



# **An Investigation into the Impact of a Workplace English Language Programme in Egypt**

Nahal Khabbazbashi

Hanan Khalifa

***Cambridge English Language Assessment***



# Background

- Pathways to Higher Education (PHE)
  - Training scholarship aimed at enhancing the soft skills of socially disadvantaged students at Egyptian universities
- Introduction of an English language component
  - Increasing chances in the local job market
  - Increasing accessibility to post-graduate studies
  - Pilot study for mainstreaming of the initiative
  - English language instruction reform in Higher Education



# An International Collaboration

International collaboration between the Centre for Advancement of Post-Graduate Studies, Cairo University (CAPSCU), Cambridge English Language Assessment and the British Council, Cairo



**CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH**  
Language Assessment  
Part of the University of Cambridge





# Cambridge English Programme (CEP)

## *Focus on Teachers*

**Aim: building capacity & professional development**

- Training of Trainers Course (TOT)
  - Teaching methodologies
  - Background to language learning and teaching
  - Lesson planning and use of resources
  - Managing the teaching and learning process
- Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT)
  - Internationally recognized certificate of teaching knowledge



# Cambridge English Programme (CEP)

## *Focus on Students*

**Aim: development of workplace language skills, certification**

- Cambridge English Placement Test (CEPT)
- Workplace Blended Learning Course (BLC)
  - Preparation for language demands of the workplace
  - Focus on all four skills, familiarity with business texts and styles
  - Classroom (phase 1): 25 hours face-to-face teaching
  - Online: 50 hours of self-study (with teacher support)
  - Classroom (Phase 2): 25 hours face-to-face teaching
- Business Language Testing Service (BULATS)



# Cambridge English Programme (CEP)

## *Focus on Decision Makers*

### **Aim: programme evaluation**

- Impact of CEP on teachers and students
- Implications for mainstreaming of project
- Ongoing study



# Investigating the Impact of the CEP

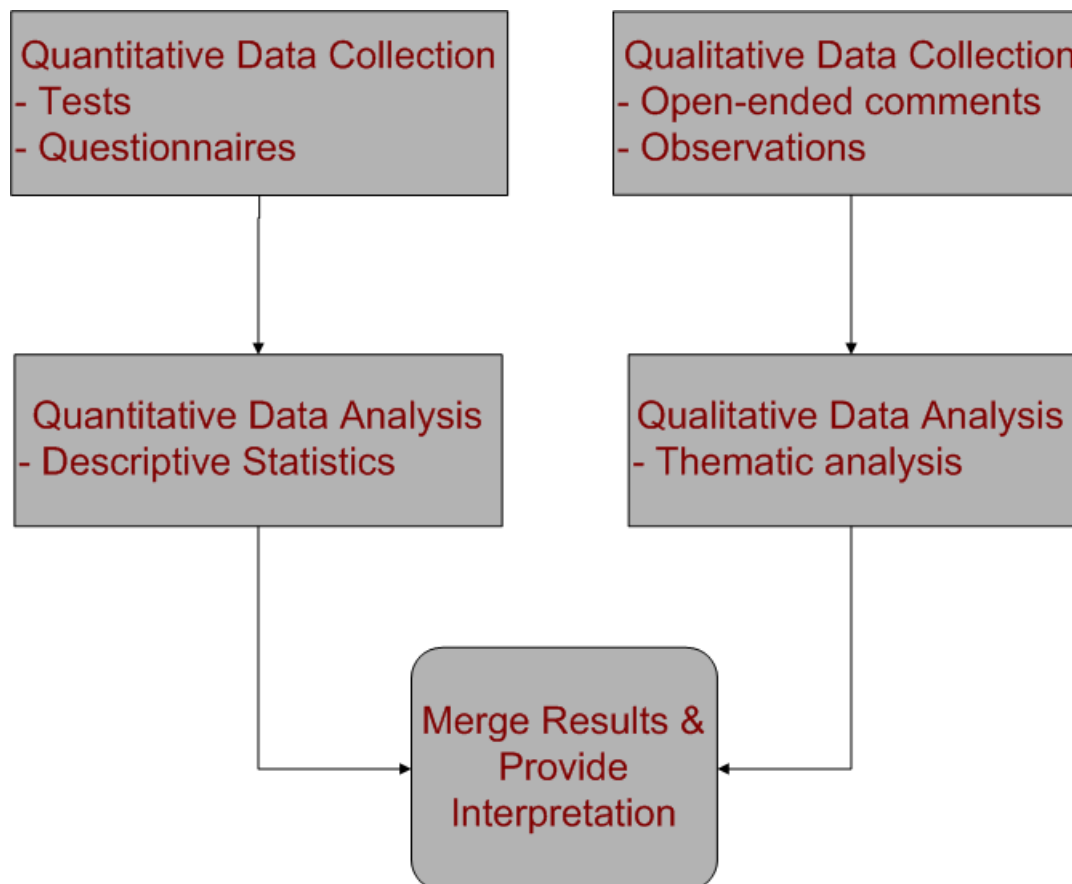
*Research Question: What is the impact of the CEP initiative on teachers and students?*

Key investigative points	Data Type	Data Source
1. Changes in teaching practices, teacher evaluation, perspectives on blended-learning approaches	Quantitative Qualitative	1. Reports and observations by master trainers 2. Test score data 3. Questionnaire to teachers & students
2. Attitude towards different aspects of CEP and its impact on learner motivation, confidence & independent learning	Quantitative Qualitative	1. Questionnaire to students & teachers
3. Learner progression	Quantitative Qualitative	1. Test score data 2. Questionnaire to students & teachers



# Research Design

## Mixed Methods (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011)







# Participant Profiles

## Teachers

- N=26; Age range= majority between 31-50, PhD holders; lecturer/ assistant lecturers; more than 15 years teaching experience

## Students

- N=462; Age range= majority between 20-22; Gender: males=50.3% & females=49.7%; field of study: faculties of Commerce (27.7%), Arts (24.9%) and Science (12.8%)
- 47% of students in final year of study, 35.3% already graduated → likely to be seeking employment/further education

## British Council Master Trainers

- N=2





# Findings: Focus on Teachers

*T12 showed a marked improvement. He moved around the class interacting with the students and monitoring very effectively. He put the students into small groups, kept to the time allotted to the task, and the students were obviously engrossed in the task. He used peer correction, which was appropriate and maximised student talking time. He still needs to work on cutting down his teacher talking time and backing up information visually.*

*(Master Trainer following classroom observations)*

*The course made me appreciate the use of active learning techniques & helped me revise the roles I can play in the class; I used to overlook some of these roles; made me rethink of ways to empower learners'*

*(Teacher from Beni-Suef University)*



# Findings: Focus on Teachers

## **Positive impact of TOT Course on teaching practices**

- New teaching techniques & strategies
- Increased interaction
- Less teacher talking time
- Promotion of active learning
- Awareness of student learning styles
- Placing importance on learner autonomy



# Findings: Teacher Evaluation

## Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) score data:

- Strong performance on all modules
- Weakest performance: lesson planning

## Teacher trainers' perspective:

- Successful implementation of course methods in classes
- Some resistance to communicative style of teaching

## Students' perspective:

- A very positive attitude towards the teachers
- Classroom activities and materials were found to be engaging and interesting.



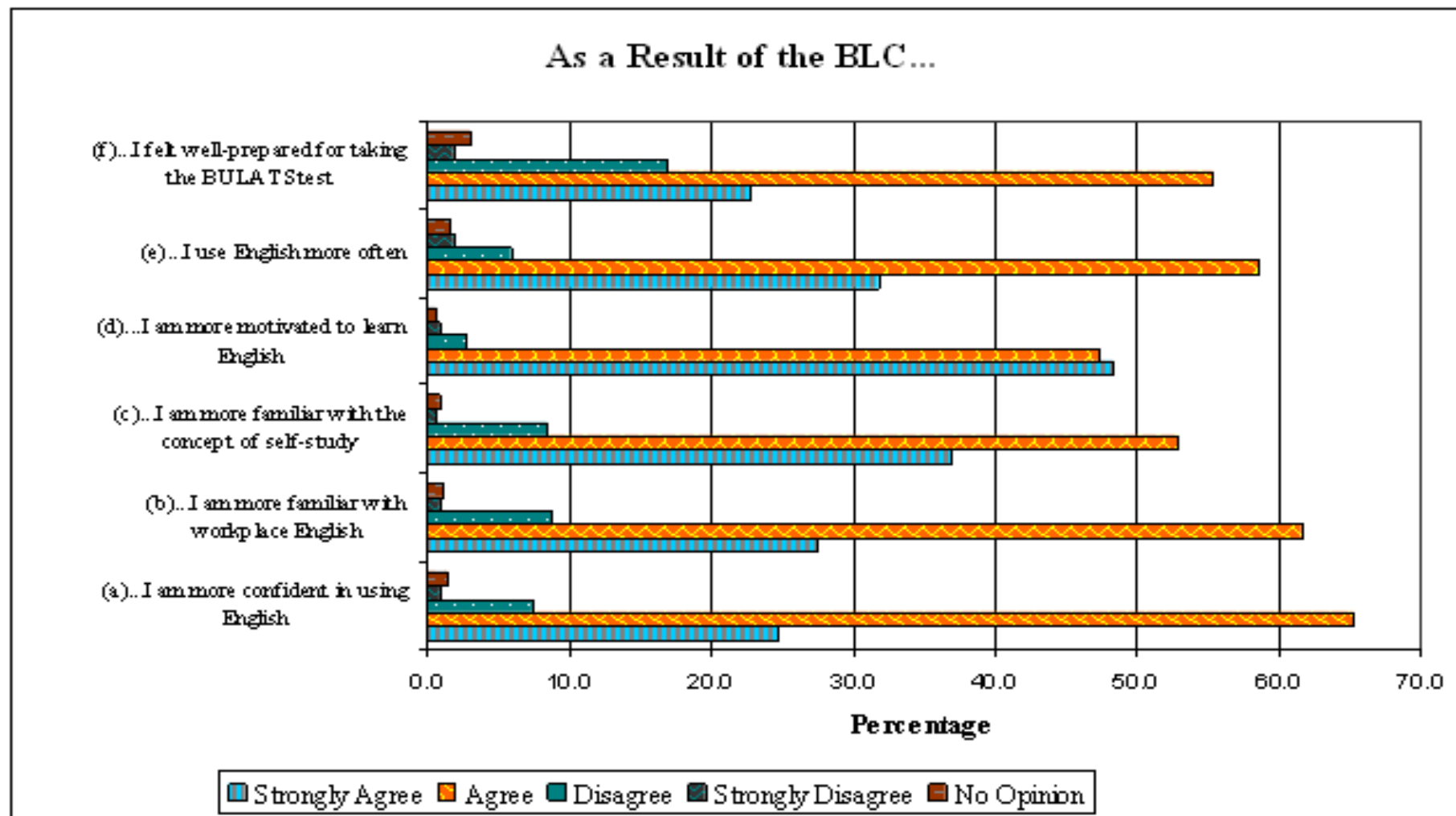
# Recommendations: Focus on Teachers

## Areas for improvement

- Teacher talking time versus student talking time
- Language ability levels
- Classroom management skills
- Varying pace of the class
- Engaging materials



# Findings: Impact of the BLC (Focus on Students)





# Findings: Focus on Students and the Blended Learning Course (BLC)

A positive impact of the BLC:

- a. Language skills
- b. Learner confidence in using English
- c. Familiarity with workplace English
- d. Familiarity with the notion of self-study
- e. Motivation to learn English
- f. Preparing for the BULATS test

*Thank you so much, I was so happy to take this course. Really, I have benefited greatly from this course.'*

*(Engineering student from Kafr-el-Shaikh University)  
The course was very helpful for me in my career and improved my English skills largely.'*

*(Student from Cairo University)*





## Findings: Autonomous Learning

*‘Generally speaking the course allows trainees to absorb training on their own time, as it is self-paced learning, and it also emphasizes the importance of practice, leaving valuable classroom time for more skill-building activities.’*

*‘Motivated students made the best out of this opportunity [online course] and they worked well and completed all the assignments independently. They have become more active in their learning and gain technological empowerment that expands beyond the required course. Some students were not used to this independent type of learning, and consequently didn't take it seriously.’*

*‘It's easier for me to learn when the teacher tells me what I have to do with’*

*‘I found it difficult to manage my learning on my own’*



# Findings: Autonomous Learning

*‘Some students, especially those living in remote villages, had no access to internet at their homes and it was not easy, for girls in particular, to go to internet cafe. Others had some technical problems with the internet connections.’*



## Findings: Autonomous Learning

The online part of the course allowed students to:

- a. Become more independent learners
- b. Identify their strengths and weaknesses in English
- c. Find ways of improving English without a teacher
- d. Monitor their own learning progress

### ***However it is important to:***

- Provide support in time management and autonomous learning
- Cater for differences in student learning styles
- Play on the strengths of face-to-face and online approaches and minimise weaknesses
- Provide technical support & ensure access to all



# Findings: Learner Progression

## Score data:

- 20% of candidates moved to an upper CEFR band level
- Strongest impact on candidates at levels A2 and B1
- Strongest skills: Reading & Writing

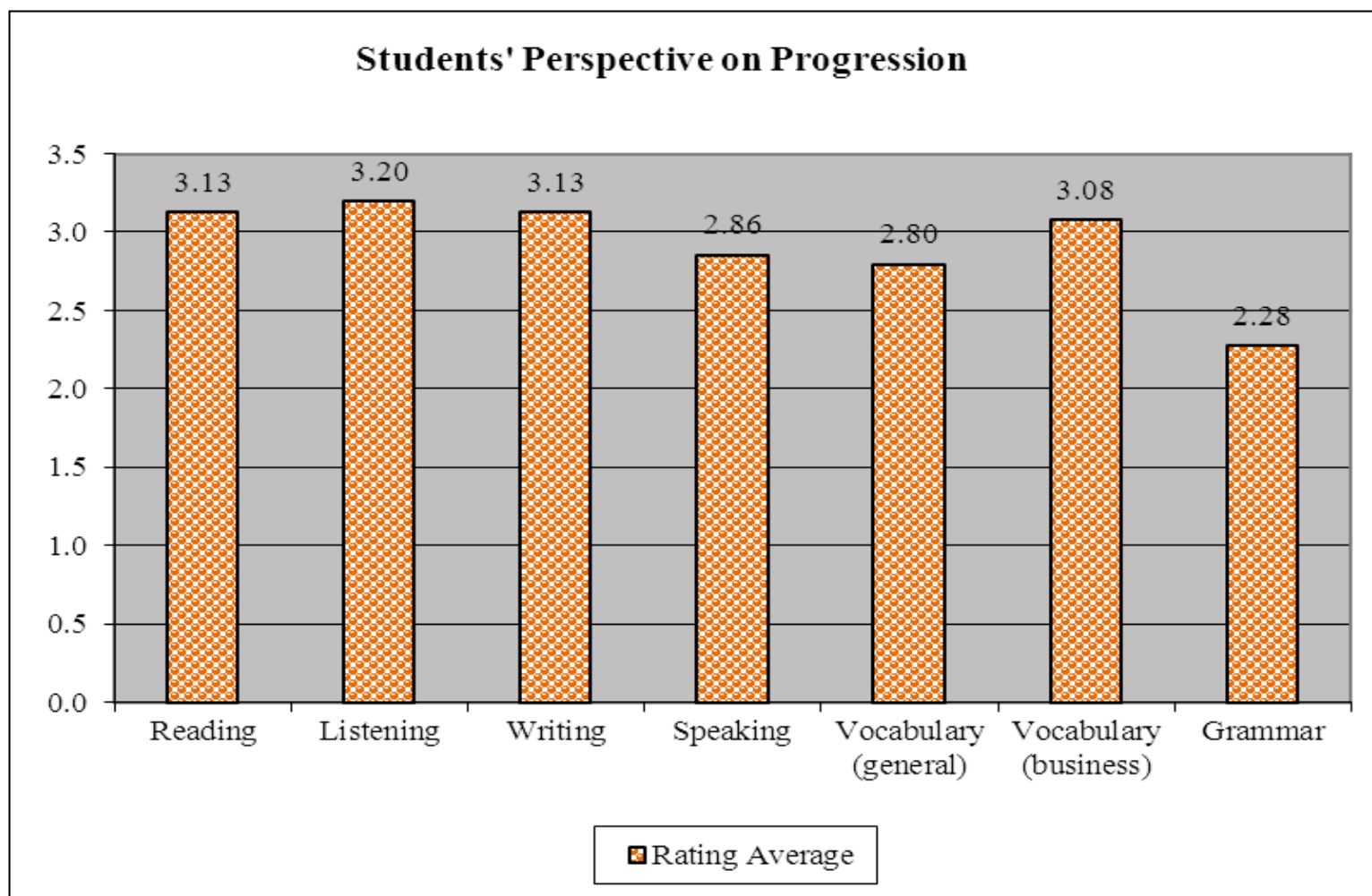
## Candidates' perspective

## Teachers' perspective



# Findings: Learner Progression

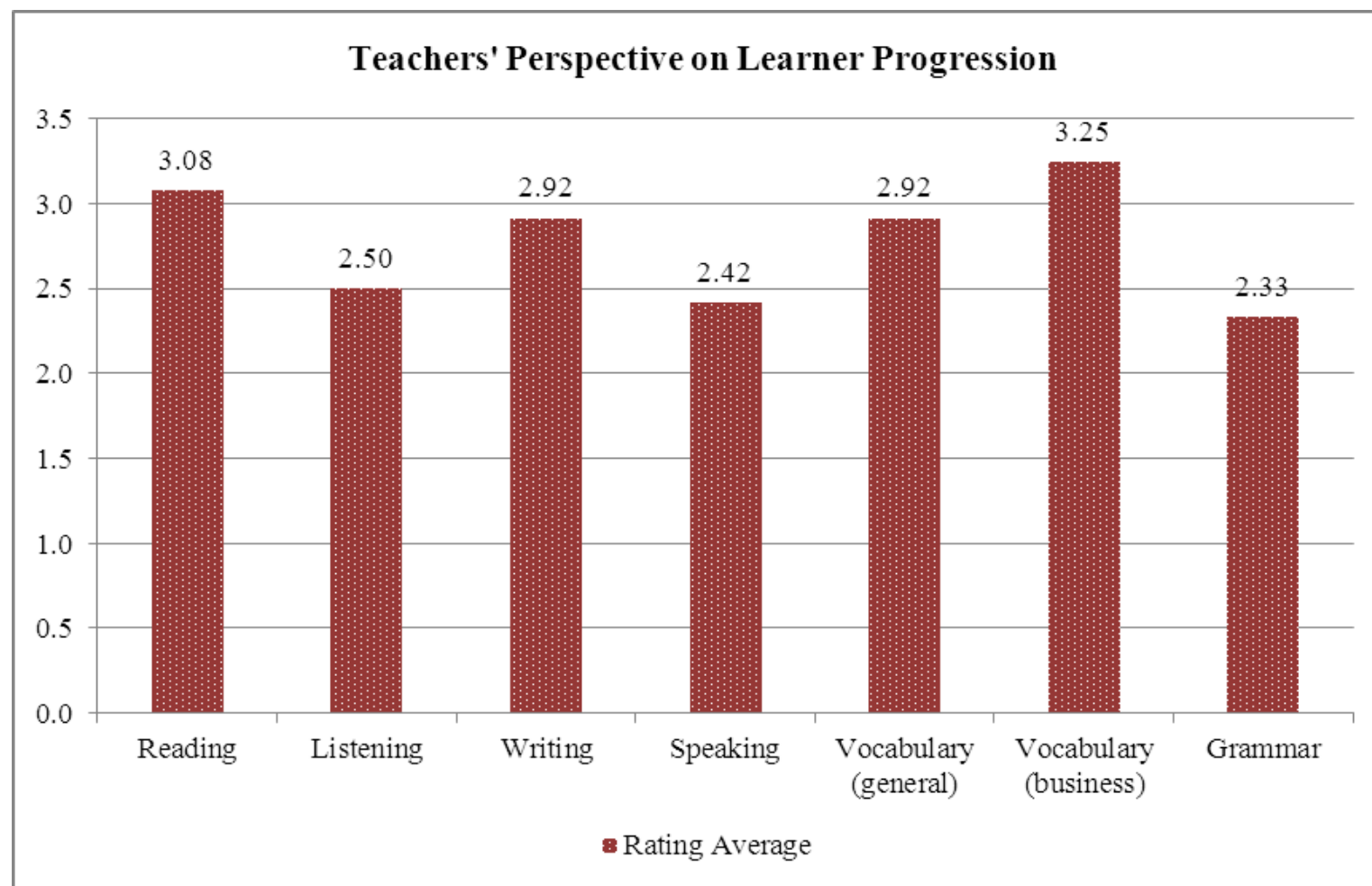
## Candidates' Perspective





# Findings: Learner Progression

## Teachers' Perspective





## Findings: Test Impact

- Test impact on learning
  - *Taking the BULATS test motivated me to study harder during the blended learning course*
- Test impact on future employment and professional opportunities

*BULATS Certification has:*

- *Helped me move closer to my future professional goals*
- *Increased my employability in the job market*
- *Opened new employment opportunities for me in Egypt*



# Summary and Lessons Learned

- Positive impact of the CEP on main stakeholders
- Successful pilot study
- Areas for improvement
  - Support teaching capacity building by selecting teachers who benefit the most from the career opportunities that TKT certification can offer.
  - Play on the strengths of blended learning approaches and minimise weaknesses
  - Provide support for autonomous learning
  - Provide technical support & ensure access to all
  - Plan ahead for the infrastructure necessary for mainstreaming of project across different regions





# Thank You!

A decorative wavy line that starts as a light gold wave on the left, tapers to a point in the center, and then expands into a dark red wave on the right.

E-mail: [khabbazbashi.n@cambridgeenglish.org](mailto:khabbazbashi.n@cambridgeenglish.org)