I recognize the social and not merely the individualistic character of the process of knowing. In this sense, dialogue presents itself as an indispensable component of the process of both learning and knowing. (Freire, 2000, p. 17)

In this sense, dialogue is not simplistic; it should have common grounds, responsibility, mutuality as well as willingness to take place. This word “willingness” is very important here, because, as Freire puts it, if we do not love life, the world and one another, dialogue cannot take place. He says: “If I do not love the world—if I do not love life—if I do not love people—I cannot enter into dialogue” (p. 90). The ultimate goal of dialogue is to “name the world” (e.g. identifying the problem and possible solutions). Unless it is recognized that a problem exists, true dialogue will never be achieved. Therefore, any dialogue between “those who want to name the world and those who do not wish this naming—between those who deny others the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied from them” can never be a reality as simple as that. Although the dialogue Freire is talking about here is between teachers and students, I believe it can be extended to all levels of life be they social, political, economic and so on. In regards to Syria, there is a great divide between those who reject Article 8 of the constitution (requiring the Socialist Arab Ba’ath party to be the ruling party) and those who object to changing this; therefore, any compromise between these two extremes is hard to imagine. Those who have been denied their primordial right to speak their word must first reclaim this right and prevent the continuation of this dehumanizing aggression. (Freire, 2000. P. 88). Below is Article 8 of the Syrian Constitution in Arabic followed by the English translation:

المادة 8

حزب البعث العربي الاشتراكي هو الحزب القائد في المجتمع والدولة ويقود جبهة وطنية تقدمية تعمل على توحيد طاقات جماهير الشعب ووضعها في خدمة أهداف الأمة العربية.

Article 8 [Baath Party]

The leading party in the society and the state is the Socialist Arab Baath Party. It leads a patriotic and progressive front seeking to unify the resources of the people's masses and place them at the service of the Arab nation's goals.

http://www.law.yale.edu/rcw/rcw/jurisdictions/asw/syrianarabrep/syria_constitution.pdf

It is very interesting that for Freire, this banking concept of education and its practices mirror and echo the oppressive society as a whole (p. 73). For Freire and Shor, the lecture-based, passive curriculum is not simply poor pedagogical practice. For them, this teaching model is most compatible with promoting and marketing for the dominant authority in society as well as with disempowering students. They also discuss the concept of “selling knowledge” and argue that in such an educational model, schools become nothing but “delivery systems” to promote the official ideas and dominant ideologies of those in power or of those oppressing others (p. 8). Hence, the teacher becomes the dictator/oppressor/tyrant and students become the subjects or the oppressed. In this kind of teaching and educational mentality, students, representing all of the population in a given country, become disempowered and lack the freedom to speak up or even the capability to know what they want from their rulers. The oppressed become dehumanized in the sense that they, students and otherwise, do not know what is good for them; they are to abide by and comply with the laws set by the oppressor, and they become nothing but objects in the hands of their oppressors. This is also indicative of education and the uprising sweeping my

homeland. The following are a few characteristics of this banking model of education, which clearly reflect the educational status quo in Syria.

- a- the teacher teaches and the students are taught;
- b- the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;
- c- the teacher thinks the students are thought about;
- d- the teacher talks and the students listen – meekly;
- e- the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;
- f- the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;
- g- the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;
- h- the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;
- i- the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which she or he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students;
- j- the teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere are objects.

(Freire, 2000, p. 77)

Simply put, in Syria, the education system reflects the greater political structure, wherein knowledge and information are powerful, so both commodities become controlled substances. The government decides how much information to pass onto the teacher, which controls how much the teacher may decide to pass on to the students. Whoever has the information has the power. Similarly, Giroux (1989) notes that critical pedagogy examines the relationship between power and discourse and how dominant ideology is instilled and ingrained in education and how power and dominant ideology work side by side to “produce,” “define,” and “constrain” teacher-student practices (p. 116). This is especially evident in centralized educational systems, Syria in this case, where government intervention and control (through standard curricula, teachers’

salaries, assigning where and what teachers teach, teacher and school inspection and so on) manifests itself by itself.

In the banking model of education, Freire (2000) says that the teacher is made as “divine” and sacred as “the sacredness of the school”. The teacher becomes “untouchable, literally and figuratively” (p. 117). The banking model of education mirrors authoritarian regimes, and teachers become untouchable as leaders, kings and presidents are. It is a great sin (that could end in death) in authoritarian regimes to talk badly about such regimes and their practices no matter how wrong and unjust they are. Ibrahim Qashoosh, an activist from Hama, was literally slaughtered (his throat was cut, allegedly by al-Shabeeha or pro-regime death squads), because he just led the protests there and sang an anti-Syrian Regime song, calling the president to leave and calling the Socialist Arab Ba’ath Party names. Is this a grave crime that deserves the death penalty? This is just one example of “killing” freedoms in Syria, and at the top of which comes freedom of speech. The video that showed how he was killed is indescribably unsettling and can be found on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zUsdkwCjIk>. Freire (2000) calls oppression “necrophilic,” because it is nourished by love of death, not life. It is also very important to note that this video and many Syrian Revolution-related others have been removed for some time due to graphic or gratuitous violence. Such videos have been removed by YouTube, and a message reads: “This video has been removed as a violation of YouTube’s policy on shocking and disgusting content.” Qashoosh is just one example among the 2,700 dead (or more) as of July 30, 2011, according to Syrian Human Rights Groups. Freire even takes this view one step further and says that the banking concept of education which serves the interests of oppression is also necrophilic.

He sees “divide and rule” as the fundamental dimension of the theory of oppression, and he argues that this rule is as old as oppression itself. In Syria, the oppressor minority subordinates and subjugates the majority. Ingraining fear and division among all people is seen as a must for the oppressor to remain in power. This is what intellectuals in Syria and other countries have been saying that the regime is doing, playing its sectarian card to bring about confusion, fear and distrust among the people. For the oppressor, it is always the oppressed who are out there to target the oppressive minority class and other existing minorities as well. Any chance for people to unite irrespective of religious, sectarian, political and ethnic backgrounds would undoubtedly signify a serious menace to the oppressors’ own hegemony as well as existence. Fear sweeps all aspects of the Syrian society and the educational system in particular.

So, as Freire sees it, it is always in the interest of the oppressor to “weaken the oppressed, to isolate them, to create and deepen rifts among them.” Bureaucracy is seen as a diabolic means of repression and manipulation since it gives the people the impression that they are being helped and taken care of against other sects, religions or ethnicities that are out there to get them (p. 141). The oppressor’s image is fostered and polished because of manipulation, division, fear, bureaucracy and distrust. The oppressor tries very hard at establishing the savior’s image as one who is there to help, protect, stabilize and take care of the people. The longer the oppressor is in power, the more ingrained this image is and the harder and longer for the oppressed to retain and achieve their liberation and freedom. Similarly, unlike liberating education, domesticating education, as is the case in Syria, has the same function; prolonging oppression and the reign of oppressors. Education for domestication is an act of transferring “knowledge,” whereas education for freedom is an act of knowledge and a process of transforming action that should be

exercised on reality (Freire, 1989, pp. 101-102). He provides the following song as a sign of domesticating education.

What did you learn in school today, dear little boy of mine?

What did you learn in school today, dear little boy of mine?

I learned that Washington never told a lie,

I learned that soldiers sometimes die,

I learned that everybody's free,

And that's what the teacher said to me.

That's what I learned in school today,

That's what I learned in school.

I learned that policemen on my friends,

I learned that justice never ends,

I learned that murderers die for their crimes,

Even if we make a mistake sometimes.

I learned our government must be strong,

It is always right and never wrong

Our leaders are the finest men

And we elect them again and again.

I learned that war is not so bad,

I learned about the great ones we've had,

We've fought in Germany and in France,

And someday I may get my chance.

That's what I learned in school today,

That's what I learned in school.

As is illustrated with this poem, the little boy has learned to toe the party line and maintain the status quo.

Antonio Faundez and Freire discuss how liberation is not simply a matter of liberating people's minds but rather their own bodies as well (physical liberation). Oppression, colonialism or any dominant ideologies try to “dim” people’s awareness of who they are (p. 96). What people deal with is not a shadow of oppression but oppression that is out there physically and embodied by individuals oppressing others and preventing them from the right to speak up. I personally like the fact and find fascinating that these terms and concepts “oppression,” “freedom,” “liberation,” “fear” as well as “democracy” are not really looked at as abstractions and shadows; rather they are concrete and physical in this sense that they are practiced by people for different reasons. Freedom is so physical and concrete that it is practiced and lived by people. The same applies to the other concepts. Fear is clear in the sense of maintaining the dominant status quo imposed by the Syrian political system.

The main, if not the only, player in oppressive regimes is fear. Fear is an emotion and a human condition. Fear is a concrete, physical, and ingrained aspect of life in the oppressed. Fear is natural and becomes very unnatural when it is mandated by oppressors to sustain their existence. As I mentioned earlier, my wife and in-laws were pressuring me not to travel, fearing for my safety. At first, my family could not really tell me the situation was bad nor could I ask. I would be lying if I said I was not scared of what was happening. I was afraid for my family as well as my own life. I have been living in the United States for the last 5 years or so. The Syrian government and news are blaming "Western influence" and “American agenda” as the root of this civil unrest, claiming even that Western money and support have been given to those protesting in the streets. The question that I already mentioned, keeps resonating in my ear: “How I would I be received?” I am human and being afraid is human. I was more scared and

worried about my family after my two close relatives had been arrested without any information on their whereabouts.

In addition, even if I had been able to travel to Syria to start collecting data, would participants be willing to speak openly about their teaching lives? Would teachers and supervisors volunteer to be participants? Would not they be scared as much as I am? I said earlier that I did not want to put my family at risk by going to Syria, and I did not want to put any participants at risk as well. This brings me almost a year back when I did my dissertation three chapters defense. One of the committee members asked me a question in relation to a quote I included about my relationship to the researched and research itself. That quote read:

The researcher is the stranger, the newcomer, the interloper—entering the place, engaging the people, and disturbing the natural rhythms of the environment—so her presence must be made explicit, not masked or silenced (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 50).

The same question comes back to my mind again: Would I be welcome? Would I be able to be an intruder, a stranger as well as a disturber? The answer in one word: “No.” Another question can be raised here. Would I be able to obtain information that echo what goes on in the EFL classroom as well as how teachers and supervisors interact? The answer is also “No.”

Freire argues that the banking concept of education and its practices mirror and echo the oppressive society as a whole (p. 73). For Freire and Shor, they also discuss the concept of “selling knowledge” and argue that in such an educational model, schools become nothing but “delivery systems” to promote the official ideas and dominant ideologies of those in power or of those oppressing others (p. 8). The question here becomes: Would participants be able to speak openly? Or would they just report, deliver and maintain the status quo? It is also very important to point out that I am not saying there should be something wrong with teacher-supervisor

relationships; I am just saying there might be a possibility some things are not working due to fear and top-down hierarchy. There might be no hierarchy issues, but is it not worth exploring and examining? Schools have become microcosms of the whole society. Fear drives the relationships between the oppressor and the oppressed, between teachers and supervisors as well as between teachers and students.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This journey has been bitter-sweet literally, ups and downs and happy and sad and interesting and boring. The five chapters in this scholarship represent true chapters of my personal and professional lives. They represent constant negotiations and conversations with family, friends, colleagues, and students. Below are summaries of the chapters in this dissertation.

Chapter One provided an overview of the study and its two rhetorical and proposed empirical models of inquiry (what, how and why it examines what it examines). A real-life scenario in Syria's EFL was given to illustrate the topic under study in this research. The context of the study is extensively described, especially in relation to the national and educational profiles of Syria. Problem statement, purpose, significance, limitations, and rationale of the proposed empirical study were also discussed and illustrated. Four research questions were critically formulated to cover the phenomenon of teacher inspection and the perceptions of those involved in it, especially with regards to English language teaching (ELT). Finally, the theoretical framework in which this research is grounded, is explained and so are key terminologies pertaining to teacher inspection.

Chapter Two was a critical and rhetorical review of teacher inspection and supervision literature, modes, models, trust issues, practices, theories, and teachers' professional and leadership growth and development. A historical overview and background of teacher supervision were first given both textually and graphically. Extensively discussed and looked at descriptively, comparatively and contrastively were phenomena like teacher evaluation, teacher supervision, and teacher inspection. In addition, types and kinds of teacher inspection were illustrated. The models and modes of teacher supervision/inspection were extensively examined

and so were the supervisory/inspectional theories and practices. Examples from literature included: Gebhard's (1990) supervision models, Glickman's (1990) supervisory beliefs, Goldsberry's (1988) models of supervision, and Freeman's (1982-1989) approaches of teacher supervision.

In addition, particular attention was given to inspection and teachers' professional growth, development, and reflective practice. Also, inspection and students' and teachers' learning were examined. Research shows that the purpose of teacher evaluation, supervision, and inspection is to improve teaching and teachers' pedagogical practices – to lead to “effective” teaching practices and better and more effective teachers. This is why I explained what makes teachers and teaching effective or not. In the same vein, what was also important, was exploring improvement and development and whether or not they were the same end of teacher evaluation. The urgent need to shift from an-evaluation-that-improves-practice attitude to a-practice-that-develops-evaluation stance is suggested to be embraced by both teachers and evaluators.

Chapter Three was the methodology section of the rhetorical research study. It revisited the research questions and explained the methodological framework of the research. The decision to have two models of inquiry or two plans (empirical and rhetorical) and the reasons behind that were also explained. There was a shift from actually conducting individual and group interviews with teachers (empirical research) to being in a state of “emotional interviewing”, as it were as is the case in rhetorical inquiry. I was in a constant state of jotting down internal feelings; feelings I had never shared with anyone or dared to speak of. To get involved in the narrative endeavor was not an easy decision on my part since everything had been in place for conducting the original research, but I had to do what I had to do – Everything happens for a reason. I never liked politics, or should I say, never liked talking about political topics.

Reprioritizing was important and made my personal and academic lives more manageable. I was feeling a lot of stress prior to and after “accepting the change of plan”. My wife, Amanda, patiently understood what I was going through and provided me with great support.

Narrative, an important rhetorical means, has literally changed my life and the way I look at things and events - with more open eyes, I would say. Pagnucci (2004) argues that narratives and stories shape who and what we are. He says that “stories shape our personalities” (p. 68). This is quite true in my case. The narrative story I have provided has made me a stronger person, a person who speaks up and discusses political things at ease. Pagnucci also draws on Jerome Bruner’s (1990) book “Acts of Meaning” and how narratives help us understand our selves. Through telling stories, both the writer and the reader become empowered. In addition, he introduces a great saying by Kundera (1986) that argues for the fact that the struggle people have against power and oppression is the struggle of our memories against forgetting (p. 71). Through writing this political narrative, I have become resistant to forgetting what occurred in my home country. Writing in general and writing a very personal narrative in particular take a lot a courage and determination to do.

After extensive theorizing on what supervision is or should be like, I can say that it is not bad or good as a concept; however, the way it is implemented and utilized can have positive or negative effects on language teachers, students’ learning, and academic institutions at large. As Freeman (1994) argues, supervisors and all of those in charge of teaching and learning should look at teaching as a “social practice” and as a “discourse” to use Gee’s terms, and that such a “social discourse” is very situational and contextualized time-wise, place-wise and people-wise (p. 15). Related to this view of supervision is the important assessment idea, labeling. It is not a

good idea to label students or teachers as high or low achievers or performers whether implicitly or explicitly.

According to Freire, dialogue is a key feature of “effective” teacher supervision. Collaborative and dialogical relationships among teachers and supervisors should overshadow and even replace the existing relationships of power, of “the supervisor knows it all” and “the teacher knows nothing”. Teachers and supervisors are to get involved in training programs, workshops as well as regular meetings where ideas are “respectfully” shared. The ultimate goal of supervision is students’ own learning development, teachers’ teaching development as well as supervisors’ supervision practices. Supervision is not merely for developing students learning through “building” better teachers; it has a three-way outcome, and all of those involved in this process should know their own learning and that of others is contingent on how they work together. Since the educational echoes and mirrors the political, I strongly believe that what works on the macro level (the political) can work on the micro level (the educational). Dialogue is need between those in power in the macro sphere and those in school systems in the micro sphere. I also believe it is the responsibility of those in charge to start this dialogue and that dialogue can spread out to reach all of the aspects of life. If dialogue is fostered and maintained, a better world will surface and emerge. Dialogue should be present among students, teachers, supervisors, educational institutions, and the political system at large. Below is a poem I have written about the relationship existing between the educational and the political, as critical pedagogues and I see it. From a critical-pedagogy perspective, fear, control, lack of dialogue, oppression, distrust, prescriptiveness and indoctrination seem to be the only player. Please note that *E* stands for the educational and *P* for the political.

E: You know, I am really tired of your manipulation and hypocrisy.

P: What do you mean? I made you, didn't I?

E: Yea. You made me what you wanted me to be, but what about what I want to be?

P: It is the same. I think for you and let you know how you can function. This is my duty, isn't it?

E: You think so? I don't. I want to be true to myself and to all those who believe in me.

P: Believe in you? Why? What is wrong with you? People have to believe in you, because I say so.

E: See! This is the crux of the problem between us. You do not make people believe in me or you; they have free will to decide what they want. Right?

P: Absolutely not. Free will? What is this nonsense? What an outrageous thing to say? This is not how I raised you; you shame me.

E: You shame yourself by saying so. I will always be true to myself despite all the obstacles you put in my way.

P: So you are declaring war against me and the country? You want war? I will give you war.

E: War? Who said that? What made you think of that? If I do not agree with you, it does not mean I am at war with you. If I want to function honestly and without any indoctrination, I am not saying war is the solution. I am here open for dialogue.

P: Okay. No problem with that, but it should be my way or no way. Okay?

E: You are kidding me? Is this dialogue?

P: Sure, it is. I am accepting to talk to you, but I am not saying I will listen.

E: (after a long sigh) It is no use. Dialogue means we are both talking and listening to one another. Otherwise, it will be nothing but oppression and dictatorship.

P: (angrily) oppression? Now you are causing problems and crossing the line. Where is oppression? Can't you say and do whatever you want if it is in accordance with what I say? I tailor your freedom. What on earth is wrong with that? Either you enter into dialogue or I will make you do that. Got it?

E: Hell no! This is ridiculous. I will keep calling for my freedom and that of others. I will always be open for dialogue. And I will always be true to myself.

P: You are breaking hell loose now. If I leave you, everything will be in chaos. Aren't you afraid of that?

E: Not really. I am more afraid of maintaining the status quo of injustice, domination, oppression, control, and being lackey to your agenda.

P: I feel there is no other choice left for me but to discipline you. We are officially at war now, and you will see very soon how I will make you beg me. I have the army, the weapons, the aircraft, the artillery and everything. I am the master of the universe, you poor thing.

E: And I have faith, love, peace, sincerity, and the people.

P: What people? People worship me and have made me their God and savior. I feel sorry for you.

E: And I feel sorry for you, too.

In addition, in relation to the idea of “situationality” of teacher supervision, it is very important for supervisors to know and willingly admit that teachers have individual differences and one “supervisory recipe” cannot do it all. A teacher teaching in a rural poor area (where students miss class or are under poverty line) has working conditions that are different from

another teacher who teaches in an urban wealthy neighborhood. So a differentiated supervisory perspective should be taken into great consideration when observing classes and providing suggestions to how teachers are teaching.

Supervisors should take into consideration that teachers know more than what supervisors may think they do. It is also vital for teachers to learn and go through self-assessment processes via reflections and action research, to engage in what Huot terms “instructive evaluation” where both students and teachers are in charge of their own learning and teaching. Though Huot was dealing with students’ “instructive evaluation”, the same, I believe, could be applied to teachers and their teaching skills. Another important issue explored in this paper has to do with the need for elevating supervisory practices in Syria from judgmentality, directiveness, and prescriptiveness to collegiality, non-directiveness, collaboration as well as descriptiveness. If supervisory practices embraced in the EFL context of Syria remain the same, teachers will lose incentive and feel dissatisfied in their professions as a direct result of their low-esteem. If teachers are not motivated to teach well, how does that affect the motivation and the learning development of their students?

What we do know is that when teachers’ motivation is decreased, students will be less likely to succeed. In other words, the relationship between teacher-evaluation and the learning of students is very interrelated, interconnected, and complementary. I do feel, however, that the Syrian government gets what it pays for. If more money was spent on teacher training, salary, benefits, school equipment, etc., as well as emotional “currency”, so to speak, (support and respect), teachers would pass that onto their students, and thus a better teaching-learning process and relationship would surface and take place. In addition, I believe that at the heart of ideal supervision is Williamson’s (1994) notion of trust as I have discussed in Chapter Two. Teacher

evaluators are to begin a trust relationship with the teachers observed as much as the teachers are to be trusted in assessing and evaluating students' learning development.

What we do know is that when teachers are de-motivated, students will be less likely to succeed. In other words, the relationship between teacher-evaluation and the learning of students is very interrelated, interconnected and complementary to each other. Despite all that has been said, further research probing into this issue of teacher evaluation is required. I do feel, however, that the Syrian government gets what it pays for. If more money was spent on teacher training, salary, benefits, school equipment, etc., as well as emotional "currency" (support and respect), teachers would pass that onto their students, and thus a better teaching-learning process and relationship would surface and take place.

Despite all that has been said, further empirical research probing into this issue of teacher evaluation is required. Maybe, someday, I will be able to conduct this study and empirically examine the research questions. This was suggested by my dissertation committee members after what had happened in Syria, and I do hope this becomes a reality once all the violence is over. I hope the best for my homeland on all levels, especially the educational. The educational should not mirror the political; it should make it and determine its workings and not the other way around. My conclusions are arrived at through a rhetorical and critical examination of the research questions.

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