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## Foreword by Honorable Dean, Dr. Abdullah Al-Melhi

### *In The Name Of Allah The Compassionate, The Merciful*

Greetings and Eid Mubarak to you during these unusually trying times dearest students, colleagues and readers.

I do not think that I would be exaggerating if I say that this is indeed a most difficult, confusing and frightening time in the history of Mankind. The Coronavirus pandemic has caught the entire world totally off-guard. It was inevitable that we in Saudi Arabia, like our fellow human beings across the world, also became victims of this strange threat to our safety. Our government has reacted by implementing a whole range of rules and regulations to keep us safe, and to maximize the prevention of the spread of this highly contagious virus.

It is essential that we constantly acquaint ourselves with the ever-changing laws at this stage in time. It is equally important to obey such laws and follow the constant flow of advice being provided by different ministries. It is interesting to note that Islam is very clear about how we are expected to behave during times when epidemics and pandemics occur. There are many hadiths which narrate that our Beloved Prophet, Mohamed (PBUH) advised people to minimize coming into contact with others, whenever contagious diseases of this nature occurred.

I am of the opinion that the current lockdown rules that lead to us being confined to our homes, do not necessary have to be deemed dreadful. As Muslims, it can actually be seen as a blessing in disguise. During this current timeframe, we have the perfect conditions to read, gain more knowledge, reflect on our lives and focus on our spiritual development. For most of our lives, we somehow take life for granted. This sudden change in our global reality should serve as a rude awakening to jolt us back to becoming even more God-conscious. We are but servants of Our Creator. Every step of our journey into time is at His mercy. We need to constantly be vigilant of our deeds and try our best to ensure, difficult as it may be, that everything we do is for the sake of Allah only. Ultimately, our fate lies in His hands.

And it is on this note that I have to digress to reflecting on how the pandemic affected our second semester at King Khalid University. As you know, both students and staff abruptly found themselves outside of their normal teaching environment. Online teaching, assignments and exams became our reality in an instant. I can understand that this rapid change in the teaching environment and methodology led to somewhat of a culture shock for many of us.

I can also understand that some students may have experienced some teething problems in the initial stages of adapting to their new reality. But I have to be honest, I could not understand how many of our students repeatedly failed to do and submit their work timeously. I was also extremely disappointed to discover that many students did not complete their tasks in an honest manner. I hope that, in the future, students will become more serious in their approach to fulfilling their obligations. I admire, thank and commend those students who, against all the odds, maintained their work ethics, moral standards, dignity and focus during the second semester. You are the "Gold Standard" students who KKU wishes to produce.

Finally, I wish to thank my colleagues who had to work long, arduous hours to switch to online teaching, and thereby ensure a successful semester. I am grateful for the compassion they showed towards our students, and their willingness to assist management whenever

### ***Eid Mubarak***

Dr. Abdullah Al-Melhi  
Dean, Faculty of Languages and Translation

requested to do so. I thank the Writing Club members for managing to endure, and succeed in publishing this Eid Students' Edition of The Mountain Top Magazine. It has also come to my attention that Hassan Costello has been burning the midnight oil to ensure its timely publication. The faculty and KKU are proud of educators like him, who selflessly go that extra mile to promote student excellence.

And last but not least, I wish to bid farewell to Dr. Charles and Dr. Lisa Forman. You both have been an invaluable asset to the department, and your departure is a sad moment for us all. May Allah grant you protection, health, peace and prosperity when you arrive back in America.

May Allah guide and protect us and our families during this challenging time.

May you and your family have a wonderful time together, in the safety of your home.



## The Corona Challenge

Warm greetings to you during these unusual vacation months. My original article was meant to focus on the Coronavirus (COVID-19) seminar conducted by the College of Medicine. I also intended to reflect on the interesting forum entitled "Translation: The Intercultural Communication", which was hosted by our Faculty of Languages Translation. However, due to a series of extraordinary global events, I found myself continually delaying and updating this short article.

As you know, the arrival of COVID-19 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has led to extraordinary measures being taken to protect our people from being infected. Its spread has been so wide and rapid that new policies are announced on an ongoing basis. The principle aim of the government's strategy is to mitigate the spread of the virus so as to prevent our medical infrastructure from being overloaded. Our government can be admired for its swift action, placing the health of both our citizens and residents above economic considerations.

Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that have been around for quite some time now. However, the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) is new. The word "Novel" means new in this context. Because it is new, unknown and extremely contagious, experts around the world are trying their best to combat this deadly COVID-19 pandemic. There are many theories and even conspiracy theories that try to explain the origin of the virus. Nevertheless, the main focus at the moment is to prevent its spread and to find a vaccine.

From day 1, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has managed to minimize the spread of the pandemic. Recently, we allocated a substantial amount of financial resources to secure the services of international experts, equipment and facilities in our battle to overcome this invisible, silent enemy. China has recently managed to get back to normal, and this is mainly due to their experience in handling pandemics like the Avian Influenza, SARS, and the Swine Influenza. They are experienced in dealing with challenges of this nature, and I am hopeful that they will assist us in accelerating our journey to getting back to normal

I would like to imagine that I do not have to remind you of the importance of following government guidelines to do our part in preventing the transmission of this deadly virus.

I hope that we will all see each other back on campus next semester. Keep on writing and submitting.

May Allah protect us during this challenging time, Inshallah



**Author: Manni Majed Manni, Writing Club Chair, Second Year Student**

## Popular Husband and Wife English Professors Retiring

The community of King Khalid University will sorely miss the departure of two of its popular teachers. Assistant Professors of English Charles Forman and Lisa Forman are retiring after six years in the Faculty of Languages & Translation at King Khalid University. The couple came to KKKU from the United States as late-stage career changers. Before coming to Saudi Arabia, Dr. Charles had been practicing law for many years. Dr. Lisa was the Assistant Director of a public library and an adjunct professor of graduate studies. KKKU was their first work experience away from their home country.

Dr. Lisa noted that working in the Kingdom would be a grand adventure. “Before coming to KKKU, I did a lot of research about the school and Saudi Arabia. As there was not a great deal of information written in English, there was much we could not know about the Kingdom until we arrived. We were headed into a completely different culture, and a language we could not speak, read or write. It was exciting and a little scary too. But eventually, we made our way with the help of some bilingual friends and staff members”, she said.

Dr. Charles was very busy during his tenure at KKKU. For five years, he served as the Language Enhancement Program (LEP) director, helping students with their academics,

and preparing them for advanced degree programs abroad. He also taught a wide variety of English courses both in traditional classroom settings and online. Dr. Charles was the public speaking and debate coach, a role he was well suited for as a former trial lawyer.

Dr. Charles approached his duties with great clarity. He said, “Teaching English was my job, of course. But my mission was to help young men mature and develop their skills. I treated my students like my sons. If they were doing well, I pushed them to do even better. If their performance was not acceptable, I put a lot of pressure on them to focus on their goals. But no matter what, I was always there to help them. This approach does not necessarily win teacher popularity contests, but that’s OK. My main concern is what becomes of the students in the years after they graduate.”

Dr. Lisa taught the 1st year female medical students English at the Al Samir campus for five years. In her final year, she taught the English majors at the main female campus. Throughout her tenure at KKKU, Dr. Lisa taught many different courses and skill levels. “Teaching at KKKU was a wonderful experience. We gained so much insight into other cultures. I will always cherish my students and think about them often.



It was a privilege to be involved in their education, especially during these years, when the role of women in Saudi society is changing. I have many mementos of our time in the Kingdom. The one I hold most dear is the Saudi driving license I received in June of 2018,” she said.

Dr. Lisa noted that “We will miss teaching at KKU, and we will especially miss the students; but our family really needs us back home. All good things must come to an end, and our tenure at KKU must now close. We hope that we have made a positive impact on our students. Certainly, the people of Saudi Arabia have made a positive impact on us. We have learned so much and benefited from different perspectives. Our time here will be one of the most memorable periods in our lives, and we are grateful to have had this opportunity.”

We wish Dr. Charles and Dr. Lisa well as they begin a new chapter in their life’s journey.



**Author: The English Writing Club**

## Working From Home During the Corona Pandemic

Due to the Coronavirus, a lot of people around the world were forced to work from their homes. After the fast spread of this virus, the world realized the danger it could cause. Therefore, many countries took serious precautions to prevent the virus from spreading among its citizens. One of those big decisions was making people work from home. It was taken to favor both the workers' health and their performance.

Working from home is but one of many smart solutions needed to protect employees from being infected. The possibility of picking up Coronavirus is extremely high when there are large numbers of people gathered in one place, especially the workplace. This is because the virus is contagious. For example, if someone works in a building that holds more than a hundred employees and one of them has the virus, it could take a mere twenty to thirty minutes to be transmitted to all of them. This shows why staying at home and working from there is crucial to protect their health from that invisible enemy.

I am convinced that working from home during this period will boost the employee's performance. For example, if someone is still going to work nowadays, he or she will be over-concerned and afraid all the time. As a result, he will not perform well at his job. However, working from home will resolve that problem easily. Furthermore, he/she will be more focused and more creative.



Some people disagree with the idea of working from home, believing that it creates irresponsibility in workers. This is because there will be no manager or supervisor to make sure that workers are doing their job properly. I understand their point of view. However, their opinion of forcing people to

be at the workplace is considered by many people, including me, an inhumane attitude at this stage in time. They do not care about the chances of being infected by this virus, that is to say, they are ready to put your job before your health. Health always comes before everything, even before our beloved jobs. This is particularly applicable during these difficult times. Without our health, we are incapable of

going about our lives in a normal manner.

I believe the best decision for those of us in the workforce is to work from home. By doing so, we will take good care of our health as well as our performance on the job. While we are still battling this global pandemic, going back to work is too dangerous. In other words, it is a foolish idea. I would even venture to say that, after this Coronavirus scare has disappeared, we should still, if possible, try to work from the comfort and safety of our homes.

Stay home to stay safe.

**Author: Rayan Hassan Al Faify, Second Year Student**

## My Romance With the English Language



It all started with these first words. They were simple words; the words of fruits, colors and objects. My utter fascination with them was limitless. Even though I did not wholly understand them, I was completely enamored by them. My mind conjectured all kinds of imagery as I grew into this wonderful, strange world of English. From that early point in my life, I dedicated myself to learn as many new words as possible. After all, no matter how distorted the grammar, words will always afford us with a certain degree of being able to communicate our thoughts.

Perhaps I would not count my story as revolutionary, or truly special, because it can appear relatively mundane. My story begins with the alluring new words I just learned. I was not content with only learning just them; I wanted to learn more and explore this new world of sounds foreign to me. From that point onwards, my mother and my father helped and assisted me in my journey. My mother taught me new words, and my father taught me their meanings; this continued until I was capable enough to forge ahead on my own. Many things also

helped me along the way, including video games, movies, and TV programs.

This is it really. I did not study outside of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, nor did I have any professional tutoring. I discovered my preferred method of learning, and I taught myself everything I could about the English language. I still learn every day, and the process of learning still somehow finds new ways to surprise me.

If you are serious about having English as the key building block of your future career, I would strongly advise you to maximize your focus and find fun ways to assist in your journey of mastering this fascinating language.

Finally, I would advise students of English to be very well prepared if they plan to enroll for the IELTS or TOEFL Exams. I personally sat for the IELTS Exam some two years ago. Although I found it to be relatively easy, I was somewhat pressured by the time constraints. I did manage to gain a reasonably high score, but aim to achieve a perfect score when I do enroll to take the exam again.

Take care, and use the lockdown holidays to improve your English.

**Author: Anas Mohammed Alshehri, Second Year Student**

## My American Homestay.....Best Experience Ever

My study trip to the USA will always remain one of the best experiences that I have ever had in my whole my life. So many extraordinary things happened during that magical experience. Through being blessed to have the honor of studying English in that amazing country, I learned skills which I would never have had today. I developed the capacity to make hard and difficult decisions. I also became confident and learned how to trust and rely on myself. I adopted a philosophy of never giving up and to struggle to achieve my goals consistently. And, very importantly, I learned about other cultures outside of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

When I graduated from high school at the age of 18, my father gave me two options. The options were that I could study at King Khalid University, or I could go to the United States to learn English with one of my cousins. Well, my English was horrible, and I didn't know anything in English, so I decided it was a chance for me to improve my English skills. Until now, this remains the hardest decision that I had to make in life. My cousin and I eventually departed for America, and we lived with an American family when we arrived there.

The first three months were really challenging and hard. We were young, inexperienced and found ourselves in an unfamiliar territory. We had problems communicating in this new society and with our host too. Being far away from our family was new and challenging for us. Every day, upon my return from English school, I would immediately run to my room because I couldn't have a decent conversation. I feared making a fool of myself. The host family was upset because we didn't talk to them

about our daily routine and experiences in school. They advised me not to worry about making mistakes as it was expected and normal. They reminded me that my family was paying a small fortune for me to become proficient in English.



After that reminder, I became determined to succeed. I slowly overcame my fears, shyness and rapidly became more and more confident. After that, my cousin and I supported each other and learned many things from each other. The host family was proud of us after they saw the improvements since the day they advised me to be more confident. They motivated me so much, and they were surprised that my English was getting better at a faster pace than they could ever have imagined. I didn't learn only language in the USA. I also learned about other cultures. America is an extremely cosmopolitan society, and I made many friends from many different places around the world during my stay there.

To sum up, being far away from my family was one of the most challenging decisions I have ever made. I didn't only learn English; I also learned many other lessons. During that experience, I got to know much about other cultures too.

If you have a dream, you have to work for it because "Dreams do not come true unless you act and seriously focus on achieving it". If you ever get the opportunity to study English in the USA, don't hesitate.....Just Go For IT.....Good Luck with your journey in English.

**Author: Mohamed Hamad Al Yami, Second Year Student**



## The Catman of Abha

If you happen to arrive at the main campus very early in the mornings, you will see the campus's feral cats congregating around Building A, just below the window of the LEP. As soon as the cats see Dr. Charles Forman arriving, they all become lively and excited. He steps out of his car, takes out the cat food and water, greets each one of the more than 20 animals by name, and proceeds to feed his "pride".

Dr. Forman has been following this routine since he arrived in Abha, more than six years ago. He also goes through the same routine of feeding un-owned domestic cats in the neighborhood where he lives. He believes in providing quality food, and apart from spending quite a sum on feeding the cats, he also regularly flies in a veterinarian from Jeddah to treat the cats. Each of his adoptive cats has been spayed and neutered. He believes that this is necessary so as to provide the animals with a better quality of life. He says that ever since he can remember, he had a great love for dogs and cats.

Dr. Forman is a highly intelligent man with a wealth of experience in life. As a high school student in the USA, he decided to become a pilot. He worked as a "gas monkey" to pay for private lessons in pilotage, weather and physics. After finishing high school, he went to

an engineering college for four years. While studying at the college, he also worked as a mechanic. Upon graduating, he became a full-time mechanical engineer and part-time pilot. Due to problems with his vision, Dr. Forman's passion for being a life-time professional pilot was not to be.



He went on to study law and graduated as an attorney. Almost six years ago, Dr. Forman and his wife, Dr. Lisa Forman, both took up teaching positions at King Khalid University. Although they are both happy and contented with the laid back, small city life of Abha, they already made plans for the time when they will return to their home in the United States. And even now, while they are still happily teaching in Saudi, they have already built a magnificent cat dormitory on their property back home.

The good doctor is passionate about donating to charities, especially animal charity organizations. As I was about to finish the interview, he proclaims, "We should all give generously of our wealth and time to our fellow creatures, it is the right thing to do."

I hope that the legend of Abha's Catman lives on with many to take on the mantle of animal compassion. We wish him well on his journey back to Texas, the lone star state.

**Author: Mohamed Ali Alsrar, Second Year Student**

## An English State of Mind

I'm a firm believer that language and culture are inherently fixed, and one simply doesn't exist without the other. Language and culture weave and intertwine in exciting ways that change the language learner a great deal. I often wonder about how my culture motivates my language studies and what the benefits and drawbacks of it are. Am I spending enough time researching and further developing my own culture? Or am I distancing myself from it? All of these questions are worth discussing, so allow me to elaborate on the language-culture intersection.

Language can affect the way we see the world. The structure of our language profoundly shapes how we construct reality. For example, when English speakers are given pictures of events unfolding and are asked to arrange them chronologically, they usually arrange them from left to right. In contrast, Arabic speakers would usually arrange them from right to left. We can see how each person chose the arrangement that corresponds to their language, which illustrates how each of them thinks about space and time differently. Seeing how language has such an impact led me to think about the way it could transform how we create. Research shows that a musician's language can significantly impact how he or she composes music. Also, it can influence the way writers arrange dialogues. It's not very clear whether language affects culture or is it the other way around. Perhaps they both have an effect on each other simultaneously, but nevertheless, the influence is prominent.



From this, we realize the uniqueness of our thoughts and behavior as bilingual students. We have a special cultural background. Many of us grew up loving foreign films or novels, and probably imitated the characters' behavior. We could also perhaps agree with their ideas and opinions. All of which might not actually make sense in the context of our real lives. However, because of the language and cultural awareness that comes with it, we were able to put ourselves in this position. This sort of imitation is natural but can have consequences that are better avoided.

Cultures have always been influenced by each other. In history, people often appropriated other cultures for their gain. These appropriations, in some cases, create a positive impact and can help cultures flourish and develop socially and economically. Other times, they are necessary in order to adapt due to unforeseen pressure. In these cases, it makes sense to borrow, but in other cases, appropriation can be misinformed, ill-researched, and out of place. A clear example of social pressure is apparent in its own current climate.

We often feel the need to keep up with the rest of the world, to consume foreign culture, and to learn foreign languages; otherwise, we feel left behind. By no means am I saying that keeping an openness to a foreign culture is terrible, or that we should shield ourselves from anything foreign. This sort of behavior is way too extreme. Actually, I think that it can be incredibly beneficial to learn a second language and to experience and appreciate other cultures, but never without developing an understanding of your own culture first. We can explore the uniqueness of our culture and identity while still maintaining interest and understanding of the world. Issues arise only when we try to plant ideas in unsuitable soil, or when we aim for modernization but end up erasing and replacing.

Our history is rich in culture. It's overflowing with exquisite, inspiring stories. It might be hard to modernize our culture at first, so relying on foreign ready-made popular motifs might be tempting since it seems more comfortable, but we need to put in more effort than that. The end goal is to make our creative work more authentic with our identity at the center of it.

**Author: Faisal "Park" Asiri, Second Year Student**

## My Journey Into the World of English

Ever since I was a young kid, I loved the English language so much that I could not stop myself from using it. My parents were surprised by me regularly speaking in English. Although they were able to speak and understand the language, my behavior must have seemed very strange to them. Some of my friends, family members and neighbors probably thought that I was possessed, crazy, or talking to imaginary friends, but I continued to pursue my passion anyway. Nothing was going to stand in the way of my goal to master English.



When I turned eight, my body was afflicted with an ailment that prevented me from participating in certain physical activities with other kids. I could no longer join them in football and other games. I underwent six surgeries to lengthen the tendons in my lower leg, which helped me to walk easier.

At the age of ten, I found myself even more focused on English. I spent much of my time watching English movies and TV series. This led to me learning quite a lot of words. I always tried to imitate and repeat what I heard. When people asked me where I learned to speak so well, I told them that I picked up the language from movies. Many did not believe me, but I could not care less. When I turned sixteen, I was fully aware of what I was going

to do with my future. I was going to master English to the best of my ability. I now also started to read newspapers and books to build my understanding of the language further.

After discovering that I was accepted to study English at King Khalid University, I was totally exhilarated. My dream was becoming a reality. Upon arriving at the campus, I immediately felt very much at home in the English Department. I befriended a lot of likeminded students who, like me, were very serious about mastering the language. I was also fortunate to discover a really cool place on

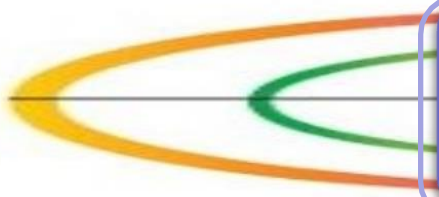
campus.

Some friends introduced me to the Language Enhancement Center (LEP), where we have the opportunity to practice our English skills. Two American Drs, Hassan Costello and Charles Forman, were there and encouraged me on my journey to becoming better at speaking in English.

I am so grateful that I am able to follow my passion of mastering English. Believe me, no matter which obstacles you may face in life, you must always follow your dreams and your heart's desires. You may just be able to find true happiness, as I did.

**Author: Mueath Abdurahmaan Saeed Al Sehman Asiri, Second Year Student**





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