

## The Effect of Cheating in English Examinations on the Process of the Pedagogical Evaluation

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### ABSTRACT:

The present study is of a descriptive nature. It aims at investigating the effect of cheating phenomenon on the process of the pedagogical evaluation and to find out its negative effect on the students' psychological status.

The study hypothesizes that cheating has no effect on the evaluation of the pedagogy, curriculum and the students' progression. It has no effect on students' futurity career, and has no effect on the importance of distinguishing between the students in terms of individual differences.

An interview and questionnaire are the instruments of the study. The investigation reveals different reasons behind cheating, different styles of cheating and different effects yielded by cheating.

Depending on the conclusions, and as a matter of recommendations, the study presents different methods to remedy this dishonest phenomenon like avoiding the classical procedures in conducting the examinations and the use of the objective test instead of the subjective test. Finally, the study presents different suggestions for further studies.

**Key Words :** Curriculum, Education, Educational Objectives

### المستخلص :

هذه الدراسة ذات طبيعة وصفية وتهدف إلى إيجاد الأثر السلبي للغش في الامتحانات على تقويم العملية التربوية برمتها والتحقق من اثر هذه الظاهرة على الحالة النفسية للطلبة.

تفترض الدراسة ان الغش في الامتحانات لا تأثير له على عملية تقويم كل من طريقة التدريس والمنهج الدراسي وكفاءة الطالب. تفترض الدراسة أيضا أن ظاهرة الغش ليس لها تأثير على مهنية الطالب بعد تخرجه ولا تؤثر على اهمية التميز بين الطلبة تبعاً للفروق الفردية.

تستخدم الدراسة وسيلتي المقابلة والاستبانة كأدوات لإنجاز إجراءات البحث. تكشف هذه الأدوات والإجراءات البحثية عن وجود أسباب مختلفة تدفع الطلبة للغش في الامتحان وعن الأساليب المختلفة التي يبتدعها الطلبة لتسهيل عملية الغش. كما تكشف الإجراءات عن الاثار السلبية التي تخلفها هذه الظاهرة.

اعتماداً على ما تم الوصول اليه من نتائج، تستعرض الدراسة مقترحاتها المختلفة لعلاج هذه الظاهرة مثل الابتعاد عن الطرق التقليدية في ادارة الامتحانات واستخدام نمط الاختبار الموضوعي بدل الاختبار المقالي. وأخيراً تقدم الدراسة مقترحات لمشاريع بحثية قد تعنى بها الدراسات المستقبلية.

### INTRODUCTION

Any deviational behaviour which is performed by some examinees causes a defect with the pedagogical system and draws it back demolishing one of the main basic elements which is the evaluation.

The phenomenon of cheating in English examinations is one of this deviational behaviour that corrupts the educational system. Jia (2009:1) states that cheating is a wide world phenomenon; he

confirms that cheating is wrong doing and should be reduced.

It is well known that assessments are the main means that not only allows specialists to be acquainted with the extent to which the students benefit from the pedagogical process, but also to evaluate the instructor's method and style and even the curriculum as well. It can be said that cheating in examination falsifies the examinees' scores which will affect negatively the process of evaluation.

Dolphin (2011:32) states that cheating has become a popular dishonest behaviour phenomenon all over the world. He adds that cheating means to take the examination or a test by the student in a dishonest way.

The present study attempts to identify the different reasons behind cheating in examinations at the college level and its effect on the process of evaluation. It may be said that the educational institution is one field in which the students' personality is built correctly. Thus the college, as the most important and may be the last field from the educational system, has to take on its side this important mission.

The curriculum, instructor and student represent the three main rings form which the chain of the educational system. Any defect in any one may affect negatively the whole educational system. It may be argued that cheating is the deviated behaviour that may damage the whole educational system by affecting negatively the process of evaluation by falsifying the students' achievement.

It may be argued that examination is the main instrument to measure and evaluate not merely the students' capacity in a certain educational material, but to

evaluate the effectiveness of the instructors' method and style (his teaching philosophy) and even the curriculum as well.

#### **The problem of the study**

During his residence in Sudan, the researcher noticed this behaviour in different English examinations at the the College of Education, Sudan University. To ensure the existence of this problem, five English instructors confirmed the existence of this problem. They declared that cheating falsifies the students' achievement and this affects their accurate evaluation. This declaration agrees with Jia's statements (2009:1) when he says that cheating is a wrong doing that falsifies the students' achievement which affects the process of accurate evaluation.

Furthermore, different English students at the College of Education confirmed the existence of this problem and complained from its psychological effects. They argued that the cheater will never be a successful person in his life.

Accordingly, it may be argued that cheating performed by some examinees is considered the most serious problem faced by the educational system. From one hand, it falsifies the students' achievement and this affects the instructor's accurate evaluation. This means that this deviation behaviour throws its shade negatively on the educational system by demolishing the desire of getting the educational objectives, in addition to its negative effect on the reality of educational status especially evaluating which is the main educational dimension. From other hand, and it has own negative effect on the students' psychological status. This deviation behaviour affects the students' present life and futurity carrier.

In the light of the above reviewing, the problem of the study may be summarized in one main issue is that to which extend cheating can affect the pedagogy in terms of evaluation.

#### **Aims of the Study**

The study aims at:

- 1- identifying the instructor's and the students' perspective about cheating,
- 2- finding the effect of cheating on the process of educational evaluation, and
- 3- determining the effect of cheating on the students' psychological status.

#### **Hypotheses of the Study**

In the light of the aims above mentioned, the study hypothesized that:

- 1- cheating is not a dishonest behaviour and has no effect on the process of the educational evaluation
- 2- cheating in the examination is not performed by the English students at Colleges level,
- 3- cheating has no effects on the property of the individual differences among the students.

#### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of the study comes from that it is an attempt to investigate the negative effect of cheating phenomenon in examinations on the issue of the educational evaluation. The significance also rises from that it concerns with the effect of cheating on the students' psychological status.

The significance of the study also lies in that it spots the light on the reasons behind cheating and pinpoints the techniques used in cheating. Furthermore, the study presents different suggestions to reduce this deviational behavior as possible as it can be and to eliminate its negative effects.

#### **Population and the Sample of the Study**

The Sudanese English students at Colleges of Education, English department in Sudan represent the population of the study. Twenty English students from third year, English department, Colleges of Education, Sudan University for Science and Technology were chosen randomly to represent the whole English students in Sudan.

#### **Limitation of the Study**

The present study is limited to investigate the negative effect of cheating in English examinations on the pedagogical ongoing system in terms of accurate evaluation and its effect on the students' psychological status during the academic year 2015-2016.

#### **Instruments of the Study**

- 1- An interview was conducted with five English instructors at the College of Education, Sudan University to acquaint with their attitudes towards cheating and its educational effect, and
- 2- Another interview was conducted with the sample of the students (namely the twenty English students) to acquaint with their attitudes towards cheating and its effect in terms of psychological dimension.

#### **Proposition**

Cizek (2001:6) states that where ever there have been tests, there has been cheating. This statement means cheating is inevitable in examination! However, the interviewed English instructors and the English students admitted the performance of cheating in examinations.

Al-Zaidi (2008:6) on his side assures that cheating in examinations threatens the existing educational system and the future of the country. Kassouri (2008:2) on his side, argues that cheating affects the correct evaluation and makes the

cheater depends on cheating not on his intelligence. In other words, cheating falsifies the real scientific level of the students by presenting incorrect achievement. This false result deceives who are involved in the educational system and presents false facts about achieving the intended educational objectives.

It may be argued, due to the above review, that cheating is considered the most deviation behaviour faced by the educational system. It affects the students' present life and futurity carrier, in addition to its negative effect on the reality of educational status especially evaluation.

### **Field Procedures**

#### **Data collection from the Interview**

##### **First: Instructors' Interview**

An interview was conducted with five English instructors from English Department, College of Education, Sudan University of Science and Technology (see appendix A). This is to acquaint with the instructors' attitudes towards cheating.

The data obtained from the interview card revealed that 100% from the interviewed instructors agree that cheating is a dishonest behaviour. Also 100% from them asserted that cheating represents a source of annoyance and represents a main educational problem they face in improving the ongoing pedagogy.

Again 100% from the interviewed instructors confirm that cheating affects the process of evaluation in terms of the curriculum and the method of presentation. Also 100% from them agree that cheating deceives them in distinguishing among their students in terms of individual differences. This deception makes them draw a false

image about their students in terms of classification due to the students' intelligence and the educational capacity.

Once again, 100% from the interviewed instructors agreed that cheating is a negative phenomenon and a deviational behaviour that should be treated. While about the way of treatment, 80% from the interviewed instructors (namely 4 instructors) stated that the better way of treating this phenomenon is by expelling the cheater to teach him and the others a severe lesson. 20% from the interviewed instructors (namely 1 instructor) preferred to give the cheater a final chance but should be punished by failing the cheater just in the material in which he cheats.

It may be said, due to the above obtained data, that cheating threatens the reality of the educational system and represents a real problem that affects the whole educational programme in terms of the competence and the suitability of the curriculum, the students' grade and their scientific progression and the instructor's methodology in presenting the material. It may be argued that this serious problem ought to be seriously treated.

##### **Second: Students' Interview**

The researcher went to the classroom specified to the third year - English Department - College of Education, Sudan University and randomly conducted an interview with twenty English students to represent the sample of the study. The interviewed students were handed a copy of the interview card to document their attitudes towards cheating (see appendix B).

The subject matter of the interview was about getting information about cheating in three dimensions; student's attitudes towards cheating and psychological

effects on their psyche, the reasons behind cheating from the students' perspectives and the techniques used in cheating by the cheaters.

### **1- Students' Attitudes towards Cheating**

The interview revealed that 100% from the interviewed students asserted that cheating is practiced by some students during any examination. They added the cheating is performed even in the final examination. Furthermore, 80% from the interviewed students commented that for some students, cheating is a natural behaviour in the examination.

As for effects of the psychological dimension, 100% from the interviewed students confirmed that cheating has a great effect by equaling among the lazy and clever students. They argued that this dishonest practicing reduces the desire of the competition among the students.

Again 100% from the interviewed students commented that this wrong doing leads to issuance an unfair judgment about the students' scientific competence and performance because sometimes the honest student achieves low marks than the cheater. Also 100% from the interviewed students expressed that they feel with injustice when they got low achievement or unsuccessful marks in a certain examination while the cheater got high marks.

In the light of the above collected data, the three hypotheses of the present study are rejected.

### **2- The Reasons behind Cheating**

The interview revealed that the reasons behind cheating can be divided into three categories as follows:

**A- Social Category.** This category throws the responsibility on the community and the family. 80% from

the interviewed students admitted that their parents have a real shortening in following their sons. This percentage indicates that the parents are totally depended on the procedure of the college in evaluating their sons. To the contrary, it was 90% from the interviewed students said that their parents blame them severely if they failed or got low achievement in examination.

In this sense, Jojoe (2010:2) believes that many students are driven to cheat when there is too much emphasis on them. In so, it may be said that the contrasted behaviour of the parents (sometimes) drive their sons as students to perform cheating.

Another indication is that 90% from the interviewed students admitted that they devoted much of time to enjoy by using the social means of communication and Internet instead of studying. As a result, when the students are exposed to exam, they go to cheat to avoid the effects of embarrassment and failing.

Another reason inferred from the interview card is that 70% from the interviewed students admitted that they are highly affected by their friends especially those who are out from the field of studying. The interviewed students argued that they spend most of their time with such a kind of friends.

**B- Psychological Category.** This category ascribes the reason behind cheating on the incorporeal status. The interview revealed that 100% from the interviewed students agreed that cheating is a kind of risk. They argued that cheating is performed by some students with much of desired risk. Furthermore, it was 70% from the interviewed students (namely 14 students from the twenty) admitted that they have the desire to perform this risk

to get success without efforts. This percentage indicates that the students have the readiness of performing cheating if they got the opportunity.

The interviewed students mentioned different reasons drive the student to perform cheating, for example 40% from the interviewed students (8 students) admitted that they worry from failing in the exam. 20% from the interviewed students (4 students) stated that they have the desire to pass the exam by any means. 20% from the interviewed students ascribed the reason behind cheating to the lack of the seriousness of the instructor as a proctor. 20% from the interviewed students stated that the negligence to their present and future life and the sense of disappointment after graduation is another reason drives some students to cheat.

The interview also revealed that 100% from the interviewed students agreed that the competition among the students sometimes plays a crucial role in driving some students to perform cheating. From other side, it was also 100 % from the interviewed students agreed that cheating strength the relation among the cheaters. The interviewed students argued that cheating is a kind of cooperation among the group. Furthermore, the uncooperative student in the class is described as a selfish and is accused by unknowing the meaning of brotherhood.

**C- Educational Category.** This category ascribes the reason behind cheating on the educational status. The interview revealed that 80% from the interviewed students agreed that the instructor and his style in dealing with the students and his method in presenting the subject sometimes play a

role in driving the students to perform cheating.

70% from the interviewed students complained from the much homework assignments that are synchronized with the time of the exam and the lot of examinations that are specified at specific period also play a role in driving them to perform cheating..

Again 70% from the interviewed students argued that some instructors lack the seriously feature in dealing with the exam that yields the sense of inexistence of the real punishment. This sense motivates some students to cheat. This argument matches with Kelvinkally's belief (2012:1) which said that there are no serious procedures against cheating to be taken by the instructors or the deanship, so it became much popular, easier and convenient for students to cheat without thinking of the consequences

50% from the interviewed students complained from the insufficient time that specified to the exam as compared with the nature of the questions. This complaint reveals that the time may play a role in driving the student to cheat. Again 50% from the interviewed students stated difficult nature of some subjects is another reason drives for cheating.

Lastly, it was 80% from the interviewed students argued that inexistence of the large and modern classrooms may be added as another reason behind cheating. It may be said that the large number of the students in a small class creates disorder that losses the control.

### 3- Techniques Used in Cheating

The interview card revealed different techniques performed in cheating such as:

1- **Peeping:** this is the most common style. It is simply the looking at the nearest student's paper. This style is preferable because it is easy to be done and there is no real threating on the side of the cheater because there is no tangible evidence.

2- **The Use of Scrap Paper:** this is the most desired style, but because it represents a serious threating, so it is only the skillful cheater practices it.

3- **The Use of the Cellphone:** this style also wide spread among cheaters. It can be achieved either by picturing the subject or by using the technology of Bluetooth.

4- **Traditional techniques:** the use of the wall, writing on the stool where the student sits, writing on the private paper already prepared for the exam, writing on the palm of the hand, switching papers among the cheaters, writing on the shirt sleeve, looking to the original book or the booklets.

5- **Other techniques:** the students mentioned other strange techniques such as: gestures or producing definite sounds that is already agreed, the initial letters of some words or even words on a pencil or pen, writing on the ruler and writing on shoes. Some cheater students go to use the trick of going to the path room, while he already prepared some papers, the book or the booklets in order to find out the answer of the question. Or he already wrote something related to the examination on the walls or the door of the path room.

### Conclusions

The investigation revealed the following conclusions:

1- All the interviewed agreed that cheating is a dishonest behavior because it presents, by no means, inaccurate information about the students'

performance at a certain course examination. It may be said that cheating is an educational and psychological illness. It includes, in a way or another, the meaning of stealing,

2- Cheating performed by the lazy student causes a great wrongness attached the clever student. It falsifies the real scientific rank of the cheater because he gets high marks depending on cheating,

3- The interviewed instructors argued that the cheaters will be unfairly equalized with the best students. They added that some cheaters may be assigned to a special educational programme to which he is not qualified. Furthermore, another cheaters may be unfairly received a scholarship that someone else fairly deserved it, and

4- This educational wrong doing manipulates the students' test scores obtained from the examination. This result affects the process of evaluation in terms of student's capacity, curriculum fitness and the instructor's method and style. From this, it maybe grasped that cheating is a trick in which the cheater uses any illegal technique to pass the examination. By this trick, he deceives his instructor by showing him that his answer is the fruit of his own efforts in studying and his instructor's efforts in teaching.

According to the above mentioned findings, cheating may be defined as an illegal behaviour that manipulates the consequences of the test by breaking the rules of a test administration. It may be stated that whatever the reason behind cheating, it is still unjustifiable doing since it offers a false image about the educational system and affects negatively the psychological status.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations may be presented to eliminate the negative effect of cheating in English examination:

**1- The use of the classical procedures.**

It is observed that the instructor himself conducts his exam. It is recommended that other instructor performs the mission of over sighting.

**2- The lack of using technology.** It is recommended the use of technology to oversight the class especially with a large class. One camera is enough if it is precisely placed.

**3- The procedure of using the objective test.** It was observed that most of the tests are designed in form of objective test. It is recommended to shift to the form of subjective test because it is valid, reliable and comprehensive. Another advantage is that it is practical and easy to be conducted. This advantage gives the instructor the ability to control his class. In addition that that this test is easy to be corrected without wasting too much time or effort. It is better to present two different forms of the test, i.e. (A) and (B).

**4- The procedure of conducting the examination behind a lock door.** It is recommended to open the door of the class. This is to allow every passer-by instructor to inform about cheating especially when the instructor writes the exam on the board. Thus it is recommended to present a printed test on papers to be distributed on the students.

**5- No serious procedure towards the cheater.** A rigid procedure is recommended against the cheater. This is to make the cheater a lesson to other students.

**6- No confirmatory procedure after the exam.** It is inferred that no instructor tried to ensure that no student has performed cheating after the

examination. It is recommended to match the papers of at least two students after gathering the papers of the test. Another procedure is to choose randomly two students after the exam and ask them to repeat orally their answers about a certain question. This procedure makes the cheater thinks more than one time before performing cheating.

**7- The students' low awareness about the negative effects of cheating.** It is recommended to stimulate this feeling by conducting conferences, meetings or lectures from time to time to identify the negative effects of cheating on the educational system and psychological status.

Briefly, it may be said that cheating is unjustifiable doing which affects the educational programme in terms of educational evaluation and psychological status. Another negative effect may be added that cheating affects the image of the instructor in terms of his seriousness, competence and abidance. It may be said that the instructor is supposed to be the students' model to be respected and followed. In so, cheating is recommended to be treated seriously before it increases because it offers a deceivable appearance about the reality of the instructor and series of the pedagogy.

**Suggestions**

Since the study concerns with the negative effects of cheating in the third year, English department, College of Education, Sudan University, thus it is suggested that other studies to be conducted to tackle this phenomenon in other years or other Colleges or Universities.

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**Appendix (A)****The Interview Card Distributed on the English Instructors to Acquaint with Their Attitudes towards Cheating in Examinations**

Item	Instructor's Attitude	Note
Do you admit that some students perform cheating? How?		
To which extend do you think that cheating is a dishonest behavior?		
Do you think that cheating represent an educational problem? How?		
Do you think that cheating affect the students' correct evaluation? How?		
Do you think that cheating affect the curriculum's correct evaluation? How?		
Do you think that cheating affect your method's correct evaluation? How?		
Do you think that cheating is a deviational behavior and should be eliminated?		

From your perspective, what are the best ways to be followed to eliminate this phenomenon?		
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**Appendix (B)****The Interview Card Distributed on the Third Year, English Students to Acquaint with Their Attitudes towards Cheating, the Reasons behind Cheating and the Techniques Used in Cheating in Examinations**

Item	Student's Attitude	Note
Do you agree that some students perform cheating? How?		
To which extend do you think that cheating has psychological effect?		
Do you think that cheating reduces the desire of the competition among the students? How?		
Do you think that cheating leads to unfair evaluation to the students' competence and performance? How?		
Do you feel with injustice when you get low achievement or failed in the exam while the cheater got high marks? How?		
Do you think that your parents are interested in evaluating your academic performance? How?		
Do you think that your parents and your family members create a pressure in blaming you if you failed in a certain exam? How?		
Do you think that you devote an adequate time to your homework? How?		
How many hours you spend with your friends by using the means of social communication and Internet?		
Do you feel that your friends motivate you to look after your academic assignments? How?		

Item	Student's Attitude	
Do you think that cheating is a kind of risk performed by some students? How?		
In your opinion, what are the reasons behind cheating?		
Do you think that the competition among the students affects cheating? How?		
Do you think that cheating strengthen the relation among the cheaters? How?		
What do you think about the method and style of the instructor?		

Do you think the synchronic of examinations with the homework assignments leads to perform cheating? How?		
What do you think about the way in which the instructors conduct the examination?		
Do you think that the time specified for examination play a role in performing cheating? How?		
Do you think that the nature of the materials play a role in performing cheating? How?		
Do you think that the large number of students in a small class has a role in performing cheating? How?		
Due to your relation with your classmates, please mention the techniques used in cheating?		