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Dr. Sultan H. Alharbi
Department of English Language & Translation
College of Languages & Translation, King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Manal Qutub, Ph.D.
Head of Graduate Studies, English Language Institute (ELI), University of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Professor Souad Slaoui,
Department of English Studies, Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences Dhar EL Mehraz, Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdellah University, Fez, Morocco.
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Strategies for Developing English Academic Writing Skills*

Joseph Mallia
Centre for English and Foundation Studies
University of Bristol, Bristol, U.K.

Abstract
Non-native English-speaking students at, or about to enter British Universities and other Western universities where the language of instruction is English may experience challenges with academic writing, often one of the most important means of assessing students. Pre-sessional and in-sessional English academic writing courses have been developed to aid students, and traditionally covered a range of topics. This paper discusses essential ‘pre-writing’ tasks. It then outlines some of the essential elements of academic writing; these often focus on paragraph structure, basic components of an essay, and different functional types of essays. Other features covered by this paper include aspects of language such as level of formality, cohesive devices, caution and hedging, supplying evidence, and avoiding plagiarism, amongst others. This paper also emphasizes the growing importance of collaborative learning, critical thinking and autonomous leaning which may be insufficiently familiar to students from non-Western learning environments where traditionally factual recall is given the greatest importance. Inductive and deductive approaches to paragraph organization, and also essay development have also been introduced. These approaches may also contrast with the rhetorical features familiar to non-native students from various cultures around the world and require special attention. Contemporary pre-sessional courses are also becoming more specialized, targeting English suitable for specific sets of disciplines at the undergraduate and postgraduate level. For example, courses focusing in STEM subjects (science technology, engineering and mathematics) are replacing more ‘generic’ academic English courses.

Keywords: academic English writing, inductive and deductive approaches, in-sessional English courses, pre-sessional English courses, rhetorical features of writing

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Introduction to academic writing and style

Non-native English-speaking students at, or about to enter British Universities and other Western universities where the language of instruction is English may experience linguistic challenges. They may also encounter a series of broader academic expectations that may differ to some, or a greater extent than the models experienced in the home country. Pre-sessional and in-sessional course courses are aimed to help non-native students understand and improve language and academic skills needed for success in a tertiary level education scenario.

Some students may have fairly limited writing experience even in their own mother tongue, particularly for longer written assignments. In certain academic cultures, essays have the primary aim of presenting information, rather than critically-assessing it, an essential feature in Western university situations. At times the strategies for writing may also differ from those of Western tertiary level academia, where a ‘typical’ university-level academic essay is only written after analyzing various sources, collecting, and collating relevant information after due analysis, and creating a new text with references.

In addition, the mother tongue (L1) rhetorical strategy for writing may vary substantially: for example Arabic is mostly inductive with multiple strands of thought being developed simultaneously, and English being generally deductive and developing a single argument or tightly-knit group of ideas (e.g. see Mallia, 2014; Mallia, 2015). Academic writing in English may therefore be a fairly new and challenging undertaking for some students for a variety of reasons.

Students may also only have a fairly broad idea of the academic expectations are in Western tertiary education institutions, and that a variety of different types of written work may be expected from them. These include taking notes, essays, reports, case studies, dissertations, theses, and power point slides, amongst others.

A further challenge for students involves understanding that any piece of writing may have one or more organizational pattern. A pattern of writing may consist, for example, of a process description or sequence, a chronological sequence with developments over time, comparison and contrast, argument and discussion, cause and effect, or situation-problem-solution scenarios.

Perhaps one of the greater challenges for students is academic writing style. Specifically, finding the balance between developing their own ‘voice and ideas’ when writing, yet following the conventions that generally hold for academic writing and acknowledging the role of others’ ideas may also be a challenge.

‘Before writing’ tasks

Understanding the title and essay-type

University students need to understand what is actually being asked in an essay title to avoid misdirecting the task answer. Understanding the components of the title is perhaps the best strategy to focusing on what is actually being asked, and involve: (i) understanding the topic or subject matter, (ii) the topic focus or aspect required for answering the question, and (iii) specifically identifying instruction word(s) in the question and (iv) decide on the necessary
rhetorical strategy (essay-type) for answering the question, including: ‘sequence’, ‘description’, ‘cause and effect’, ‘comparison and contrast’, ‘argument and discussion’ or ‘problem-solution’.

Developing a thesis statement

After understanding the title and essay-type necessary, writing a thesis statement does not follow immediately. Before developing an argument to write on about a topic, evidence, has to be collected and organized, with the development of possible relationships and conflicts between known theories and arguments; this is often achieved through a process of ‘brainstorming’. These ideas can subsequently be distilled down to one major idea, or thesis statement that addresses the essay title, and that can also be supported with evidence.

Pragmatically, before writing commences it is therefore generally useful to write a brief outline of all the points that need to be considered in the answer and then restate the essay question and answer it with a thesis statement. After this planning stage, the question can be answered following the general rules of academic writing for a determined rhetorical strategy or essay-type that best addresses the task question.

Rhetorical strategy: essay types

The rhetorical strategy or essay-type for addressing task questions generally falls under: ‘sequence’, ‘description’, ‘cause and effect’, ‘comparison and contrast’, ‘argument and discussion’ or ‘problem-solution’. Some of the more complex types are here discussed.

‘Argument and discussion’ essays: critical thinking:

Simple recall of factual information is rarely only what is required to be successful at the tertiary level in Western educational institutions. Students are expected to engage with topics, examine various facets and viewpoints and progressively develop a stance. Therefore the capacity to do research, find relevant sources and critically assess them is an imperative feature of successful academic performance.

Often substantially different and even conflicting facets of any topic are present; critical and constructive thinking skills on the part of the writer are essential. In addition, note-taking and idea-organizational skills are necessary prior to commencing the writing task itself. When writing, students must be able to demonstrate familiarity with various aspects of an argument and present their own interpretations using a suitable academic style.

When taking two (or more) positions, information can be organized ‘in series’, having a ‘vertical’ organization of ideas. For example a paragraph (or series of paragraphs) showing ideas in favour of the topic are presented first, subsequently followed by one or more paragraphs with ideas against. This allows for the full development of a view-point before tackling an opposing one.

Conversely, information can be organized ‘in parallel’, having a ‘horizontal’ organization of ideas. For example a paragraph (or series of paragraphs) can show paired ideas both in favour and against of the topic are presented simultaneously. This allows for a more immediate and targeted argument development, focusing on different viewpoints of the same issue under discussion, before moving on to another related issue, which again is also analyzed from
different viewpoints. Paragraph organization related to how close different issues are, rather than if they present viewpoints that are in favour or against a particular topic.

Irrespective of the organizational pattern chosen, the language of discussion in academia has several traits, and would include phrases that: (i) introduce sources which support the writer’s line of argument, (ii) introduce counter-arguments, (iii) present minority viewpoints, and (iv) show objectivity, thus avoiding presenting ideas as the writer’s personal opinions.

While critical thinking is clearly relevant for ‘argument and discussion’ types of essays, they feature in many (if not all) essay-types. For example it is also a key feature of ‘cause and effect’, and ‘problem-solution’ essays.

‘Problem-solution’ essays
A very frequent way of presenting information when addressing an academic writing task is to organize it around a ‘situation – problem-solution(s) – evaluation’ framework. This pattern can be used to organize individual paragraphs, a series of paragraphs or even a complete essay, report or book.

The ‘situation’ helps the reader establish a context in which the rest of the writing can be embedded. Essential terms and jargon are also explained, preferably in context, in this section. Details of the limits of the scope of enquiry are also given here…the number and types of people, things, places, when and where and other features that establish and define the context of the problem at stake.

Once the background situation has been established, the problem can be clearly defined and the reasons why it is an issue. Generally, its causes are also explored, giving deeper meaning and significance to the problem. The in-depth exploration also helps the development of the section related to solutions, which are therefore embedded in a meaningful context. It is also generally expected that an evaluation of the solution(s) is effected as part of the conclusion. Therefore a critical, objective assessment of what has been achieved and may still need to be achieved is outlined.

‘Cause and effect’ essays
Academic writing often necessitates the discussion of the causes and effects of a scenario or situation, and requires the writer to use critical and constructive thinking skills. These are used to analyze and ‘unpack’ subject complexity into simpler, component blocks of information and explore how they interact (critical thinking). This strategy can be applied to help understand one or more causes, and the one or more effects they may give rise to, in addition to developing an understanding the relationships among causes and effects (constructive thinking).

The writing organizational strategy can also be ‘in parallel’, having a ‘horizontal’ organization of ideas, or ‘in series’, having a ‘vertical’ organization of ideas. In addition to organizational strategies, determined patterns of language are used in cause-effect writing to make the links more explicit. In particular, language may help the writer place more focus either on the cause, or on the effect.
Writing organization: text structure

Different writing genres (types) have diverse purposes and audiences, and so they require appropriate text structures. Yet irrespective of the essay rhetorical strategy, or essay type, the general text structure is similar and invariably follows a similar pattern: an introduction, followed by a body of writing, and ending with a conclusion.

The introduction

Where to begin is a crucial decision for a writer, and often this first impression sets the general tone (and evaluation) for the rest of the writing. Just as a good beginning can add value and draw a reader into a piece of writing, a mediocre beginning can give lasting bad impression or even discourage a reader from reading further.

Key features of an introduction include: (i) background information to set a meaningful context, (ii) justification for the choice and focus of topic, (iii) an outline of the essay, (iv) definition of key lexis (terms) essential for the topic, (v) thesis statement (a concise summary of the main point or claim), and (vi) purpose for writing the essay.

The thesis statement, often placed towards the end of the introduction, is a critical part of any introduction as it gives a clear guiding focus to the reader and sets expectations. There should be one key idea so that a clear idea and organization of the essay content, in addition to the writer’s stance are succinctly presented.

The body

The organization of the body, and particularly the paragraphs within it, depend on the objectives of the paragraph and text as a whole, and belong to five basic organizational structures. A single essay often has paragraphs with several different types of structures.

The ‘sequence’ structure uses time, numerical, or spatial order as the organizing structure. The ‘description’ structure is used to describe the characteristic features and events of a specific subject. Descriptive reports may be arranged according to categories of related attributes, moving from general categories of features to specific attributes. The ‘cause and effect’ structure is used to show causal relationships between events. Signal words for cause and effect structures also include if…then, as a result, and therefore. The ‘comparison and contrast’ structure is used to explain how two or more objects, events, or positions in an argument are similar or different. Words used to signal comparison and contrast organizational structures include same, different, alike, in contrast, similarities, differences, and on the other hand. The ‘problem and solution’ structure requires writers to state a problem and come up with a solution.

The conclusion

A strong conclusion can be circular, looping back to the beginning and summarize the highlights, restating the main points, being the final part of the text. It may also emphasize a final statement that drives home the main point of the writing, namely that specified in the thesis statement in the introduction. It is also an opportunity to explore the extent to which the writing has addressed the core issues covered by the thesis statement.
Therefore the features of a conclusion include: (i) comments on ideas in the essay, (ii) a logical conclusion from the development of the ideas in the writing, (iii) areas of need research and predictions for future developments in the topic field, (iv) limitations of the writing, and (v) reference to the thesis statement.

Core aspects of academic writing

Generic features

Academic writing has a more formal aspect and standard English is generally used throughout, avoiding idiomatic or colloquial vocabulary. The accurate use of vocabulary is essential, giving consideration to both the denomination and connotation of the word. Precision in quantification for both facts and figures also reflects well in academia. Adverbs that show subjective involvement and personal attitude are generally avoided unless specifically requested by the task. Question forms, rhetorical or otherwise, are also generally not used. Numbering of sections is to be avoided, and continuous text is expected except in reports and possibly long essays. Strategies to develop cohesion among different sections need to be employed. When including lists these too need to be written as continuous prose, generally inserting ‘and’ before the last item. Inferences and conclusions should use cautious, tentative language, rather than written as absolute facts.

Verbs

Contracted verb forms are informal, and generally have no place in academic writing. Similarly, two-word verbs give an informal feel and often one-word equivalents should be used. A higher proportion of passive verbs are also used in academic writing, although these are to be used judiciously.

In academic writing, the present simple retains its essential functions for reporting facts and opinions that have been accepted, published, and are currently still considered to be valid. The present perfect can be used in these situations to underscore the past-to-present timeline link. The past simple can be used when reporting from a particular study which reflects more of an opinion, viewpoint or incompletely substantiated information, rather than ‘factual’ knowledge.

When including one’s own opinion in writing, both the present simple or even present perfect can be used, together with the use of cautious language. Yet if new results or observations are the purpose of the study, and being described for the first time in the writing at hand, then the past simple should be used. The past simple should also be used for the materials, methods, and procedures employed.

Definitions

Definitions are generally an integral part of academic writing, but which terms to define depend largely on the target audience, in addition to the terms themselves. Good definitions must be written concisely in simple, direct language; they clearly cannot be more complex than the original word, considering both the vocabulary used and also language structure. Sometimes more than one definition for a term is available, so phrases such as ‘can be defined’ and ‘may be defined’ are to be used to make this clear.
In some cases a single sentence is not sufficient to adequately define a term or concept, and a series of sentences may be needed. Generally, the first sentence is fairly generic, and subsequent sentences add layers of detail as may be required.

Irrespective of the complexity when defining terms, academic writers define terms to clarify the writing for readers. Conversely, university students define terms to make it clear that they themselves understand core concepts and terms.

Supporting argument

In academic writing one of the over-arching objectives is to develop arguments starting from basic principles, develop these providing support, and making broader generalizations that can be extrapolated to several situations. This is an inductive approach, whereby the writer starts from broader ideas and examples and progressively focuses on the specifics and develops conclusions that are evidence-based. Providing support or evidence is an essential part of academic writing and makes the writer’s ideas more credible.

However, other approaches may be necessary for academic writing. For example a premise or statement is set, or even a loosely-held fact, opinion, or challenge. The writer starts from this specific point(s) of view and develops a series of arguments and discussion in favour, against or both, often together with a series of relevant cases, examples and non-examples to illustrate these. This is known as a deductive approach is also commonly needed when writing essays for postgraduate studies.

Whether an inductive or deductive approach is used, providing support for ideas therefore remains an essential part of academic writing. In addition to examples and cases from one’s own knowledge where appropriate, quality objective writing also includes ideas from other people’s work, and also using research findings when possible. Ideally these should include both qualitative and quantitative information, as this ‘mixed method approach’ tends to develop more completely and supply different types of support.

Paragraphs

Writing a paragraph in different discourse communities may vary, for example in the number of ideas within and the structural layout. An essential guideline for paragraph writing is the ‘one paragraph, on idea concept’. Different ideas are therefore presented and developed in different paragraphs. The usual paragraph structure for English academic writing in Western institutions involves a topic sentence followed by one or more supporting sentences. A paragraph may also have a concluding sentence. This is a deductive pattern of information layout organization and is by far the most frequent. Inductive approaches to paragraph organization are less frequent.

It is important to realize that ‘inductive’ or ‘deductive’, when referring to paragraphs, does not necessarily reflect the overall nature of a ‘deductive’ or ‘inductive’ approach to writing an essay. Thus a mainly ‘inductive’ essay can be composed of many or even mostly ‘deductive’ paragraphs. The opposite may also be true, though less likely as many academic paragraphs do tend to be of a ‘deductive’ nature.
The topic sentence contains the topic and controlling ideas. It should not be too generic or specific and must be a complete sentence. Supporting sentences describe, illustrate, explain and generally develop the topic. A concluding sentence, when present, helps form inferences from the paragraph. It may also have the role of giving the reader an idea of the topic of the next paragraph, serving as a ‘lead-in’, and creating cohesion.

There are four basic paragraph types: narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive. Therefore the paragraph can be used to describe or explain an endless variety of things, and each paragraph type aims to achieve a specific objective: narrative paragraphs tell about a scene or event, descriptive paragraphs give detailed descriptions of one subject, expository paragraphs provide information, and persuasive paragraphs try to convince the reader. These four paragraph types are powerful tools for writers.

Cohesive devices

Cohesion refers to the creation of a unified and flowing text through the use of transition words including conjunctions, and reference words. There are six categories of transition words that help achieve text cohesion: (i) spatial order words, used in descriptive writing to signal spatial relationships, such as above, below, beside, nearby, beyond, inside, and outside, (ii) time order words used in writing narratives, and instructions to signal chronological sequence, such as before, after, first, next, then, when, finally, while, as, during, earlier, later, and meanwhile, (iii) numerical order words used in expository writing to signal order of importance, such as first, second, also, finally, in addition, equally important, and more or less importantly., (iv) cause/effect order words used in expository writing to signal causal relationships, such as because, since, for, so, as a result, consequently, thus, and hence, (v) comparison/contrast order words, used in expository writing to signal similarities and differences, such as (for similarities) also, additionally, just as, as if, as though, like, and similarly; and (for differences) but, yet, only, although, whereas, in contrast, conversely, however, on the other hand, rather, instead, in spite of, and nevertheless, and (vi) general/specific order words, used in descriptive reports and arguments to signal more specific elaboration on an idea, such as for example, such as, like, namely, for instance, that is, in fact, in other words, and indeed.

Conjunctions can link a sentence to the following one (in addition to linking different parts of the same sentence) and may have the following functions: addition, result, reason, opposition, example and time. Examples of reference words include pronouns, possessive pronouns, objective pronouns, demonstrative pronouns and also other phrases. Repetition of key words and phrases, use of synonyms or paraphrase also help create a cohesive text.

Providing factual, ideological and objective support for academic writing

The paragraph layout in academic English paragraph generally follows a deductive pattern of information organization: a generalization or ‘fact’ followed by examples, details and evidence. Yet the general organization of the essay as a whole is inductive: from particular or individual instances to broader generalizations. While the derivation of generalizations depends on the writer, the overall credibility of the writing hinges on the use of specific examples, details and evidence that create a solid underpinning. Therefore a wide variety of detailed ideas,
Strategies for Developing English Academic Writing Skills

Mallia

perspectives, viewpoints and opinions are presented by the writer, who logically and systematically develops these into factual ‘conclusions’ that have wider application and meaning.

In addition to the writer’s own knowledge and experience, evidence and examples generally stem from other people’s work and research findings, both quantitative and qualitative. Other people’s words and supporting arguments are also often presented. Writers’ need to distinguish between their own ideas and those of others is essential, as is how these ideas are used; this is often referred to as ‘academic honesty’.

Academic honesty: generalisations, moderation, caution and hedging

While good writers are critical thinkers and carefully assess what they ready, in the same manner one’s own writing will be critically evaluated by others. It is therefore essential that academic writing, where the rigour of quality checks is substantial, only includes information that is evidence-based, i.e. which we can account for to a reasonable degree. This is known as academic honesty, and helps guarantee the writer’s credibility and also not mislead the reader.

Yet writers may be in a situation where they must include information which they are somewhat unsure about; this is in fact quite common in academic writing, including highly-rigorous scientific writing. The greater the degree of uncertainty about information quality, the greater the caution with which it should be presented. This is the rationale behind strong, emphatic language not generally being associated with academic writing, where a more cautious, conservative style is favoured. Often called ‘hedging’, this strategy is particularly so when writing the discussion and conclusion sections, where students have the opportunity to express their own inference and viewpoints.

Ways in which to give a more cautious tone to academic writing include (i) the use of modals, (ii) terms that imply varying degrees of probability, (iii) adding distance between the and a statement or claim that could be overstated or even incorrect, (iv) using generalisations and (v) using weaker verbs.

Using and acknowledging the work of other writers

Academic writing essentially contains information such as the ideas, theories, data, opinions of others and these citations must be acknowledged to avoid presenting these as one’s own. This would otherwise constitute plagiarism, intentional or accidental omission of specifying the source of information, which is unacceptable in academic circles. Yet not all the supporting evidence and information in the writing has to be referenced: common facts, well-established ideas and notions and ‘common knowledge’ in general are generally not referenced.

Summarizing and paraphrasing

The decision what is important to be summarized depends on the thesis statement of the essay, or writing objective in general. Therefore summarizing a text starts with the identification of key vocabulary and ideas in relation to this. Notes of these should be taken, using one’s own words without altering the meaning. Expand the notes and write the summary, reorganizing the sequence of the ideas as necessary. A reference should be included to indicate where the information came from. Read and edit the summary as may be needed to ensure that the important points have all been included, fit together logically, and not been altered.
Paraphrasing essentially involves rewriting others’ work in one’s own words without altering the core meaning. The style and genre can also be changed to suite the purpose and writing objectives if different from the original text. Once the purpose of paraphrasing has been established, gathering an understanding of the meaning and importance of the sentence(s) involved is necessary. Identification of (i) specialized or technical terms is needed as they cannot be changed, and also (ii) keywords and expressions that can be substituted with synonyms or alternative forms. In addition, entire sentences are also often reformulated, and a reference should still be included to indicate where the information came from.

Combining sources

The production of most writing at a tertiary level requires the reading of several sources and the synthesis of different ideas, some which may even be conflicting. Organizing and presenting ideas from a variety of sources is a prerequisite that is often a challenge to students.

Mentioning sources is particularly relevant in the introductory phases of writing as it creates an underpinning solid theoretical or ideological foundation. In addition, it shows that the writer is familiar with contemporary literature related to the topic, but should also show the writer’s capacity to evaluate and conglomerate various writings and ideas into a coherent, logical composition. The appropriate referencing of all the sources sued helps avoid the possibility of ‘patchwork’ plagiarism.

Many students erroneously feel that if they attribute all ideas and sources used to other authors (as is in fact appropriate), then their contribution is nil. The essential message is that students are evaluated on their capacity of understanding and judiciously incorporating others’ work, at this stage, rather than propose personal ideas; this is their required contribution. Students’ contribution and ‘voice’ comes in the form of critical thinking and constructive thinking skills…how well can information be challenged and verified, how well can different ideas be collated to create a new ‘whole’, take fresh perspectives, give different (albeit incompletely substantiated) interpretations and present these as their own referenced writing.

In-text references

In-text references are used in the writing text itself to show the source of ideas, diagrams, statistics and other information from other sources that is being used. They may include the family name(s) of the author(s) in the text with publication year in brackets, or both author(s) and year can be in brackets; the latter format places less importance on who supplied the information and more emphasis placed on the nature of the information itself. This sounds more objective and is often preferred, unless there is specific need to highlight authors. Secondary sources refer to those not read by the writer, but accessed through other’ writing; these must also be referenced appropriately.

Quotations

Quotations from others’ writing are also used to support the writer’s arguments, or for the writer to argue against them and promote an alternative. While referenced paraphrase or summary are generally used, quotations are used if (i) provides an accurate definition, (ii) concepts, evidence or examples are expressed particularly well, (iii) to add the weight of
authority associated with the writer of the quote. Otherwise, quotations should generally be sparingly used.

**Reference list and bibliography**

A reference list at the end of the written text lists all the in-text-citations used for the readers’ easy reference. A bibliography is similar but more extensive, and also includes works consulted but not referred to directly in the text, or that may be relevant as additional information and consulting for the reader.

**Additional aspects for academic writing**

In addition to the ‘classic’ element described above that have been given long-standing importance in academic English writing courses, other aspects considered highly important are emerging. These include collaborative learning, critical thinking and autonomous learning.

**Collaborative learning and critical thinking**

Collaborative learning involves presenting a variety of tasks to the learner, some of which can be accomplished and others not. Other tasks lie in between these two areas, within what is called the ‘zone of proximal development’, as based on Vygotsky’s concept of learning (1997). These tasks represent a category of things that a learner can accomplish only with the help of support or peer view-exchange, and guide which set of skills the learner is developing.

Moreover, learning through communication and interactions with others enhances the possibility of success with this category of tasks, and collaborative learning (as opposed to only independent work) tends to increase the level of success. Individuals are able to achieve higher levels of learning and retain more information when they work in a group rather than individually (Gokhale, 1995). Indeed critical thinking skills are sharpened via this type of learning interaction.

The identification and evaluation of evidence to help guide decision making is central to critical thinking, allowing for the use of holistic in-depth analysis of evidence to take decisions and present ideas objectively. Hence critical thinking is considered important in the academic fields because it enables objectivity, precisely the ability to analyze, evaluate, present and reformulate ideas rather than base them on opinion. Critical thinking must therefore essentially include identification of prejudice, bias, propaganda, self-deception, distortion, misinformation and any approach that is not based on evidence. Perhaps not surprisingly, the teaching of critical thinking skills is considered to be an increasingly important component of academic pre-sessional programmes, in addition to the regular features of such courses outlined in the previous sections.

**Autonomous learning**

The concept of ‘learner autonomy’ was first coined Holec (1981) and defined by him as the ability to take charge of one’s own learning. Independence, autonomy and the ability to control learning experiences has come to play an increasingly important role in language education (Hurd, 1981).

When considering learner autonomy, it can be viewed short-term as a means to an end, namely learning English, or as an end in itself in making students in pre-sessional courses
autonomous learners. These two options do not exclude each other, both of them can be part of teachers’ and learners’ views towards language learning, or learning in general (Dam, 1995).

Discussion and conclusions

Non-native English-speaking students at during pre-sessional courses may experience diverse linguistic writing challenges, several of which have been concisely described above. Thus the focus on language per se in the pre-sessional writing courses is generally at the paragraph level. A point to consider is that many students coming from radically different language-groups such as those from China and the Middle East also may still have substantial challenges at the sentence level, yet syntax is not addressed during the course and (perhaps justifiably due to IELTS scores) students are assumed to be of an adequate level, when it perhaps is not always so.

In addition to the intrinsic language focus, pre-sessional courses emphasize the concerns with plagiarism. How this is perceived, and the consequences may be drastically different than those within home-country universities. In addition to the serious consequences, explaining to learners how highly prestigious quoting or paraphrasing other authors’ acknowledged work is seen to be and well-rewarded for those doing this in their academic essays. Finally, strategies and practice opportunities for paraphrasing, synthesis and summary help empower students and avoid plagiarism.

The increasing awareness to the importance of collaborative learning is another important focus learning how to take part in group work confidently and effectively are at the forefront of the objectives of an academic English pre-sessional. Similarly, developing critical thinking skills – scrutinizing, unpacking and reorganizing information routinely prior to attempting academic writing are now considered to be core academic skills. While the need for collaboration during learning is emphasized, an overall strategy for autonomy – autonomous learning, and indeed life-long learning are other essential features of contemporary programmes.

Pre-sessional programs therefore have now extended their role to well beyond the language focus. They give students a more holistic package of academic skills that allow them to approach postgraduate studies, and the world of work beyond with greater confidence and probability of success.Moreover, contemporary pre-sessional courses are also becoming more specialized, targeting English suitable for specific sets of disciplines at the undergraduate at postgraduate level. For example, courses focusing in STEM subjects (science technology, engineering and mathematics), and other having a humanities ‘slant’ are replacing more ‘generic’ academic English courses. This will help exploit the highly limited time at the disposition of students prior and during graduate postgraduate studies being conducted in English as the language of instruction.

Note: *This paper reflects ideas and issues presented by the author at the Arab Society for English language Studies (ASELS) Annual Conference Proceedings, held on 26-17th May 2016at Mohammed V University of Rabat, Morocco.
About the Author:

Dr. Joseph Mallia:
The author’s focus is on researching, developing, and delivering English for academic purposes courses particularly for non-Western university students. He is also a specialist in the organization, evaluation and implementation of language-related projects in the European Union and internationally. The author also actively develops specialized courses and pedagogy to help displaced immigrants integrate in recipient countries.

References
Abstract
Mobile Assisted Language Learning, known as MALL, is an approach to language learning that is enhanced through the use of a mobile device, such as mobile phones. The ubiquity of mobile phones has opened up more platforms for vocabulary learning, resulting in increased metacognition among learners; which can be seen as a predictor of successful vocabulary learning. This article describes the results of a study conducted on 21 undergraduates that analysed the most frequently used activities facilitating self-directed mobile-assisted vocabulary learning outside the classroom based on the pedagogical framework for mobile assisted language teaching and learning. The study also looked into the extent these activities enhanced the learners’ metacognition. Data was collected from video reports, interviews and an activity log, and analysed according to the pedagogical framework for mobile assisted language teaching (Kukulska-Hulme, Norris, & Donohue, 2015). The findings revealed that the most frequent activities utilized outside the classroom were (1) using online dictionaries to assist with understanding word meanings, (2) using video features on their phones for speaking and pronunciation practice of new words and (3) posting on social media as a means of practicing their newly acquired vocabulary in writing. The self-directed nature of these activities were reported by the participants as enhancing their metacognitive skills, resulting in increased learner confidence and deeper gains in vocabulary learning. The implications of these findings are discussed.

Keywords: affordances, metacognition, mobile-assisted language learning, vocabulary learning,

Introduction

Mobile assisted language learning (MALL), considered as the next generation of Computer assisted language learning (CALL), is a progression from a bulky desktop or laptop to a portable device offering the same technological conveniences (Looi, Seow, Zhang, Chen & Wong, 2010; Tai, 2012). The proliferation of smartphones and other handheld devices has further developed both the scope and range of learning activities as well as dimensions of learner autonomy (Benson, 2007), by giving learners greater responsibility and flexibility over the direction of their own learning.

The language learning process has benefited from this flexibility by enabling learners to take advantage of a "seamless learning space" (Chan et al., 2006, p. 5), where one can learn anywhere, anytime, using affordances that harness functional and meaningful properties of the environment (Gibson, 1977). Inherently, technological affordance provides the potential for increased metacognition which is positively associated with greater gains in learning by enabling learners to keep track of their learning progress, who now have more options of utilizing self-directed learning strategies.

This element of control over the learning process is optimally channeled by MALL in that the “learning space is thus augmented or expanded and becomes a means of looking outwards and making connections” (Kukulska-Hulme, 2012, p.2). Learning resources such as formal online learning portals and mobile vocabulary learning apps are now available 24/7, and these impromptu sites of learning create an ecology for learners to manipulate according to their learning requirements (Luckin et al., 2010). In short, learners can learn language seamlessly and at any time, sometimes without even having to be conscious of the learning process.

These current developments in MALL have given rise to new and exciting areas for research. However, studies that focuses on the intersect between mobile assisted language learning, vocabulary learning and metacognition is still in its developmental stage (Azevedo, 2005) and therefore warrants further exploration.

Furthermore, vocabulary learning, regardless of whether it is enabled by a mobile device or otherwise, is a life-long endeavor that extends beyond the classroom. In short, one is constantly having to learn new words as technology develops and impacts lives. Presently, there is still a lack of research that involves a qualitative inquiry into how learners engage with their mobile devices independently for vocabulary learning. Current research focuses mostly on specific classroom activities and instructor designed apps, which may be beneficial in a language classroom; but what happens when the semester is over? In other words, how do learners engage in vocabulary learning without a classroom, language instructor, and formal syllabus; using their mobile phone? How are metacognitive processes affected when using the mobile phone in managing one’s learning? This paper addresses these questions.

Vocabulary Learning and MALL

Vocabulary learning is a cognitive process that involves creating an understanding of words in both form and meaning. Knowing a word means having knowledge of collocations, connotations, and grammatical forms (Nation, 2006). Building a strong vocabulary knowledge is
critical to effective reading comprehension, and the earliest notion of vocabulary knowledge begins with what Richards (1976) posits as being the 7 aspects of knowing a word, which are “syntactic behavior, associations, semantic value, different meanings, underlying form and derivations” (in Shen, 2008, p.136). Vocabulary knowledge is also seen by Goulden, Nation and Read (1990) as having receptive and productive properties, which incorporates form, grammatical pattern, meaning, function, and relation with other words. Formal activities for learning vocabulary often featured these elements to ensure that learners could use new words effectively and appropriately.

When mobile phones became ubiquitous, they were introduced in classroom activities for language learning. By harnessing the affordances within the smartphone, learners were able to pitch the learning processes and manage content according to their own levels, temporal availability, and convenience, resulting in a more adaptable learning space. Mobile devices can produce unique educational affordances in that they provide “portability, social interactivity, context sensitivity, connectivity, and individuality” (Klopfer, Squire & Jenkins, 2002, p. 95). Additionally, the smartphone enables the learner to engage in more meaningful learning processes, whereby these affordances can function specifically as tools for “multimedia-access, connectivity, capture, and as a representational and analytical tool” (Churchill, Fox & King, 2012, p.252). Thus, the learner is able to utilise the device in any way that is convenient and beneficial to engage more meaningfully and independently in the learning process.

The earliest application of mobile-assisted language learning was in vocabulary learning (Stockwell, 2010). Researchers took full advantage of the existing on-campus infrastructural conveniences that enabled language instructors to update and access materials to distribute to students, as well as keeping records for tracking students’ work. Earlier studies were conducted within classroom settings and were primarily teacher-centered, in that the learning activities or modules were designed by the instructor. Thus, this initial stage of exploring the application of mobile technology in vocabulary learning was top-down, with the learner not being given the autonomy for choosing what and how to learn. These earlier studies were experimental in nature and activity-based, usually building upon the concept of flashcards to augment knowledge structures (Browne & Culligan, 2008), as well as viewing videos describing idioms (Thornton & Houser, 2005) to aid in the contextual understanding of vocabulary. Chen, Hsieh, and Kinshuk (2008), who examined the role of short-term memory when acquiring meanings of newly learned words, found evidence that graphic-annotations of word meanings were of some benefit to learners with lower verbal ability. In short, vocabulary enrichment activities involving the mobile phone in its earlier incarnations were little more than modified pen-and-paper activities that hinged on the novelty effect of having a new toy to experiment with. Nevertheless, positive reactions to this new mode of learning were reported (Stockwell, 2010; Kukulska-Hulme, 2012).

There were also studies that focused on learner-directed learning. These studies were the antithesis of a structured approach, in that the researchers attempted to harness what was already available on the mobile phone (such as email or browsing) to explore the potential of the mobile phone as a learning device. For instance, studies such as that of Kiernan and Aizawa (2004) studied how sending emails “could assist in teaching targeted structures” (in Stockwell, 2010, p.95), Taylor and Gitzaki (2003) studied using the browser functions to conduct Internet searches, while
Levy and Kennedy (2005) looked into sending notifications through SMS. However, some teething issues were reported with these types of activities. Stockwell (2010), for example, who looked into how learners tried to complete listening-based vocabulary activities, found that despite positive attitudes towards mobile phone technology, the momentum for use dropped as the study wore on, with students citing issues such as “cost, screen size, and inconvenient keypad” as reasons. Thus, once the learners were outside the classroom sustaining the use of the smartphone became a bigger challenge.

When Android launched in 2008, technology caught up with the demands of users and some of these issues became irrelevant. After the launch of iPhones (in 2007) and further expansions of Android platforms, the direction of MALL took on a different, more exciting turn. With the Internet now ubiquitous, and vocabulary and language learning apps more available; learners had greater flexibility and options than ever before. Although recent studies have tracked mobile phone usage outside the classroom to study emerging patterns (Stockwell, 2013), there is still a lack of qualitative research that studies how learners “engage in mobile learning outside the classroom” (Stockwell, 2013, p.118), without having to depend on the use of specially designed apps, which provides justification for the current study.

**MALL, Vocabulary Learning and Metacognition**

Cognitive and metacognitive processes are the building blocks of vocabulary learning. Cognition refers to the “mental process by which external or internal input is transformed, reduced, elaborated, stored, recovered, and used”, and incorporates “perception, attention, memory coding, retention and recall, decision-making, reasoning, problem-solving, imaging, planning, and executing” (Neisser, 1967, as cited in Pawlik et al., 2006, p.3), while metacognition can be seen as the act of thinking about thinking; and refers to “the knowledge about and regulation of one’s cognitive activities in learning processes” (Flavell, 1979, as cited in Veenman et al., 2006, p.3). It could be seen that in the active process of learning vocabulary, metacognition seems to be embedded within the cognitive process itself.

Cognition and metacognition interplay during self-directed tasks such as incidental vocabulary learning, which is the act of learning vocabulary that is not limited to the classroom, but which expands beyond it. Incidental learning is learning that progresses organically, driven by the learner and often takes place in informal yet input-rich environments, such as by watching a movie or short video in the target language, and is defined by Schmidt as “learning without the intention to learn” (1994, p.173). Incidental vocabulary learning can positively aid vocabulary development during reading by providing a context for the target word, thereby encouraging learners to guess the meanings from the context available (Huckin & Coady, 1999). When a target word or words frequently occur in the text, and there is sufficient contextual scaffolding for the reader to bridge gaps in understanding, there is increased potential for memory retention due to increased exposure (Reynolds, Wu, Liu, Kuo & Yeh, 2015).

Metacognition plays a strong role in influencing positive gains in vocabulary development, as indicated by current research (Ma, 2013; Ebner & Ehri 2013; Vandergrift, 2012; Gollek & Doherty, 2016). Vocabulary learning especially requires metacognition as there will be many instances when learners are confronted with a familiar word that suddenly seems to take on a new
meaning in a new context. For example, the word “bank” could have different meanings in “bank in the money” vs “the plane banked to the left”). In this case, the learner must implement Problem-solving and Evaluation strategies to enable more understanding of the meaning of the word. Other metacognitive strategies such as Planning (in the form of setting targets, making learning schedules, and identifying learning “buddies”), and also Monitoring; where they can both plan their learning as well as monitor their progress, such as by using instructor’s feedback during classroom learning, can be utilised for managing their learning progress. Traditionally, the point of reference for the learner would be the instructor, or a more advanced peer. However, now that there is mobile technology in hand, the potential sources for reference are increased manifold. We shall see how this influences the framework for learning in the next section.

Pedagogical Framework for Mobile Assisted Language Teaching and Learning

Current research on mobile learning is still in its developmental phase, where studies are mostly descriptive, with an emphasis on experimental studies (Viberg & Grönlund, 2013). At present, there is a lack of qualitative research that studies how both cognitive and metacognitive are impacted by mobile assisted language learning, which justifies the current study on how learners conduct their vocabulary learning using mobile phones outside the classroom, without the confines of an instructor, formal class schedules, and a syllabus. Additionally there is also a lack of theoretical and conceptual frameworks that capture the learning process of mobile assisted vocabulary development (Viberg & Grönlund, 2013), despite the existing frameworks that attempt to capture vocabulary acquisition from a pedagogical perspective.

There have been some attempts to capture the mobile learning process, such as the Theory of Mobile Learning, which views learning as a “cultural-historical activity system” featuring a semiotic system that facilitates activities through “cultural tools and signs” (Sharples, Taylor, & Vavoula, 2007, p. 11). This theory has contributed to an understanding of how technology is viewed from a user perspective, and underscores the interaction between man and machine to achieve a learning goal. Its limitation is that it was not operationalized clearly, perhaps partly due to the rapid developments of technology.

One pedagogical model that attempts to encapsulate both the teaching and learning process using a mobile centred approach is the one proposed by Kukulska-Hulme, Norris, & Donohue, (2015). Known as the pedagogical framework for mobile assisted language teaching and learning, it highlights how mobile devices can be optimally used for exploring new linguistic boundaries for learning, such as through:

…creating and sharing multimodal texts, communicating spontaneously with people anywhere in the world, capturing language use outside the classroom, analyzing their own language production and learning needs, constructing artefacts and sharing them with others, and finally providing evidence of progress gathered across a range of settings, in a variety of media.(Kukulska-Hulme, Norris, & Donohue, 2015, p. 7).

The framework espouses the use of the mobile device as a starting point to be used in the classroom, upon which the learner must then embark on self-directed activities to further consolidate the learning. It consists of 4 main concepts which serve as considerations when
selecting or designing a teaching/learning task, namely outcomes, inquiry, rehearsal and finally reflection. Outcomes relates to the extent the task can result in improved language proficiency, while Inquiry refers to how the task adapts itself to changing situations of use. Rehearsal focuses on how a learner can maximize the potential for practice, while Reflection entails self-awareness on the learning progress. This framework shall be used to capture and analyse the findings of the current study by investigating how these concepts are actualized during incidental learning.

**Methodology**

This phenomenological study was that of a single, instrumental case study (Stake, 1995), where the researchers focused on the issue of concern and then selected a bounded case to highlight this issue (Cresswell, 2013). We deemed the case study approach as being the most suitable for the purposes of this study as it investigated the most frequently used activities that assist vocabulary learning using a mobile device and delved into how the smartphone was utilized by the participants. It is also due to the fact that since the actions of the participants were not modified in any way, the context in which the study took place was also the focus of the study, and there was little that demarcated between the context and phenomenon being studied (Yin, 2003; as cited in Baxter &Jack, 2008).

**The participants**

Twenty one volunteers comprising nine female and twelve male freshmen agreed to record and report their use of the smartphone in their vocabulary learning over a 14-week period. They were all students enrolled in a language-based elective paper called, Critical Reading and Thinking, which featured an emphasis on the development of reading skills; and came from a range of majors - Actuarial Science, Applied Mathematics with Computing, Physics, Quantity Surveying, and Mechanical Engineering; all of which are 3-year degree programs. The course was aimed at teaching the learners how to read and respond critically to reading texts, and featured many vocabulary learning activities, as well as exposure to different rhetorical structures.

The respondents were selected based on their level of articulateness, their ability to express their opinions clearly and to provide rich descriptions of their activities and experiences, as well as being able to engage in learning activities independently. This was crucial as their responses would serve as the primary source of data for the study and a rich description would provide for better analysis.

The participants were briefed on the objectives of the study and were given free rein to engage in and explore their use of their smartphone in vocabulary learning. They were asked to pay attention to not only how they used the smartphone in vocabulary learning, but also how they used it when managing their learning. A summary of the participants’ details are presented below.
Table 1
Participants’ details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actuarial Science</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Mathematics with Computing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantity Surveying</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Design & Data Collection

The participants were instructed to record and report not only the activities related to vocabulary learning, but also how this affected their metacognitive processes. They were instructed to record their thoughts in their smartphone in the form of video reports to enable the immediate capture of experiences and to keep the report data ‘fresh’. These video reports were later transcribed, and then analyzed for emerging themes. They were also expected to update an Activity Log with a description of their most frequent activities.

Upon completion of the project, the learners submitted their video data and completed Activity Logs to the researchers for analysis. The following questions were used as a guide for the data analysis.

1. What are the sites most frequently visited when using the smartphone for vocabulary learning outside the classroom?
2. Do learners prefer to guess meanings of words or refer to an online dictionary instead?
3. What are the features in the smartphone that are most frequently used during vocabulary learning?
4. How do learners use their smartphones when practicing new words?
5. How do learners use their smartphones when planning and monitoring vocabulary learning?
6. How do learners use their smartphone when gauging their progress in vocabulary learning?

Findings

A total of 16 hours of data from the video reports submitted by the participants, together with data from their Activity Log were collected and then analysed for recurring themes. For this study we have decided to utilize the framework by Kukulska-Hulme, Norris, & Donohue (2015) for analyzing the findings as it adequately captures the domains covered.

The following table lays out the categories of findings, mapped against Kukulska-Hulme, Norris and Donohue’s pedagogical framework for mobile assisted language teaching and learning (2015). Although the framework covers both the teaching and learning aspects of MALL, this table shall focus on the vocabulary learning aspects as described and reported by the participants,
as the emphasis of the current study is self-directed mobile-assisted vocabulary learning outside the classroom.

Table 2  
*Categories of findings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INQUIRY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the activity relate to ever changing contexts of language use?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessing reference sites, eg: online dictionaries, online thesauruses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessing relevant reference sources related to topics studied in other classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REHEARSAL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the activity make the most of circumstances and resources to enable more practice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog posts, Facebook newsfeed updates and comments, and participation in online forums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet access, capture tool, video function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REFLECTION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the activity design ensure reflection on learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning, monitoring, problem-solving and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OUTCOMES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the activity lead to improved language proficiency and other outcomes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing updates on learning portals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog posts, Facebook newsfeed updates and comments, and participation in online forums</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in the table above, the participants reported using their smartphone for learning language and vocabulary in various ways. The following section presents a deeper analysis of the findings according to each research question.

RQ 1: *What are the sites most frequently visited by learners when using the smartphone for vocabulary learning outside the classroom?*

The participants reported that the sites that they most frequently visited for vocabulary learning were online dictionary sites, such as [www.oxfordonline.com](http://www.oxfordonline.com), as they were felt to be the most useful sites for looking up words. They found these sites easy to access, convenient to use, and useful for learning not only new words, but also new meanings of words that they already knew. They felt that learning the antonyms and synonyms of words was more effective through these sites, as these items were placed side-by-side on the page, or linked. The same is true when it came to learning about meanings of idiomatic expressions. The participants reported that content in online dictionaries is more updated than that in regular dictionaries, and since online dictionaries are more convenient to use, accessible, and less cumbersome, this resulted in more frequent use. In other
words, this increased interaction with the online dictionary resulted in a greater volume of newly learned words.

*Online dictionaries are...very convenient for me to use. I can also learn more words and meaning (sic)...it’s faster and I can understand better because...I don’t forget.*

*Participant A, 22 (Physics major)*

*I like to find out the opposite meaning...I mean, antonym! Yes antonym...also I check for the synonym too, in case I read [come across] that word again later...in different form...(sic)...I think it’s good to learn more meanings for the same word...very useful in writing...you can explain better...*

*Participant B, 21 (Actuarial Science major)*

**RQ 2: Do learners prefer to guess meanings of words or refer to an online dictionary instead?**

When asked about contextual guessing for understanding meaning, the participants’ response was unequivocal – guessing the meaning of words was no longer a popular strategy. This was also the finding of Supian (2012), who reported that guessing is no longer seen as a favoured vocabulary learning strategy use due to its instability and Frankenberg-Garcia (2011) and Dziemianko, (2010), who found that learners no longer relied on guessing from contextual cues to ‘figure out’ the meaning of a word as the dictionary in their mobile phone, or online dictionaries, can provide the answer within seconds. Guessing was now seen as risky, and “this kind of risk-taking can be counter-effective when applied wrongly” (Doczi, 2011, p. 34). When students rely on inferences based on word form associates rather than actual cues from the text, the outcome is incorrect word-meaning determination (Bensoussan & Laufer, 1984). In short, learners preferred to be *decidedly certain* rather than take the risk of being *potentially wrong*.

*I feel...very frust (sic) because I spend so much time trying to look for clues...like the lecturer said...for the meaning of the word (sic)...and then I find that I still cannot understand the word, and now I cannot understand the passage also! It make (sic) me want to give up...also sometimes when I try to guess I cannot because I got (sic) the context also wrong, so now everything [is] wrong also!*

*Participant C, 21 (Financial Mathematics major)*

*I feel it’s a waste of my time to be guessing...I have been wrong so many times that now I (am) scared...so I might as well refer to online dictionaries so that I don’t waste time.*

*Participant B, 21 (Actuarial Science major)*

**RQ3 : What are the features in the smartphone that are most frequently used during vocabulary learning?**

The participants reported using the Internet most frequently to access online dictionaries; read short articles on the way home on the train, bus, or car; access virtual learning portals such as weble (web-based learning environment) to download lecture notes, additional reading materials, and tutorial worksheets; and also access announcements and information uploaded by the
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instructor. It was also used as a capture tool to record anything that can be considered of value to the participants (such as notes on the whiteboard), and to record the students’ practice for presentations.

Normally I use the phone...to download all my notes so that I can read ahead. Then I can print my materials at home. Also, I download tutorial worksheets...it is easier...however I find that referring to tutorial worksheets can be a problem if I have low battery. The phone screen will switch to save mode...so I need to remember to bring my power bank!

Participant C, 21 (Applied Mathematics with Computing major)

[I] got use Internet access (sic) a lot...I use it to refer to wble and the online dictionary..

Participant D, 22 (Actuarial Science major)

For myself I use my phone for reading articles on the train home...to get to my house usually take (sic) about 1 hour so I use that time to read..

Participant E, 22 (Financial Mathematics major)

I use the smartphone for capturing notes on the whiteboard...this way I won’t lose them so it is easy to keep and store.

Participant F, 22 (Financial Mathematics major)

My lecturer recommended using the phone to practise and prepare for oral presentation...so I tried it...I record my presentation at home so that I can check my pronunciation...if got correct or not...clear or not...like that ..(sic)

Participant G, 22 (Actuarial Science major)

RQ 4: How do learners use their smartphone when practicing newly learned words?
The participants reported using the video feature on their smartphone to record their presentation practice to prepare for their oral presentations. This was to ensure that newly learned words were correctly pronounced. Prior to that, they reported clicking on the speaker icon available on online dictionaries to check for the correct pronunciation of a word. They then used that as a model for their own pronunciation practice.

This gave the participants more confidence that they were pronouncing the words correctly. Weaker learners reported feeling a lack of confidence in speaking, and the fact that whenever they were laughed at, or scolded for mispronunciation in the past, that experience was often hurtful and embarrassing. These negative experiences resulted in their being afraid to try and speak in public. However, once they were able to model the correct pronunciation, they reported that they were more willing to try out new words and phrases. In short, they reported increased feelings of motivation to try out words and phrases in both formal activities in class, and informal activities such as discussions with friends and family members.

The participants also reported that they used these new words in their writing. They had their own Facebook accounts, and they were encouraged to respond to newsfeed updates, using
their newly learned words. Some of them responded that they were able to add new friends from foreign countries, as they were more confident now in their writing abilities. A few participants even reported that they received feedback on their new ‘bombastic’ language!

Apart from Facebook, they were also encouraged to write comments on articles written in online news portals or blogs related to subjects of interest. They reported trying as much as possible to write in complete and grammatical sentences to avoid misunderstanding. The range of sites visited varied from cooking blogs to news portals to videogame reviews. The participants reported uploading their comments to give feedback, and reported feeling very happy when other users ‘green arrowed’ or ‘liked’ their comments.

I learn new words but then I don’t know how to pronounce…so I click on the speaker icon to listen…get UK and American pronunciation…so I try both. I make sure that I try and use the words in sentences with my girlfriend…she also get (sic) to learn new words…I am more confident in my pronunciation now as compared to before...

Participant D, 22 (Actuarial Science major)

It is useful for practice…like when I got (sic) oral presentation due…can get very stress (sic)...when I stress (sic) I tend to be very nervous…then my pronunciation also can become wrong like that…(sic)...my lecturer suggested I practice and record myself…so I tried…now I see what I need to improve..

Participant B, 22 (Quantity Surveying major)

My Facebook has been buzzing with newsfeed since I started participating in this study…I have been uploading comments on issues that I post….some of my friends also post comments. Sometimes we even argue about issues. II can structure my argument better now…got comment (sic) the other day…wahh, your English now so bombastic! What happened to you!...haha I felt kind of happy…that my writing has improved a bit....

Participant C, 21 (Applied Mathematics with Computing major)

RQ 5 : How do learners use their smartphone when planning and monitoring vocabulary learning?
The participants reported using the smartphone features such as the calendar for organizing their schedules. According to the data gleaned from the interviews, MALL has resulted in new affordances that enable greater learner autonomy, with increased flexibility and choices for planning and managing learning. More conveniences for managing time and communication have been incorporated into the smartphone standard features, and participants reported using Gantt charts and project timelines to assist them in their formal learning. Some participants also reported using tools for planning—scheduling meetings and calendar appointments with pre-set alarm reminders on deadlines that are synced with those of other members. However, these features were mainly utilised in formal learning tasks, especially in managing group assignments for other courses that semester.

The participants in this study did not use the above features for managing their learning of vocabulary as they felt that they would ‘get in the way’ of actual learning. They reported that they
did not see the sense in spending time to keep a record of the management of their learning; instead, they preferred to incorporate their incidental vocabulary learning with other cognitive learning tasks, such as reading.

No, I don’t keep track of the learning process...waste of time, right? Afterall, we have other things to do...so much (sic) of assignments...so because of that I am too busy..

Participant B, 22 (Quantity Surveying major)

If we want to keep track like that...it is difficult because we have no time to do so...

Participant D, 22 (Actuarial Science major)

RQ 6: How do learners use their smartphone when gauging their progress in vocabulary learning?

The participants reported that they were able to gauge their development by participating in language activities like chats and forums, and receiving feedback on their vocabulary use. They also reported using messaging services, video uploads, and live feedback sessions in online message boards. When the participants wished to have group chats, they used the Whatssap and Viber messaging services to coordinate their discussions. An added feature to Whatssap is that users can upload videos and captured photos to share with others. Some of the participants found this to be a particularly enjoyable activity as their friends could post comments featuring newly-learned adjectives – for example, “I watched a movie with my girlfriend (last weekend) ... I liked it but she found it pedantic”. The participants contributed to this exercise organically and on their own volition, so there was more interest in the discussion. Feedback was given freely and the participants were able to gauge their vocabulary learning based on their contribution and involvement in the chats with their peers.

Gaining individual feedback from instructors has also been positively impacted by MALL. The participants responded that getting feedback from their instructor is important for their development; however, they realised that most instructors faced time and logistical constraints and would not be able to provide feedback to every student. The solution to this problem, as mutually agreed upon by both instructor and student, was the use of open-review using peer-assessment of writing. Peer-assessment has a lot of potential for monitoring vocabulary learning through collaborative feedback, resulting in greater interaction and sharing among students regarding learning performance. It also has the potential for more focused cognitive engagement; because since the work is to be shared, viewed, and critiqued, students try harder to write well. This could be done formally in class, or it could be done informally as a group.

Unfortunately, only two participants reported doing this for informal learning. The others reported doing so only when they wanted to discuss their group assignments. The two participants who used peer-assessment were taking part in a writing competition; and thus it did not count as part of their formal learning process. The technological demands were simple; they simply uploaded a captured photograph of what they had written on WhatsApp and requested for
comments and feedback from their peers. Their friends gave feedback, although most of it was hollow; for example, “It looks ok.”

*WhatsApp is very easy to use...and since we live quite far from each other, group discussions we can do ... (sic) using Whatssap.*

*Participant F, 22 (Financial Mathematics major)*

*Yes, we tried using Whatssap...to prepare for the writing competition...we managed to get some friends to critique and give feedback...but not all the feedback was helpful...or useful.*

*Participant C, 21 (Applied Mathematics with Computing major)*

The participants who attempted to provide peer feedback reported that while it was a useful technique in evaluating performance, they still preferred validation from an instructor-led assessment. However, messaging services could still be of use for uploading and sharing relevant videos, brainstorming for ideas, and creating shared lists that can be updated and critiqued in real time.

**Discussion**

These findings provide evidence demonstrating the link between learner-driven practices/activities for vocabulary development and increased metacognition, suggesting that the use of the smartphone has positively impacted the learning process, consistent with Kukulska-Hulme’s pedagogical framework for mobile assisted language teaching and learning. While the process of looking up words in a dictionary still remains the same, the smartphone has now made it more convenient, quick, and productive since word meanings are presented within seconds; and with links to additional information such as synonyms, antonyms and corresponding parts of speech that enables contextualized vocabulary learning. This provides deeper learning gains in vocabulary knowledge and supports the *Inquiry* phase of the framework.

Furthermore, there is also the spillover effect—because using an online dictionary is so convenient, it results in increased engagement and frequency of use, with positive outcomes for vocabulary learning. These findings are similar to those of other studies, such as Doroszewska and Lew’s (2009), who found that high retention rates were reported among their participants due to “the engagement value … and the flexibility to look up words in the pattern that suits the individual preferences of the student” (p. 252), and also that of Dalton and Grisham (2011), Levy (2009), Loucky (2005), and Prichard (2008).

Furthermore, it can be seen that the vocabulary learning in this setting is more personalized to the learners’ interests, levels, and needs, rather than externally set by the instructor. This resulted in more depth of processing, especially in building and consolidating knowledge schemas of words and concepts to enable the effective comprehension of reading since the cognitive process of comprehension involves “lexical access to retrieve word meanings, memory retrieval to elaborate on the text, and forming connections to prior knowledge” (Moss et al, 2011, p. 675). Hence, it stands to reason that being exposed to different views on an issue reinforces existing knowledge schemas, thus improving memory retention (see Majerus et al., 2006; Leclercq et al., 2010).
The results also show that the learners had less tolerance for ambiguity when learning new vocabulary. When there is a possibility of misunderstanding a word, the participants reported that they were more confident of getting the correct answer right away by using online dictionaries, as opposed to taking the time to make ‘intelligent guesses’. Guessing is also viewed by these students as being fraught with risks, because, as Laufer, et al. (1998) have argued, without sufficient vocabulary size and knowledge, it is a fruitless activity that could result in more confusion. One participant highlighted that making inferences without an online dictionary was only resorted to “during examinations, when they (the invigilators) instruct us to switch off our phones”. Apparently, this is the only time that old-fashioned inference is used by these students.

This is a major departure from previous findings that indicated guessing as one of the most popular vocabulary learning strategies (Huang & Eslami, 2013). Indeed, in some English courses, guessing as a skill was even taught in class. Guessing was seen as plugging the gaps in the understanding of texts, and usually incorporated knowledge of “linguistics, strategies, and the world” (Nagy, 1995 as cited in Huang & Eslami, 2013, p.2). Oxford describes contextual guessing as the use of linguistic and non-linguistic clues; the former referring to semantic or syntactic knowledge while the latter referring to knowledge of “context, text structure, and general world knowledge” (Oxford, 1990; as cited in Huang & Eslami, 2013, p.2). It used to be that guessing from context “showed positive correlation with vocabulary size and general language proficiency” (Gu & Johnson, 1996, p. 667). However, this process had its inherent drawbacks, namely time and inconvenience. Another was the accuracy of the guess, in that a learner could very well have misinterpreted the context wrongly, or got the context right but the word meaning completely wrong. This usually resulted in slower reading and demotivated learners (Laufer et al., 1998).

A positive finding of this study is that the participants are fully harnessing the educational affordances provided by the smartphone. These affordances can perform functions for multimedia-access, connectivity, capture, and representational and analytical tools. Since most of them take the train to and from campus, that one-hour commute can be effectively utilized for incidental vocabulary learning. Even listening to the news or watching YouTube videos with English subtitles can be considered as exposure to new words. Thus, the smartphone has enabled increased cognitive engagement with activities that promote incidental vocabulary learning (Gikas et al., 2013; Kovacev et al., 2011; Wong et al. 2010; Kukulska-Hulme, 2006).

Another positive finding is that the respondents reported increased levels of engagement when they practised newly learned words and when they were exposed to a variety of activities that sustain the learning process, which is consistent with the Rehearsal phase of the framework. They reported that this increased frequency of use of newly learned words resulted in better retention, suggesting that working memory is given an added boost. This is important because working memory has been cited as being necessary when learning new rules in an L2 through its “involvement in the noticing and encoding of new information” (Mackey, Philp, Egi, Fujii, & Tatsumi, 2002; in Martin et al., 2012, p. 383). The practice of using the newly learned words in actual writing forms (ie., blog posts, Facebook newsfeeds and comments, and online forums), as well as informal presentations, has had a two-fold effect. Firstly, vocabulary is learned in context, with pronunciation models and example sentences, which increases confidence for the oral and written practice of the newly learned words. Next, the fact that the writing forms are not held in
the ‘safe’ confines of a classroom gives an added ‘real’ dimension to the practice element. There is a certain ‘danger’ or risk when posting feedback online, as some readers may find your writing confusing, or they may disagree with you outright and put you down in their reply with disparaging remarks. The fact that the participants were willing to attempt to use these newly learned words in real discussions online indicates increased confidence in their learning, and deeper processing in the consolidation of knowledge schemas. Overall, the participants who posted comments on news portals reported getting positive feedback to their ideas and comments, which further bolstered their motivation to learn new vocabulary which is consistent with both the Reflection and Outcomes phases of the framework.

Finally, the study also discovered that while the learners were happy to engage in and explore vocabulary learning activities, they were not as motivated to use it as a metacognitive tool for peer assessment, preferring instead to deal directly with instructors for feedback and suggestions for improvement. This is consistent with the notion of incidental vocabulary learning as the “learning of vocabulary as the by-product of any activity not explicitly geared to vocabulary learning” and is viewed differently from intentional vocabulary learning, which can be seen as “any activity geared at committing lexical information to memory” (Hulstijn 2001: 271, as cited in Rieder, 2003). Since peer assessment was not reportedly viewed as desirably as instructor feedback, this indicates that the potential for the smartphone to be used as a metacognitive device can still be explored further.

Limitations
This study has uncovered some limitations regarding the application of smartphones in vocabulary learning. Notably, while the participants reported being comfortable with the use of the smartphone (since it was their own property), they reported not being as comfortable with it compared to using a larger tablet device such as an iPad. This was due to the limitations of the physical attributes of the smartphones, such as small screen size and short battery life. Another frequent complaint was network speed and reliability—especially on campus, where there was more opportunity to engage in incidental vocabulary learning in between classes. Most reported having problematic keypads, particularly touchscreen keypads. Nevertheless, the participants were still able to utilise their smartphone for vocabulary learning, despite these hindrances.

Conclusion and implications
This study has yielded many interesting findings that enable us to gain a deeper understanding of the autodidactic process of mobile assisted language learning. The cognitive processes of incidental vocabulary learning has been positively impacted by harnessing the full potential of educational affordances. By having personal access to the Internet for reading and online dictionaries, they were able to increase their exposure to new words, concepts, ideas, different forms of expressions, and rhetorical structures. The structure of vocabulary learning was also impacted, in that learners checked for meanings of unfamiliar words immediately, and guessing as a strategy was no longer seen as a viable strategy for determining meanings of unknown words. The features on the smartphone such as video, and messaging services such as Whatssap have given new dimensions for learners to engage in collaborative feedback, paving the way for more opportunities to try out new words and develop confidence. The convenience of having a learning device in your pocket also made the learning process less burdensome, especially
when they were able to learn vocabulary through reading what they liked. However, this study found that the smartphone was not always fully utilised for the metacognitive processes of planning, monitoring and evaluating of performance of vocabulary learning.

The findings have several implications for language learners and language instructors. Firstly, this study has revealed that autodidactic language learning through mobile technology has much potential, and that the smartphone offers affordances for increased metacognition; thus, learners should fully embrace and explore more avenues for learning. Instructors should also be aware of this, and perhaps incorporate a sharing session where everyone gets to share their weekend activities with the class, with an added emphasis on what was learnt that weekend. Vocabulary learning should be fun, exciting, challenging and rewarding. Perhaps it is time to throw out those word lists!

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About the Authors:
Dr. Ratnawati Mohd Asraf is a professor at the Kulliyyah of Education and Director of the Research Management Centre, International Islamic University Malaysia. She has published in the areas of reading, literacy education, and second and foreign language learning and teaching.

Dr. Nadya Supian (PhD) is an Assistant Professor with the Faculty of Creative Industries in Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman. She established the Centre for Modern Languages and Literature and currently serves as the Chairperson. Her research interests include metacognition in language learning, mobile assisted language learning, vocabulary acquisition, educational psychology and gamification in language learning.

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Preparing Preparatory Year English Language Learners for Professional Colleges: An Evaluation of Current Placement System

Muhammad Sabboor Hussain  
Head, English Language Research Team, PYP  
Qassim University, Saudi Arabia

Khaled Besher Albesher  
Dean, Deanship of Educational Services  
Qassim University, Saudi Arabia

Aisha Farid  
English Language Research Team, PYP  
Member, Qassim University, Saudi Arabia

Abstract  
The present study aims to analyze the pros and cons of both the existing system (English for General Purposes for one year and English for Specific Purposes for six months) and the proposed one (both ESP and EGP for one year) in Preparatory Year Programme (PYP) in Qassim University. It starts with an assumption that if the students are placed on the medical or science track in level-1 instead of level-2, they can be better prepared for the professional colleges after studying ESP for a full year. The study uses quantitative research approach by analyzing the data statistically in a comprehensive way. The complete record of high school grades, Pre-PYP tests and the first semester results of 615 PYP students in the main branch have been thoroughly studied. Likewise, 50 medical male, 50 medical female, 50 science male and 50 science female students have been surveyed on the 5-point Likert scale with 10-items quantitative tool. Major finding is that existing system of placing the students on medical and science tracks in the 2nd semester is better as the students get refined and polished due to the competition and hard work in the 1st semester of PYP. They remain both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated that despite their low performance on the high school exams, aptitude test and entry test, they still have another chance of being placed on the medical track (the first choice of majority of the students). The study, nevertheless, recommends reforms in the existing system without changing it drastically.

Keywords: EGP, ESP, language learners, medical track, preparatory year programme, professional colleges, science track

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Preparatory Year Programme in Saudi Arabia plays a vital role in the academic and professional lives of students. It bridges the glaring gap between the school education and professional colleges’ scheme of study. To make the programme dynamic, there is a need to carry out the exploratory research study with the objective of bringing reforms to prepare the Preparatory Year Programme (PYP) students better for the professional colleges in particular and professional lives later in general. In Qassim University, Saudi Arabia, the students are admitted to PYP on the basis of their high school grades and their scores on two tests (aptitude test, entry exam). The marks allocated for their performance on these measures are: 30 marks for school grades, 30 marks for the achievement test, and 40 marks for the general aptitude test.

PYP is divided into two semesters. In Level-1 (the first six months / first semester), the students are made to study general subjects like English for General Purposes (EGP), Statistics, Physics, Computer Science Course (CSC) and Thinking Skills. Their performance on formative and summative assessments in level-1 along with their earlier grades and performances on tests are taken into account to decide for their future field of study. The students with overall better grades are allowed to follow the medical scheme of study (which ensures their admission in the professional medical colleges after the successful completion of PYP), and the rest of the students have to follow the science track. Thereafter, they are taught English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in their respective field (medical and science tracks) only in the second semester—two classes per week with a focus on the technical terms and reading skills.

The admission to the medical colleges is limited to a specific number of seats for different branches. For example, the main branch (the case study for the present research) has 80 seats for the boys, 40 for the girls and 25 for dentistry in the medical field. The students who are selected for the medical track have the choice of entering into five fields later: Medicine, Dentistry, Applied Medical Science, Pharmacy and Nursing. The students who do not qualify for the medical fields have to follow the science track that offers the options of Engineering, Architecture and Computer Science Course (CSC).

The existing system of students’ placement on the medical and science tracks in PYP which allows students to study EGP for a year and ESP for six months has been functioning for last three years. In these initial years, many changes have been suggested by all the stakeholders. A major argument emerging now is that the six months training of ESP given to the students in PYP for their higher studies in the professional colleges is insufficient. The proposition is that the students may be allowed to enter in PYP medical and science tracks after they have been scrutinized on three kinds of assessment (high school examinations, the achievement test, and the general aptitude test). These should be considered sufficient enough to decide about the students’ future professional training.

As per the newly emerging argument, making the high school grades and the two tests as the criteria, the destination of the students’ entry into the medical and science fields should be decided since it may benefit them in many ways. This would lead to a full one year programme in PYP with focused study of ESP along with EGP on the medical and science tracks separately and equip the students with better skills required in the professional colleges thereafter. The
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A proposed innovation in the existing system may make the medical and science students clear-headed right from the beginning of the PYP session. However, it may snatch from such students the chance to improve their grades and get admitted in the medical field. The students who desire to enter the medical field but have not been able to perform well on the earlier assessment may take the innovation as a barrier to their career building.

Therefore, the present study will analyze the pros and cons of both the existing system (EGP for one year and ESP for six months) and the proposed one (both ESP and EGP for one year) and give the recommendation in the favor of the one which is better and more suitable for the students studying in PYP.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The present system of students’ induction on the PYP medical and science tracks has its pluses and minuses. There are some advantages of the present system. First of all, the students who are generally naïve at the outset spend one semester and learn the lessons in maturity. Secondly, this gives a chance to those students who could not perform very well on the earlier three assessments, and they feel more motivated to learn. Thirdly, there is a strong sense of competition among the students in the current scenario to excel and enter into the medical, engineering, architecture, and CSC fields according to their choice.

However, there are some drawbacks too. A major drawback is that the students, who ultimately get a chance to follow the medical and science tracks, get only six months which is not a sufficient time period for them to get acquainted with the basic knowledge and be equipped with the skills required in the medical and engineering studies and the professions thereafter. Moreover, all the students in the first semester remain baffled and anxiety-ridden until their fate is decided. Therefore, there is a need to modify the system. The proposed system suggests that the high achievers and low achievers in the schools on the basis of their performance in the entry tests should be put on the medical and science tracks straightaway when they start their PYP. They should be offered subject specific training including ESP apart from EGP. There is a need to analyze both existing and proposed systems. The existing system focuses on mere EGP whereas proposed system advocates introduction of ESP right from the beginning.

The study at hand tries to address the problem by exploring as how to bring the students’ pre-PYP proficiency and performance at par with their 1st semester results so as to decide about their entry into medical and science tracks right from the beginning of their PYP journey.

1.3 Research Questions

A. What are the implications and impact of the existing system (general subjects in the 1st semester and specific field based subjects in the 2nd one) of students’ induction on the medical and science tracks in PYP in Saudi Arabia?

B. What are the possible implications of the proposed system (specific field based subjects right from the beginning of the programme) of students’ induction on the medical and science tracks in PYP in Saudi Arabia?

C. Which system of students’ induction on the medical and science tracks in PYP is better?
2. Review of Literature

Assessment for placement is an important but one of the most complex parts of any educational system. Sullivan and Nielsen (2009) point out that “the scholarship about assessment for placement is extensive and notoriously ambiguous” (p-4). Policy makers and educationists remain divided in their opinions on how to build up bridges between the school and college/university education. Many of them favor the remedial courses before the students are admitted to colleges. Vandal (2014) opines that “evidence is mounting that the vast majority of students who are currently placed into prerequisite remedial education could be successful in gateway college-level courses if they receive additional academic support as a co-requisite” (p-1). Hence, there is dire need to reevaluate the current system of students’ induction on medical/engineering tracks in PYP in Saudi Arabia in general and Qassim University in particular. Vandal (2014) further elaborates this point:

Recent research on college placement exams reveals that the exams are unreliable at predicting college success and adding multiple measures like high school GPA only marginally improves predictability. Because of the exams’ poor predictability, there is reason to believe that using assessments to place students into stand-alone remedial education is worse than placing all students into gateway courses (p-1).

This point clearly goes in favour of introducing general subjects first for the sake of orientation and mind making and the specialized subjects later when the gap between the school education and professional colleges’ demands has been bridged considerably. However, there is confusion as where to draw the line—whom to offer pre-requisite and whom to offer co-requisite courses—since the traditional remediation has generated mixed responses (Bailey, 2009; Bettinger & Long, 2005, 2009; Calcagno & Long, 2008; Dadgar, 2012; Hodara, 2012; Martorell & McFarlin, 2011; Scott-Clayton & Rodriguez, 2012).

The current practice at Qassim University is that students get the entry into PYP based on their school grades and two tests conducted by the ministry of education. They spend one semester in PYP as a pre-requisite and 2nd semester as a co-requisite where they are bifurcated into Medical and Engineering/Computer/Architecture tracks based on their performance in the 1st semester. If both notions of pre-requisite and co-requisite are to be taken along, perhaps the best solution is to add another additional co-requisite semester for the students who have been chosen into Medical/Engineering tracks based on their performance in the pre-requisite 1st semester of PYP. Vandal (2014) expresses his candid view that “reforms to assessment and placement practices alone will not dramatically improve college success rates. Instead, assessment and placement should support a fundamental redesign of the system that provides effective support to academically underprepared students while they are enrolled in gateway college—level courses” (p-2). There are serious concerns shown for the developmental students who are at the cut off score of college readiness (Bailey, Smith, & Jenkins, 2015, p-135). A successful co-requisite model is the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) at the Community College of Baltimore Country (Cho, Kopko, Jenkins, & Jaggars, 2012).

While the traditional pre-requisite system in PYP, Qassim University can work as WARM UP stage for the students, adding one co-requisite semester can address the
dissatisfaction of the students that just six months of study of the specialized subjects is insufficient for them to exist effectively and smoothly in their professional colleges.

The present system for induction in PYP at Qassim University gives due credit to the high school grades in placing the students on Medical / Science tracks but Vandal (2014) points out that,

the expectation of those adding high school GPA and other data into placement decisions is that multiple measures will improve colleges’ ability to identify students who can succeed in gateway college-level courses. Unfortunately, the evidence does not support this approach (p. 2).

In other words, the rationale behind using the high school grades and other data for placing the students on Medical / Science tracks is not valid to such an extent that it may not be challenged or modified. There are some other crucial factors which must be kept in view before making final decisions.

PYP in Saudi universities is a developmental education process and a gateway college level course that prepares the students for the college level study. Creating a placement range that results in the induction of students into PYP allows colleges to assess the readiness of students for college-level content and it is hoped to help in designing appropriate academic support for students who need it. The present study is a step forward in this direction as it intends to enlighten the stakeholders involved to have the clear vision in this regard and make better decisions.

3. Research Methodology

This study compares the existing system (introduction of ESP in the 2nd semester) and proposed system (introduction of ESP from the beginning) of students’ placement in PYP on medical and science tracks in Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. The complete record of high school grades, Pre-PYP and 1st semester results of 615 students has been thoroughly studied. Likewise, 50 medical male, 50 medical female, 50 science male and 50 science female students have been surveyed on the 5-point Likert scale. The comparative analysis of male and female, and science and medical students has been presented through bar charts. The high school record and the entry tests results of all the students in the main branch have been taken into account. The performance of the students in high school examination, general aptitude and achievement tests along with their performance in the 1st semester in PYP has been analyzed.

Two working hypotheses emerged as a result: H1: Existing system of induction of the students on medical and science tracks in the 2nd semester is better as the students get refined and polished due to the competition and hard work in the 1st semester of PYP, and H2: Based on the high school grades and the entry test scores, the students should be inducted on the medical and science tracks right from the beginning of their PYP so that they are better prepared for the professional colleges thereafter. The comparative statistical analysis reveals that both hypotheses have their pros and cons.
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The research is basically quantitative and deals with the results of the subjects / students in the Pre-PYP tests i.e. the Achievement Test (IKHTABAR AL TEHSILI), and the General Aptitude Test (IKHTABAR AL QUDRAT), and their results in the PYP level-1 exams. A detailed analysis of the results and their comparison has been carried out with an intention of reaching the conclusion as to whether the results in Pre-PYP exams alone are sufficient enough in providing an insight into the students’ capabilities of doing well in Medical track or Science track. Moreover, in order to validate the results, a 12-items survey designed on the five-items Likert scale has been conducted to get the opinion of PYP students about the existing induction and placement system. The survey items address various themes in the following fashion:

- The need for a remedial course before studying specialized courses like ESP: the survey item numbers 1, 2 & 3.
- The reflection on the idea of criteria for admission on medical and engineering tracks: the survey item numbers 4, 5 & 6.
- Support for the inclusion of specialized subjects in Level-1: the survey item-7 and 8.
- Endorsement to segregation of medicine and engineering: the survey item-9 and 10.
- Feedback for changes in syllabi and subjects: the survey item numbers-11 and 12.

In total, 300 students from the current session were contacted for this purpose. However, there were 200 respondents whose survey sheets were complete and thus considered for the research. 50 of these students were males (medical), 50 females (medical), 50 males (engineering) and 50 females (engineering). In order to ensure the valid responses, we translated all difficult words in the given statements in Arabic (students’ mother tongue) in the survey.

The sample population comprised of 615 students who graduated from PYP in 2015 (inducted in PYP in January 2015, placed in medical and science tracks in August 2015, on the basis of their performance in the achievement test, and the general aptitude test, and their results in the PYP level-1 exams). These 615 students included 423 girls and 192 boys.

4. Data Analysis

The data was analyzed taking 615 students into account whose complete record of high school grades, pre-PYP tests and the 1st semester PYP results was available. Following is the table showing the details of the sample population for the study at hand:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Medical track</th>
<th>Science track</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>615</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the first step, the sample students’ pre-PYP results were studied and the average results were found for both boys and girls. These results were compared with their results in level-1 exams of PYP. Following is the comparative Pre-PYP and PYP 1st semester averages of all the boys and girls including the medical and science track students in the current session.
Table 2  Averages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Medical track</th>
<th></th>
<th>Science track</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-PYP Result</td>
<td>PYP Level-1 Result</td>
<td>Pre-PYP Result</td>
<td>PYP Level-1 Result</td>
<td>Pre-PYP Result</td>
<td>PYP Level-1 Result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>83.9</td>
<td>76.46</td>
<td>81.69</td>
<td>67.95</td>
<td>82.84</td>
<td>72.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>84.41</td>
<td>77.56</td>
<td>84.42</td>
<td>72.86</td>
<td>84.41</td>
<td>76.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84.12</td>
<td>76.93</td>
<td>82.02</td>
<td>68.47</td>
<td>83.33</td>
<td>73.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows that the average result of the students in pre-PYP assessment is 83.33% but it decreased to 73.74% in level-1 exams. The boys inducted in level-1 of PYP had the average of 82.84% marks whereas the average for the girls inducted in level-1 of PYP was 84.41%. However, their results in level-1 exams show a decline in their performance – boys with the average of 72.35% and girls with the average of 76.79%. This difference may be due to various factors including the level of difficulty in content and exams, the difference in marking exams which requires another research study. However, for the present research purpose, we consider the fact obvious from the table that the students getting higher accumulative averages have been placed on the medical track whereas the students with lower accumulative averages have been placed on the science track. An interesting observation made in this regard is the reading in the row for the results of girls. The girls placed on the medical track secured an average of 84.41 in pre-PYP exams and the ones placed on the science track had a higher average 84.42. However, they got place on their relevant tracks mainly due to the difference in their PYP level-1 results. This indicates that even if a student has not been able to score very high in his / her pre-PYP exams, he / she still has a chance to work hard and get higher score in PYP level-1 exams and is able to go to the medical field. Thus, it can be concluded that the students need to be trained in the PYP 1st semester as per the current practice. The survey results on the 12-items questionnaire will further throw some light in this regard.

As the second step, we analyzed the sample students’ results in pre-PYP exams in detail. In the following pie-chart, the students have been grouped on the basis of the percentages of their results: 70%–74%, 75%–79%, 80%–84%, 85%–89% and above 90%. The chart reflects that the majority of the students (i.e. 338) got 80%–84%; whereas 160 students secured 85%–89% and 30 students got above 90%.

![Figure 1 - Pre-PYP Results Pie Chart](image-url)
Figure 1 gives some guidelines to bring reforms in PYP students’ placement in a logical way. It suggests that 30 students getting above 90% marks may be directly inducted on the medical track right from the 1st semester of PYP. In the same way, 160 students getting above 85% marks can be put on the science track. In this way they would have almost a year to focus on their specialized subjects including ESP and be prepared better for their future professional studies. All the rest of the students can either be given a highly standardized placement test or they can be given a warm up training by offering them a pre-specialized PYP semester as per the current practice. Following figure also favours this scenario as the standard curve with scattered results gives space to implement the suggested innovations:

![Figure 2- Pre-PYP Results Standard Curve](image)

The curve of the students’ pre-PYP performance is quite close to the valid and reliable one. It does suggest that the students’ pre-PYP performance can be made a base for their induction on the medical or science tracks right from the 1st semester of PYP.

As the third step, we studied the sample students’ results in PYP level-1 exams closely. In the following figure, the pie chart shows the number of students grouped together on the basis of the percentages of their results in PYP level-1 exams.

![Figure 3- Level 1 Results Pie Chart](image)

Figure 3 clearly shows the reliability and validity of PYP 1st semester results. However, the scattered results of the students suggest that there is a mismatch between the students’ pre-PYP training in high schools and studies in PYP. It also points out the
importance of 1st semester general study for the students before starting their proper / specialized study including ESP in PYP. It clearly shows that the majority of the students who obtained above 80% marks in their pre-PYP exams have not been able to obtain that high percentage in their PYP level-1 exams. Therefore, it indicates that the students require this coaching and teaching in general subjects including EGP to reach the level at which they might get ready to study the specialized subjects including ESP in level-2 of PYP.

![Figure 4- Level-1 Results Standard Curve](image)

The standard curve for level-1 results of PYP students is quite reliable and acceptable. This clearly indicates that the present system of students’ placement has its own worth as it gives a chance to the students to work hard and get a place on the medical track, especially the ones who are really motivated to study on the medical track but due to some reasons were unable to score very high in the pre-PYP exam and therefore might not have been able to study the subjects of their choice if the induction had been on the basis of the pre-PYP exams results only.

However, if the fruits of both the existing system and the proposed one are to be reaped, the better idea is to introduce a pre-PYP semester for the students where students study subjects of general nature and then enter into PYP for the study of their specialized subjects including ESP so that they may have a longer span of training for their specialized area and are better prepared to meet the challenges in their future professional colleges.

Next, we compared the three situations: students’ pre-PYP results, their PYP level-1 results and their accumulative scores on both pre-PYP and PYP level-1 exams. The following bar chart shows this comparison:
Figure 5- Comparison of Existing System vs. Pre-PYP vs. Level-1 PYP Results

In figure 5, it can be observed quite clearly that level-1 results rationalize the existing system of students’ induction into PYP and their Pre-PYP results. The scattered results in level-1 grade the students into high-achievers, average-achievers and low achievers which in turn helps the decision makers in placing them in the professional colleges. In this way, the spirit of competition and the passion of working hard to excel are inculcated in the students. Such a spirit makes a programme dynamic and progressive. However, the problem persists that the students get less time to study specialized subjects like ESP– for six months only. That favours the argument that it is not a sufficient time period for preparing students for their future study in the professional colleges.

To gain further depths in understanding the issue at hand, a 12-statement survey with 5-items Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree) was administered at 200 students in the current session. 50 of these students were males (medical), 50 females (medical), 50 males (engineering) and 50 females (engineering). Their responses are presented as following:

Figure 6- Overall picture of all 200 responses from the students
The responses of the students to the survey items show that majority of the respondents consider the existing system of students’ induction in PYP and their placement on the medical track in level-2 of PYP good enough. Majority (more than 50%) believes that six months of training given to the students in PYP in Level-2 (2nd semester), for their higher studies in the professional colleges, is insufficient. However, their responses to many statements related to their earlier studies and the pre-PYP exams reflect their dissatisfaction with their earlier studies and pre-PYP performance measures due to many reasons. First of all, the students think that the existing practice develops them intellectually and makes them mature enough to study the specialized subjects in level-2 and later in their professional colleges. This kind of response raises questions about the students earlier school education. This indicates that the students think that their earlier school education was not good enough in terms of quality or time period to prepare them to study the specialized subjects. Therefore, they deem it necessary to study the general subjects like EGP in PYP before being able to focus on specialized subjects like ESP.

Secondly, the students clearly agree that the subjects they study in level-1 of PYP (EGP) are of great importance in preparing them to better understand the technical specialized subjects-based knowledge and skills, especially ESP, which they tend to study and acquire later in level-2 of PYP. This opens another area of research, i.e. what is missing in the curriculum these students study at school level and why so, since even after getting above 80% of marks in their high school exams, they still need to study EGP in PYP first to be able to focus on the technical knowledge and skills in ESP later.

Thirdly, there are many students who think the grades they obtained earlier are not good enough to enable them to go to the field of their choice, and therefore, they find level-1 of PYP as a chance to improve their grades and be able to get into the field of their choice— that is in most of the cases the medical track. However, almost 26% of the respondents chose the option of neutral to the relevant statement on the survey. They represent the group of students who are confused about the role of level-1 studies in improving their chances in their future progress in academic / professional life.

Finally, the majority of the respondents think that the pre-PYP test / assessment tools like the achievement test, the general aptitude Test and high school grades do not measure enough the students’ capability to go in medical / engineering fields. They still ask for more improvement in their abilities and require more professional skills and guidance to come at par with the high achievers. In other words, the majority of the students seem to reject the idea of placing students on the medical or science tracks on the basis of their performance in the pre-PYP assessment on two grounds: first, they think the curriculum taught at schools is not sufficient enough to enable them to study the specialized subjects right after completing their school education, and secondly, the pre-PYP assessment tools are not valid enough to measure the strength and the aptitude of the students; therefore, the results on these assessment tools are not reliable and cannot be taken as standards for the students’ placement on the medical or science tracks for their higher professional studies.

However, when these respondents were asked if the students’ assessment on PYP level-1 general studies (EGP) exams could help decide about the students placement on the medical or science tracks, the responses were quite varied. These varied responses raise questions about the
absolute usefulness of the PYP level-1 subjects. Almost 47% of the respondents believe that the students’ scores in Level-1 (1st semester) give a good measure of their capability for their admission in medical and engineering colleges. This group seems to represent those students who could not score so well in the pre-PYP assessment so that they could be directly placed in the medical field (the choice of the majority) and find PYP level-1 a chance to improve the grades and enter the field of their choice. However, 35% of the students showed uncertainty about this. This uncertainty reflects on their dissatisfaction with the remedial education up to level-1 only since they still ask for more improvement in their abilities and require more professional skills and guidance to come at par with the high achievers. Almost 18% respondents opine that the PYP level-1 scores are not sufficient measure of students’ strength to help decide about their placement on the medical or science tracks.

It is quite strange to find that the respondents in the research showed varied opinions even about the notion that the scores in level-1 (1st semester) as well as scores in the earlier tests collectively give a good measure of the students’ ability to study medicine or engineering. There are almost 40% of respondents who endorse the existing system of placement. However, 35% showed uncertainty about it, and 22% rejected the idea. These are the students who want some change or reforms to improve the system to satisfy all stakeholders by ensuring that the students entering professional colleges after completing PYP have gone through a valid placement procedure and have acquired required technical skills and knowledge (ESP). When asked if there should be drastic changes in the syllabi and subjects taught in PYP right from level-1 (1st semester) to match the needs of future professional colleges of the students, more than 50% of students agreed, very few (only 15% disagreed) and more than 26% showed uncertainty.

One suggestion in this regard is to place the students on the medical or science tracks on the basis of their performance in the pre-PYP assessments. Almost 41% of the respondents liked the idea. But 18% of them rejected the suggestion and almost 41% showed uncertainty about it. This uncertainty may be because they do not have the experience of content based teaching and learning that enhances an ESL learner’s professional knowledge to build his or her specialized base (Evans, 1996). This segregation of the students, right on the onset of PYP, can render many benefits. More than 57% of respondents believe that it may help learners study their specific areas with more focused approach and clear the uncertainty. Almost the same number of respondents believes that the placement of the students on the medical or science tracks at the onset of PYP would help students study the basics of their specialized areas for a full year and better prepare them for study in the professional colleges.

Another suggestion presented is that the specialized subjects (including ESP) may be taught right from level-1 (1st semester) in PYP along with the other required basic subjects and skills (EGP). The majority of the respondents agreed with the idea. The favorable responses correlates with Evans’ (1996) proposition and case studies that content based approach and topic approach through language centers can integrate “language learning with content areas in the mainstream curriculum” (p-180). The important point is to “transform remedial education” and “recalibrate their (students’) measures of success” (Vandal, 2014, p-1). However, if the curriculum and syllabus of PYP is designed around the co-requisites and specialized areas of the students’ prospective tracks, it can greatly benefit and equip the students for their future
endeavors. Again, there were more than 25% of the respondents who showed uncertainty about it and 20% of them disagreed with the idea.

A lot of uncertain responses from the survey participants point towards the room for reforms and innovations in the existing system. The uncertainty of PYP students in their responses reflects on their dissatisfaction with the remedial education up to level-1 only since they still ask for more improvement in their abilities and require more professional skills and guidance to come at par with the high achievers. Overall, the responses express that there is no need to bring the drastic changes, but only the reforms to bring improvement in the existing system. Therefore, if the curriculum and syllabus of PYP is designed around the co-requisites and specialized areas of the students’ prospective tracks, it can greatly benefit and equip the students for their future endeavors and successful and dignified existence in their professional colleges.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Continuous innovations and reforms play key role for the success of any academic programme. Drastic and unmindful changes can prove to be counter-productive as they bring chaos and disorder in the system. Willingness to bring evolutionary and planned changes can make PYP dynamic, progressive and productive. The present study analyzed the pros and cons of both the existing system (EGP for one year and ESP for six months) and the proposed one (both ESP and EGP for one year) for the overall benefit of all the PYP stakeholders: students, teachers, administrators, policy makers and decision makers. The analysis presented in this study can prove to be beneficial to all such contexts in other parts of the world as well where efforts are being made to give right directions to the students by placing them in the educational programmes like PYP in a planned way addressing all the surrounding complexities and niceties. In the light of the discussion in the data analysis part, the following conclusions and recommendations can be made:

A. The present system of students’ induction on medical / science track needs some innovations and reforms to make it more productive and beneficial for the students and for the betterment of existing system. However, the research in the present study does not favor the drastic change in the system. The students’ performance in the level-1 / 1st semester of PYP divides them into the high achievers, average ones and low achievers which suggest that the existing system of students’ induction on medical and science tracks after the 1st semester of PYP can sustain successfully. This implies that the students enrolled in PYP initially need training in EGP and other subjects of general nature, and once the academic momentum has been caught, they should be taught English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and other specialized subjects with full focus to prepare them thoroughly for the professional colleges.

B. Majority of responses are in favor of level-1 as a general part of the remedial course leading to specialized level-2 part as is reflected in the responses to the survey item numbers 1, 2 & 3. All in all, research recommends bringing reforms in the existing system of PYP students’ induction on the medical and science tracks without changing it altogether.

C. The poor outcomes in the remedial courses may also point towards the disparity in the content taught in the remedial courses and the ones required in the college-level courses...
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(Jaggars & Hodara, 2013). The proposed system of placement of the students on the medical or science tracks might prove a step in the right direction by bridging up the gap and aligning the content taught and required. However, the results obtained in this research reflect the importance of the remedial course (EGP) taught in level-1 for the students. Therefore, it is recommended that the existing system of students’ induction in the PYP may continue but at the same time, some reforms should be added that may help improve the students gaining professional and technical knowledge and acquire skills required in their future studies in the professional colleges.

D. At Qassim University, the students are placed on the medical or science tracks in the level-2 of PYP on the basis of their grades in level-1, and prior to that on the basis of their high school grades and their performance on the standardized aptitude test as well as the entry test. It is in the level-2 (i.e. after six months) that they are given ESP training for their relevant fields, which is probably a very short time span to study ESP. The divided opinion does not prefer exclusive and radical replacement of existing system with the proposed model but suggests parallel coexistence of both systems. However, the poor performances in the remedial course require alternative models, and the co-requisite model of remediation is becoming “increasingly popular” (Ladd & Goertz, 2015, p. 647).

E. It is strongly recommended that the high achievers may be segregated from the very start and may be placed for the intended and specialized fields with co-requisites while the average and low achievers may be enrolled for remedial courses in pre-PYP semester. The recommendation may be supported with the reforms in Connecticut and Florida introduced on the “assumption that most or all developmental students could be successfully served either in a co-requisite model or a one-semester remedial course. Co-requisite model is being considered a “game changer” that would improve the success rate of underprepared undergrads. Thus, it would be a wise step to conduct the placement test at the beginning of PYP, put the low achievers in a pre-PYP semester, and let high achievers continue in the regular PYP semester. For this to be a successful practice, it is very necessary to screen out the existing syllabus taught in the 1st semester. Reforms need to be brought to such an effect that very basic things should be moved to the pre-PYP semester and scheme of the study should be made more forward looking.

F. It is a common misperception that EGP and ESP are in conflict with each other and are striving to replace each other. In fact, they complement each other and are integral part of each other. What is recommended in the light of present research is that ESP should be given more consideration by allocating more teaching hours for it side by side the teaching of EGP.

About the authors

Dr. Muhammad Sabboor Hussain is currently Head, English Language Research Team (ELRT), PYP, Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. He holds PhD Degree in Applied Linguistics. He has diversified experience (18 years) of teaching English at different levels and at various places to the adult English language learners of various nationalities. His research interests include Psycholinguistics, Applied Linguistics, and issues related to ELT (EFL and ESL). He has numerous publications in reputed journals to his credit.
Dr. Khaled Besher Albesher is currently the dean of Deanship of Educational Services, Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. He is PhD in Applied Linguistics from the United Kingdom. His research interests include Applied Linguistics and ELT related issues particularly in the EFL context in Saudi Arabia. He has many publications in the reputed journals. He is the patron-in-chief of English Language Research Team [ELRT] at Qassim University, Saudi Arabia.

Dr. Aisha Farid has been teaching English Language and Literature for last 18 years. Her PhD is in Applied Linguistics. She is an active member of English Language Research Team (ELRT) at Qassim University, KSA. She applies Mixed Method, Qualitative and Quantitative approaches in her research projects, many of them have been published and many are under process.

References


Motivation and Language Learning Strategies Used by Moroccan University EFL Science Students: A Correlatioal Study

Zahra EL AOURI
Faculty of Education
Mohammed V University, Rabat, Morocco

Badia ZERHOUNI
Faculty of Education
Mohammed V University, Rabat, Morocco

Abstract
This study aims to investigate the overall use of language learning strategies (LLSs) and its relationship with English learning motivation by Moroccan non-English major students. The sample consists of 228 students enrolled in their second year at the Faculty of Sciences, Mohammed V University – Rabat – Morocco. To collect the data, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) developed by Oxford (1989) was adopted and adapted to the Moroccan EFL context. The motivation questionnaire was developed based on different sources including Gardner’s Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (2004); Pintrich et al.’s Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) (1991); and Schmidt & Wattanabe (2001). The two questionnaires were tested for reliability and validity. Descriptive statistics and Pearson Correlation were selected to analyze the data. The results demonstrate that Moroccan university EFL Science students use LLSs at a medium level and exhibit a high level of motivation, and that their motivation to learn English and use of LLSs are strongly and positively correlated. This study yields a number of implications both for pedagogical purposes and for further research.

Key words: language learning strategies, Moroccan EFL context, motivation, Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

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Introduction

Preliminary research on language learning strategies (LLSs henceforth) began in the early 1970's with Rubin (1975). This field of research became prolific, especially with the emergence of the notion of "the good language learner" (Rubin, 1975; Naiman, Frohlich, Stern & Todesco, 1978). Based on this notion, other researchers tried to develop lists of strategies and other characteristics supposed to be essential for "good L2 learners". These strategies were classified into various types according to different learners in different contexts and in relation to factors such as age, gender, nationality/ethnicity, language experience, proficiency, motivation, aptitude, learning style, learning stage, language task and so on (Oxford, 1990). One of the learners' factors that has raised L2 researchers' interest is motivation because of its potential impact on the learning process in general including L2 learning. Hence the motive for investigating its relationship with LLSs among a specific population in the Moroccan EFL context, and find out whether the results will compare or contrast with those of previous research.

Before reporting the different components of the empirical study conducted to this end, the first section below will be devoted to a brief review of the literature related to this issue.

I. Literature review

1. Definition and taxonomies of LLSs

In the field of LLSs, one of the major issues that has been and may still be of much concern to many researchers is the issue of defining LLSs. The fuzzy/ambiguous nature of the concept of ‘strategy’ makes it difficult to assign it one definition due to a number of reasons. One major reason concerns the different theoretical perspectives researchers have adopted in their definitions of the concept (O’Malley & Chamot, 1995; Weinstein & Mayer, 1986; Wenden, 1987; Ellis, 1997), which leads to a lack of agreement on what the concept really means. Another reason is that LLSs are bunched with all types of learner behaviors and, hence, their classification as observable or non-observable, conscious or subconscious actions is controversial. This critical point is supported by O’Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Kupper & Russo (1985a) who claim that:

there is no consensus on what constitutes a learning strategy in second language or how these differ from other types of learner activities…even with the group of activities most often referred to as learning strategies, there is considerable confusion about definitions of specific strategies and about the hierarchic relationship among strategies (p.22)

Dornyei (2005), on the other hand, states that “…we cannot offer a watertight definition of ‘learning strategies’” (p.166). Oxford (1990) supports the same view when she claims that:

there is no complete agreement on exactly what strategies are; how many strategies exist; how they should be defined, demarcated, and categorized; and whether it is - or ever will be - possible to create a real, scientifically validated hierarchy of strategies…Classification conflicts are inevitable. (p.17)

Thus, besides the definition issue, Oxford also highlights the problem relative to the classification of LLSs and the production of agreed-upon taxonomies. The lack of clarity and agreement among researchers concerning this issue has caused inconsistencies and mismatches
across existing taxonomies and classificatory systems developed by different researchers (O’Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Russo & Kupper (1985b); Rubin, 1987; Stern, 1992). However, Oxford (2001) offers one of the most comprehensive definition which covers different features of LLSs defined according to her as "…operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval and use of information; specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more efficient, and more transferable to new situations." (p. 166). She also offers a taxonomy of LLSs which is considered as the most comprehensive one (as it includes items from other taxonomies), and the most widely used in language learning strategy research reinforcing its validity. It should be mentioned that Oxford’s orientation in this classification is towards the development of communicative competence. This taxonomy, adopted by the present article, classifies LLSs into two main categories: direct and indirect strategies which are in turn subdivided into six subcategories as reported below based on Oxford (2001, p. 359):

Cognitive strategies which enable the learner to manipulate the target language material in direct ways such as note-taking, reasoning, analyzing, summarizing, synthesizing, outlining …etc

a. Metacognitive strategies which enable the learner to manage the learning process through identifying the learning style preferences, planning for L2 learning, gathering and organizing materials, arranging for learning, monitoring mistakes, and evaluating the learning process.

b. Memory strategies which enable the learner to link one L2 item or concept with another.

c. Compensation strategies which help the learner make up for missing knowledge such as guessing from context in listening and reading, using gestures … etc

d. Affective strategies which enable learners to control their mood and anxiety level, talk about feelings, reward oneself for good performance, use positive self-talk and deep breathing … etc

e. Social strategies which help the learner work with others and cooperate to understand the target language as well as the culture. For instance, learners ask questions, seek verification, ask for clarification … etc

2. Language learning motivation

Similar to the concept of LLSs, there is no consensus on the definition of the concept of motivation in the literature. This lack of consensus is due to the complex and multifaceted nature of this psychological construct. Nonetheless, most researchers focus on what specific factors conjure up to bring learners’ motivation into play. For instance, Ellis (1994), in an overview of research on motivation, claims that motivation affects the extent to which language learners persevere in learning, the types of behavior they engage in and the actual achievement they manifest. Later, Ellis (2000, p. 75) states that “Motivation involves the attitudes and affective states that influence the degree of effort that learners make to learn a second language”. Therefore, motivation is a crucial factor in successful language learning. This is further supported by Dornyei who contends that “Motivation has been widely accepted by both teachers and researchers as one of the key factors that influences the rate and success of second/foreign language (L2) learning.” (1998, p. 117).
Other researchers consider motivation as a process and link it to goal-driven activities. Pintrich & Schunk (1996), for example, define it as “the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained.” (p. 118) Dornyei (1998) shares this same view in considering motivation a process, and adds the feature of force to this complex construct which he defines as “[A] process whereby a certain amount of instigation force arises, initiates action, and persists as long as no other force comes into play to weaken it and thereby terminate action, or until the planned outcome has been reached.” (p. 118). In another article, Dornyei & Otto expand on the definition of motivation by stating that

In a general sense, motivation can be defined as the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritized, operationalized and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out” (1998, p. 65)

Gardner (1985), another pioneering figure in research on motivation, developed a model of language learning motivation called the socio-educational model based on social psychology. According to this model, L2 motivation is defined as "the extent to which an individual works or strives to learn the language" (p. 10). Gardner also asserts that “motivation […] refers to the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes toward learning the language.” (p. 10). This means that motivation is a construct which combines different factors including effort, desire, goal and attitude. As a psychological construct, motivation takes different orientations as highlighted by the literature (Gardner, 1985; Schmidt, Boriae, & Kassabgy, 1996; Ehrman, 1996; Green, 1999). Four main orientations (intrinsic/extrinsic and integrative/instrumental) have particularly been focused on in research (Gardner, 1985) including the present study.

To sum up, motivation can be considered as a complex process that results from an inner drive or strong desire to achieve a certain goal through favorable attitudes.

3. Language learning strategies and motivation

As mentioned above, the relationship between LLSs and motivation is an issue that has raised the interest of many L2 researchers from different contexts yielding mixed findings as shown in the studies reported below. Hence in the present study the researchers’ interest in contributing to this line of research among a specific EFL population in the Moroccan higher education context.

To start with, Oxford & Nyikos (1989) conducted a study in which they highlighted the effects of motivation on strategy use by surveying 1,200 students studying various languages in a Midwestern American university in order to examine the kinds of language learning strategies the students reported using. According to their findings, the degree of expressed motivation was found to be the most influential variable affecting the participants’ strategy choice. Another study was conducted by Liao (2000) on Taiwanese junior high school EFL students whose findings showed that these students lacked deep motivation to learn English, and when they happened to be motivated, they tended to be extrinsically oriented. Results also revealed that the majority of those students did not frequently report using a wide range of LLSs categories.
Hence, their low English-learning motivation was significantly correlated with their low use of learning strategies.

Like Liao, Peng (2001) explored the relationship between EFL learning motivation and strategy use among a total of 326 senior high school Taiwanese students. Significant differences were found between strategy use and each motivational aspect especially, motivational intensity, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and requirement motivation. The latter was significantly but negatively correlated with strategy use, as well as with learners’ achievement. Therefore, high school students who were forced to study English (requirement motivation) used strategies significantly less often and performed more poorly than those who were motivated to learn English either intrinsically or extrinsically. In another study carried out by Chang & Huang (1999), intrinsic motivation was found to significantly correlate with language learning strategies, more particularly with cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Pong's (2002) study, on the other hand, revealed that extrinsic motivation significantly correlated with cognitive and affective strategies, while intrinsic motivation correlated significantly with cognitive and metacognitive strategies, a finding which corroborates Chang and Huang’s results.

Based on the findings reported above, it can be concluded that motivation as a psychological construct does have an impact on the use of LLSs. However, such an impact operates in differential ways, in that different types of motivation influence different types of strategies in different learning contexts.

II. Research methodology

1. Objectives
The present study has two main objectives:

(1) examine the overall use of language learning strategies by Moroccan university EFL Science students and the specific types of strategies they use in the learning process of English.

(2) find out how the variable of motivation relates to the self-reported use of language learning strategies.

2. Research questions and hypothesis
Based on the above objectives, the present investigation attempts to answer the following questions:

(1) What are the types of language learning strategies Moroccan university Science students use in their EFL learning process?
(2) How does motivation relate to Moroccan university EFL Science students' use of language learning strategies?

The second research question can be reformulated into the following hypothesis: ‘More motivated Moroccan university EFL Science students make a more frequent use of different types of language learning strategies than less motivated ones’.
3. Participants

This study focuses on Moroccan university EFL Science students enrolled at the Faculty of Sciences, Mohammed V University as the target population for investigation. A stratified random sample of 228 students was drawn from six fields of study as table 1 below demonstrates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic major</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geology</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Data collection instruments

To investigate students’ use of LLSs, the researchers adopted and adapted Oxford's (1989) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL version 7.0) designed for ESL/EFL contexts. The SILL is a 5-point Likert-scale measurement which is composed of six categories of learning strategies divided into two broad categories: direct strategies which contribute directly to language learning and include memory, cognitive and compensation strategies; indirect strategies which help in language learning, but do not contribute directly to the learning process and include metacognitive, affective and social strategies. The original version of the SILL consisting of 50 items was administered in the piloting stage to test its reliability and validity. Based on the piloting results, 12 items were added to the original SILL to fit the first objective of the study: exploring LLSs used by Moroccan university EFL Science students.

The SILL was chosen because it is considered the most efficient and comprehensive tool to assess the frequency of language learning strategy use worldwide. As claimed by Ellis (1994), it is “the most comprehensive classification of learning strategies to date” (p. 539). This is supported by Oxford & Burry-Stock (1995) in the following statement “According to research reports and articles published in the English language within the last 10-15 years, the SILL appears to be the only language learning strategy instrument that has been extensively checked for reliability and validated in multiple ways” (p. 4). The two authors also assert that “the content validity of the SILL is very high” (p. 7), and that “ESL/EFL SILL strategy frequency is related ... to language performance in a number of studies, thus providing validity evidence for the SILL as a strategy instrument” (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995, p. 10). Another reason for choosing the SILL is that it lends itself to statistical analysis such as correlations, ANOVA, MANOVA, regression analysis … etc. On the other hand, in order to serve the purposes of the present study, and allow participants to feel more comfortable filling in the questionnaire to ensure the validity of the collected data, the SILL was translated into French (the language of instruction for science subjects in Moroccan universities).
Concerning the second major variable of the study ‘motivation’, the questionnaire used to collect data was adapted from different sources including Gardner's (2004) AMTB (Attitude/Motivation Test Battery) questionnaire, Pintrich et. al.’s (1991) MSLQ (Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire), and Schmidt & Wattanabe (2001). The final version administered to the participants included four types of motivation namely integrative, intrinsic, instrumental and extrinsic; and contained 28 items in total measured on a 5-point Likert-scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, to 5= strongly agree. The motivation questionnaire was also translated and administered in French for the same reasons mentioned above.

5. Data collection procedures

Data collection took place after getting permission from the dean of the faculty of Sciences-Rabat, the teachers’ consent to allow the researchers into their classes, and the students’ consent to take part in the study. The two questionnaires were then administered in one shot for two main reasons. First, to ensure availability of the same participants to fill in both questionnaires so that the data collected would be valid. The second reason is that the teachers were reluctant to spare another session for a second round of data collection. The administration of the two questionnaires to sub-groups belonging to six different academic majors took about two weeks, and completion of both questionnaires took about one hour (35 - 40 minutes to complete the SILL and 20 - 25 minutes to complete the motivation questionnaire). Prior to distributing the questionnaires, it was necessary first to assure the participants of the confidentiality of their answers that the latter would exclusively serve research purposes, and would have no impact on their grades. Then the study objectives were explained to them followed by clear instructions on how to fill in the questionnaires. Students were also invited to ask for clarification if they encountered any difficulties understanding the instructions or the questionnaire items.

6. Data analysis procedures

Collected data was then submitted to statistical analysis using SPSS version 21. First the two questionnaires were tested for reliability through the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha for Internal Consistency Reliability and for validity through Factor Analysis. Then a test of normal distribution of the data was conducted generating histograms with normal curves to test for normality of distribution and decide on which statistical technique to use. As the data were found to be normally distributed, it was decided to use parametric tests. Thus, descriptive statistics were run to explore the nature of the data and answer the first research question concerned with the types and frequency of LLSs use. To explore the relationship between motivation and LLSs (research question2) a Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used.

6.1 Normal distribution of the data

The data of the present study is normally distributed as the following two graphs show:
Figure 1 Normal distribution of the SILL and the motivation questionnaire

Figure 1 demonstrates two histograms with a bell-like shaped curve representing normal distribution of the scores of the SILL and the motivation questionnaire. This allows for the selection of the parametric test of Pearson correlation to explore the relationship between the LLSs and motivation since there are hardly any significant outliers.

6.2 Reliability and validity
6.2.1 Reliability of the SILL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability Statistics</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N of Items</td>
<td>.919</td>
<td>.922</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows that the SILL reached a high Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient (.92). This is an excellent coefficient for internal consistency reliability. Interestingly, a similar result was achieved by Fazeli (2012) who found a reliability coefficient of .89 for the SILL translated into Persian, and Demirel (2009) who found a reliability coefficient of (.92) for the Turkish version. Similar Cronbach’s Alpha results were also found by Yang (1992), Liao (2000) and Liu (2004) who translated the SILL into Chinese and found Alpha coefficients for reliability of .94, .96 and .94 respectively.

6.2.2 Reliability of the motivation questionnaire

The same measure was applied to the motivation questionnaire as shown in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability Statistics</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N of Items</td>
<td>.890</td>
<td>.899</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Similarly to the SILL questionnaire, the motivation questionnaire reached a high level of internal consistency reliability with an Alpha Coefficient of .89. Other researchers who adopted the SILL questionnaires also measured the motivation construct and reached acceptable reliability. Examples of such cases are Chang & Liu (2013) whose Chinese version of the motivation questionnaire reached .90; and Nikoopour, Salimian, Salimian & Farsani (2012) whose Farsi version reached a reliability coefficient of .82.

6.2.3 Validity of the SILL

Despite the fact that the SILL was validated in a number of previous studies, it was decided to test its construct validity. The reason is that it was translated into French and modified by adding 12 items to the original version consisting of 50 items. The French version was thus submitted to Factor Analysis technique, specifically Principal Component Analysis, using SPSS Version 21, to find out whether it still adheres to the six factors displayed in the original one. Results revealed the presence of the six factors in the French version of the SILL, hence its construct validity.

6.2.4 Validity of the motivation questionnaire

Factor Analysis technique was also conducted on the motivation questionnaire to test its construct validity since it was adapted from different standardized and well-validated sources, basically Gardner’s (2004) AMTB questionnaire, Pintrich et al.’s (1991) MSLQ, and Schmidt & Watanabe (2001). Again, the Factor Analysis output revealed the presence of the four dimensions of motivation investigated in this study, hence the construct validity of the questionnaire.

III. Results

To answer the first research question concerning the type and frequency of LLSs employed by Moroccan University EFL Science students, descriptive statistics were used mainly to find out means and standard deviations.

Table 4 displays means and standard deviations (SDs) of overall LLSs use and the use of each of the six individual categories as represented in the SILL. The overall mean score of LLSs is 3.15 (SD=.46) suggesting that Moroccan university EFL Science students are generally medium strategy users according to the assessment criteria set forth by Oxford & Burry-Stock (1995) which consider means of 3.5 – 5.0 as high strategy use; 2.5 – 3.4 as medium strategy use; and 1.0 – 2.4 as low strategy use (p. 12)

Table 4: Means and SDs of overall LLSs and the six strategy categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean scores of language learning strategies</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall mean score of language learning strategies</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory strategies</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive strategies</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation strategies</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive strategies</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective strategies</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social strategies</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Concerning the six individual categories of LLSs, they also fall in the medium range. The participants reported using compensation strategies at a mean frequency of 3.39 (SD=.57), followed by cognitive and metacognitive strategies at the same mean frequency of 3.31 with SD=.59 and SD=.70 respectively. Then, social strategies were reported with a mean frequency of 3.04 (SD=.77). Memory (M=2.99, SD=.60) and affective strategies (M=2.87, SD=.68) were reported at a lower level than the other strategies.

Table 5 displays means and standard deviations of overall motivation and the four motivational orientations as represented in the motivation questionnaire. To interpret the mean scores of motivation, the same scale suggested by Oxford & Burry-Stock (1995) for interpretation of LLSs was used. Thus, the overall mean score of motivation obtained is 3.86 (SD=.49) suggesting that Moroccan university EFL Science students are highly motivated.

Table 5: Means and SDs of overall motivation and four motivational orientations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean scores of motivation</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall mean score of motivation</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrative motivation</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic motivation</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental motivation</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic motivation</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table shows, the four motivational orientations fall within the high range except for extrinsic motivation. Thus, Moroccan university EFL Science students display a high level of instrumental motivation (M=4.25, SD=.55), followed by intrinsic motivation (M=3.98, SD=.72) and integrative motivation (M=3.90, SD=.72). However, extrinsic motivation falls within the moderate range with a mean score of 3.32 (SD=.58).

Based on the second research question, it was hypothesized that more motivated Moroccan university EFL Science students would use LLSs more frequently than less motivated ones. To crosscheck this hypothesis, a Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was run. Before generating the correlation table, a Scatterplot was generated to check the linearity and direction of the correlation between the two variables.
The scatterplot shows that the principle of linearity was respected. In other words, there is a positive relationship between motivation and LLSs. Thus, as scores of motivation increase, the scores of LLSs do increase too and vice versa. To interpret the correlation coefficients, the guidelines set forth by Cohen (1988, pp. 79-81) were adopted:

- $r=.10$ to .29 indicates small correlation
- $r=.30$ to .49 indicates medium correlation
- $r=.50$ to 1.0 indicates large correlation

Table 6: Pearson’s correlation between motivation and language learning strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language learning strategies</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.612**</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.612**</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 displays a large correlation between motivation and LLSs. The two variables strongly and positively correlate $r=.612$, $N=228$, $p<.0005$ which is less than the significant level set at 0.01 (2-tailed). The coefficient of determination $R^2=.3745$ suggests a 37.45% of shared variance between motivation and LLSs.

To explore relationships between the four dimensions of motivation and the six categories of LLSs, there was a need to create a correlation matrix.

Table 7: Correlation matrix between the four dimensions of motivation and the six categories of LLSs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations between subscales of LLSs and subscales of motivation</th>
<th>Integrative motivation</th>
<th>Intrinsic motivation</th>
<th>Instrumental motivation</th>
<th>Extrinsic motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory strategies</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$.300**</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>$.311**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$.349**</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>$.294**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive strategies</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$.404**</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>$.502**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$.392**</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>$.206**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A quick look at the above matrix indicates that most of the strategy categories positively correlate with the motivational orientations at a medium level. Thus, the memory category is positively and significantly correlated with integrative, intrinsic and instrumental motivation at a medium level (r=.300; r=.311; r=.350, N=228, p<.0005 respectively); and exhibits a small yet significant correlation (r=.294, p<.0005) with extrinsic motivation. Cognitive strategies, on the other hand, highly correlate (r=.502, N=228, p<.0005) with intrinsic motivation, moderately correlate with integrative and instrumental motivation (r=.404; r=.392, N=228, p<.0005 respectively), and exhibit a small yet significant correlation with extrinsic motivation (r=.206, N=228, p<.002). Like cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies are also highly correlated with intrinsic motivation (r=.596, N=228, p<.0005), moderately correlated with instrumental and integrative motivation (r=.462; r=.461, N=228, p<.0005 respectively); and display a small yet significant correlation with extrinsic motivation (r=.229, N=228, p<.0005). Compensation strategies’ correlation with the four motivational orientations shows a totally different picture. Thus, while a weak and insignificant correlation exists between compensation strategies and integrative, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (r=.127; r=.078; r=.111 respectively), a small but significant correlation (r=.156, N=228, p<.019) has been found with instrumental motivation. Finally, while affective strategies are moderately correlated with integrative, intrinsic, instrumental and extrinsic motivation (r=.463; r=.373; r=.335; r=.308, N=228, p<.0005 respectively); social strategies are moderately correlated with integrative and intrinsic motivation (r=.439; r=.410, N=228, p<.0005 respectively), and show a small but significant correlation level with instrumental and extrinsic motivation (r=.292, N=228, p<.0005; r=.208, N=228, p<.002 respectively)

To sum up, the correlation matrix displayed in table 7 shows that most of the four types of motivation correlate at a medium level with the six types of LLSs, except for intrinsic motivation which demonstrates a large correlation with cognitive and metacognitive strategies.
Besides, extrinsic motivation indicates a small correlation with all categories of LLSs except for affective strategies which moderately correlate with extrinsic motivation. Another pattern that emerges from the matrix is that the four motivation orientations show a small correlation with compensation strategies and a moderate correlation with affective strategies.

**IV. Discussion**

The present study results show that Moroccan University EFL Science students are generally medium strategy users since their overall mean score of LLSs is 3.15 (SD=.46). This result is commensurate with similar studies carried out by other researchers in different contexts. Thus Alhaisoni’s (2012) study indicated a medium frequency of LLS use (M=2.76, SD=1.23) for Saudi students; Su (2005) found that 419 Taiwanese vocational college students majoring in Applied Foreign Languages, used LLSs at a medium level (2.86). Similarly, Chand’s (2014) research on a sample of 88 undergraduates Fiji students yielded an overall mean score which fell within the medium range of strategy use. On the other hand, Xu’s (2011) study involving 284 Chinese graduates of non-English majors exhibited high use of overall LLSs (M=4.3).

One factor that may account for the participants’ medium use of LLSs could be their limited exposure to English in real life situations allowing them few opportunities to interact directly with native speakers within English-speaking socio-cultural contexts. This indicates that the input they get from class or through exposure to different sources including the mass media (both broadcast and digital) is not sufficient to trigger the development of effective LLSs in the learning process in spite of their high motivation for learning English. Such results are indicative of the relevance of the learning strategy theory to the field of language learning. LLSs are supportive tools which allow students to be empowered in the learning process. They help them face the challenge of learning a foreign language, achieve autonomy and self-confidence and improve their linguistic proficiency. In this regard, Oxford (1990) states that “strategies are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence. Appropriate language learning strategies result in improved proficiency and greater self-confidence” (p. 1).

Similar to the above results, the main patterns that emerged from the ranking of LLSs by category belong to the medium range. Thus, compensation strategies rank at the top followed by cognitive and metacognitive strategies, then social and memory strategies, and last affective strategies. A somewhat similar pattern emerges in Abu Radwan’s (2011) study in which 128 Omani students reported metacognitive strategies as the highest, followed by compensation, cognitive, social and affective strategies as medium, and finally memory strategies as the lowest. Another study whose findings are close to those of this research is the one conducted by Lai (2009) on a sample of 418 EFL Taiwanese learners who used LLSs at a medium level with compensation strategies as the most frequent and affective strategies as the least frequent ones. The high frequency use of compensation strategies among Moroccan university EFL Science students is quite understandable. Students resort to compensation strategies such as gestures, synonyms, circumlocution, paraphrasing, or guessing the meaning of unknown words to fill in gaps in their communication due to deficiencies in their English proficiency. This preference for compensation strategies supports similar findings in studies carried out by Meshkat & Khanjani (2014), Lai (2009), Chen (2005) and Mochizuki (1999). Actually, these strategies are supportive tools EFL learners rely on to overcome their deficient communicative skills due to limited
exposure to English. Another factor which may explain this reliance on compensation strategies could be the learners’ desire to use the new language in either comprehension or production despite their linguistic limitations.

Another interesting finding concerning LLSs is the participants’ excessive use of cognitive strategies (e.g., practicing, analyzing, summarizing) which enable them to engage in manipulating and transforming the target language input, and provides evidence for the major role of these cognitive strategies in the learning process of a foreign language. Such strategies are deeply rooted in cognitive theories which view learning as an active and dynamic process in which learners process the input information in accordance with their background knowledge. Learning is based on thinking processes related to learning and remembering new information through organizing, elaborating and linking it with already existing one. This frequent use of cognitive strategies may also be due to the nature of the students’ specialization in different fields of hard science which requires skills such as logical thinking, critical analysis, hypothesizing, problem solving, etc. Interestingly, students tend to make a simultaneous use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies as revealed by the results. The combination of both strategies is quite natural since metacognitive strategies are usually resorted to coordinate the learning process through organization, planning and regulation. Similar findings are reported by Peacock & Ho (2003) and Chang & Liu (2013) who discovered that participants in their respective studies also use cognitive and metacognitive strategies together, besides other learning strategies.

The Motivation factor turned out to play a greater role in the present study participants’ English learning process. Results show a high degree of motivation with an overall mean score of 3.86 (SD=.49). This is in agreement with the results obtained by Domakani, Roohani & Akbari (2012) whose study on a sample of 152 Iranian EFL university students revealed a moderately high level of motivation and the use of LLSs at a medium level. Another slightly different study from the current one was carried out by Feng (2010) on 300 sophomores in Shandong Jianzhu University in China. Feng’s study participants were motivated at a medium level (3.02) and their mean score of overall LLSs fell within the range of 2.50 and 3.40. Back to the present study, one reason that may explain the high degree of overall motivation exhibited by Moroccan students could be their awareness of the usefulness of learning English for both academic and professional purposes. One may assume that different learner needs and interests may result in different degrees of motivation and effort learners are willing to invest in the language learning process. In this regard, Cohen & Dornyei (2002) contend that “Motivation is often seen as the key learner variable because without it, nothing much happens. Indeed, most other learner variables presuppose the existence of at least some degree of motivation”. (p. 172). Motivation thus seems to override all other factors underlying language learning.

Concerning the patterns of motivational orientations, they all belong to the high range except for one extrinsic motivation. Actually, the participants exhibited a high level of instrumental motivation, followed by intrinsic and integrative motivation, but only a moderate level of extrinsic motivation. This result is somewhat similar to Yu’s (2012) study in which 164 Chinese learners demonstrated a strong inclination towards instrumental and integrative motivation; and Domakani, Roohani & Akbari’s (2012) study in which Iranian EFL students also exhibited a higher level of integrative and instrumental motivation. As mentioned earlier,
Moroccan students’ motivational orientations may be accounted for by their awareness of the importance of developing their English proficiency for both research and career purposes. This makes them strive to learn the language in order to achieve these utilitarian goals. Likewise, their trend towards integrative motivation clearly expresses their desire to integrate with different foreign communities and be familiar with their cultures, which could only be achieved through a good level of English language proficiency. This integrative side of motivation is clearly reflected in the socio-educational model developed by Gardner (1985) who states that “languages are unlike any other subject taught in a classroom in that they involve the acquisition of skills or behaviour patterns which are characteristic of another cultural community” (p. 146).

The above results thus seem to confirm the hypothesis formulated at the outset of this study concerning the relationship between motivation and the use of LLSs. The Pearson’s r Product-moment correlation shows that there is a linear and positive relationship between overall motivation and overall LLSs. Moreover, the findings also indicate generally moderate relationships between the four types of motivation and the six categories of LLSs. Two plausible explanations may account for this finding. First, given their high level of motivation, Moroccan university EFL Science students are more likely to invest the time and effort required to engage in strategy use since learning strategies are regarded as effort-driven behaviors. This explanation is supported by MacIntyre & Noels’ (1996) conclusion that “students who feel more highly motivated will be more likely expend the effort needed to engage in strategy use” (p. 383). Second, this category of students, given the nature of their academic majors, may already have developed some learning strategies, hence their awareness that they are effective learning tools and readiness to learn more LLSs for the sake of improving their English learning. A number of previous studies have yielded similar results. For example, Chang & Liu (2013) examined the use of LLSs in relation to motivation by 163 EFL freshmen university students, and discovered that highly motivated students made significantly greater use of overall LLSs. Wu (2013) at Fooyin University in Taiwan revealed that motivation is of paramount effect on the use of vocabulary learning strategies; Feng’s (2010) findings revealed a high correlation between overall motivation and overall strategy use. In the same vein, the studies carried out by Xu (2011) and Yu (2012) in the EFL Chinese context reached results which are consistent with those reported above.

As for the correlation between individual types of motivation and individual categories of LLSs among the present study participants, intrinsic motivation was found to correlate with all the strategy categories except for compensation strategies. This corroborates the findings provided by Ziahosseini & Salehi (2008) which revealed a positive correlation between intrinsic motivation and all categories of strategies except for the compensation category. The same conclusion is further confirmed by Ellis’ (2001) research in which he maintained that intrinsically motivated language learners usually employ a variety of LLSs. Accordingly, intrinsic motivation seems to correlate with different types of strategies, especially the cognitive and metacognitive category. This is the case in the present study in which that students who are inherently interested in learning English use metacognitive strategies such as planning, organizing and evaluating the learning process; cognitive strategies related to “identification, grouping, retention and storage of language material, as well as strategies of retrieval, rehearsal and comprehension or production of words, phrases and other elements of the L2 more frequently than other types of strategies (Schmitt, 2002). This finding is supported by Pintrich’s (1999) who
contends that the use of metacognitive strategies to control learning is closely linked to motivation in general and self-regulated learning more particularly.

In connection with the above conclusion, the lack of correlation between intrinsic motivation and compensation strategies in the current study may be due to students’ preference for higher order strategies such as cognitive and metacognitive ones which require deep analysis and engage them in a deeper thinking process. Besides, intrinsically motivated students may avoid compensating for their deficient English proficiency taking it as their duty to develop their language ability by facing the challenge of applying their linguistic input. These are risk takers who dare communicate in the target language to test their ability to convey the messages by their own means. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation results indicate a low but significant correlation with memory, cognitive and metacognitive strategies; a medium level correlation with affective and social strategies; but no correlation with compensation strategies. These results are similar to those concerning the relation between intrinsic motivation and LLSs, except that the correlation level is lower in the case of extrinsic motivation. This may be due to students’ interest in learning English for its own sake rather than for any external factors.

Sadeghi (2013) conducted a similar study to explore the relationship between English learning strategies and motivational orientations. He found that only intrinsic orientation could predict LLSs use, in contrast to extrinsic orientation which failed to significantly correlate with LLSs. These findings support those of the present one concerning intrinsic orientation, but contrast in results concerning extrinsic orientation, since the present study indicated a significant yet low correlation between extrinsic motivation and LLSs. Nikoopour et al.’s study (2012) also examined the relationship between intrinsic/extrinsic motivation and LLSs use among 72 Iranian EFL upper-intermediate learners. They demonstrated that intrinsic motivation correlated positively with both metacognitive and cognitive strategies, moderately with memory and social strategies, and at a low level with compensation and affective strategies, while extrinsic motivation displayed weak negative correlations with LLSs.

The current study findings reveal a positive and significant correlation between instrumental and integrative motivation and the six categories of LLSs except for compensation strategies which correlate at a small but significant level with instrumental motivation. This is consistent with Manfred’s (2007) study which was limited to the investigation of the relationship between motivation and metacognitive strategies. He found that the learners’ use of metacognitive strategies was positively related to their levels of motivation, with the integrative type having a stronger relationship with strategy use than the instrumental type. Bonney, Cortina, Smith-Darden & Fiori (2008) also investigated the predictive power of integrative and intrinsic motivation in explaining the use of LLSs among a population of 694 students from 36 foreign language classrooms in a high school in the U.S.A. They found that integrative motivation is the best predictor of LLSs use in general, and of compensation, cognitive and collaborative social strategies in particular; and that intrinsic motivation did not correlate with any of the LLSs. This finding is partially in agreement with the present study except for compensation strategies which correlate neither with integrative nor intrinsic motivation. Three other studies whose findings show similarities with the present one are Feng’s (2010) study in which instrumental motivation correlated with the six categories of LLSs; Sadighi & Zarafshan (2006) study conducted on a sample of 126 Iranian freshmen and seniors majoring in English Translation and Teaching
English which concluded that integratively motivated students used more strategies than instrumentally motivated ones; and Yu’s (2012) study in which both integrative and instrumental motivation correlated with the six categories of LLSs, with integrative orientation revealing a stronger relation than the instrumental one.

To conclude this discussion, Moroccan university EFL Science students have been shown to be both intrinsically and integratively motivated. This is an interesting finding which is quite understandable as these two dimensions of motivation might overlap. In other words, in intrinsic motivation, students are moved to learn from within – there is no external force acting on them; while in integrative motivation, students are moved to learn due to a strong desire, which can be psychologically driven without any outside force, to identify with the target language community. Different reasons may explain this integrative orientation and its significant correlation with LLSs. For instance, and as mentioned earlier, even though Moroccan students are not in direct contact with the target language community in their immediate environment, they might still be tempted to identify with cultural and intellectual values associated with the English language. As argued by Dörnyei (2011), integrative orientation can involve the affective and interpersonal disposition of the students and their desire to interact without completely identifying themselves with the target culture. Another factor which might as well explain the correlation between integrative motivation and LLSs is the role of technological advancement which provides learners with rich sources of information that serve to bridge the gap between cultures, trigger openness on other ways of life and thinking and facilitate exchange between groups of different cultures. Finally, it is interesting to note that not only are Moroccan university EFL Science students intrinsically and integratively oriented, but instrumentally oriented as well. Students with instrumental motivation tend to have clear learning objectives. Learning English for them is a means to an end, and in order to achieve their instrumental goals, they try to use all types of strategies that they believe can scaffold their learning process. This might be one of the reasons why compensation strategies correlate with instrumental motivation in the present study, unlike the other types of motivation.

The above studies reveal both similarities and differences with the present one. Research thus has yielded mixed results concerning the issue at hand. This is not surprising given the complex nature of the two major concepts investigated by the study which contributes largely to the complexity of their relationship. This may raise the age-old chicken-and-egg question as to whether it is motivation which leads to the use of LLSs or the use of LLSs which enhances learners’ motivation. This is reflected in Oxford and Nyikos’ statement that “Not only does high motivation lead to significant use of language learning strategies…but high strategy use probably leads to high motivation as well” (1989, p. 295).

V. Implications and Conclusions

This piece of research aimed at exploring the relationship between language learning strategies employed by Moroccan EFL Science students and their learning motivation. The quantitative analysis of collected data yielded findings which show that the students participating in the survey are medium strategy users and highly motivated English learners. The study results have also revealed a strong and positive correlation between their strategy use and motivation for English learning.
Building on these findings, some pedagogical and research implications can be drawn. First, concerning pedagogical implications, strategy training seems to be imperative since students exhibited some degree of awareness of their learning strategies and their usefulness. Therefore, training them in strategy practice can be beneficial in making them aware of the most effective way of using those strategies to enhance their learning process and improve their English proficiency level. In fact, students majoring in non-English specialties need more scaffolding and training into how to apply strategies to learn English. Furthermore, motivation, as the study results indicate, is vital in language learning in general and in enhancing strategy use in particular. Thus, teachers need to boost their students’ motivation level and strategy use by creating a positive learning environment in which students are provided with appealing language learning tasks and strategy training that enhance their enthusiasm for English classes. On the other hand, to help teachers respond to their students’ needs, curriculum developers and textbook designers should base their materials on the language learning strategy theory. For example, they may design textbooks which include a variety of tasks that require students to use a wide range of motivational language learning strategies.

The present study findings suggest some research implications as well. One such implication is the need for an experimental research study to pin down exactly what types of LLSs are actually used, and whether training students in those strategies will yield beneficial results. Also, more variables such as learning styles, personality traits or language proficiency level need to be included in order to identify other factors that may influence the use of strategies. In addition, more research should be conducted on LLSs in Moroccan EFL context which combines both learners’ and teachers’ perceptions of LLS use with a focus on the learning strategies used by students and how they match the teaching strategies used by teachers. There is even a need for a research study to develop a strategy training model that can fit Moroccan students since the learning context is constrained by different socio-cultural factors. Moreover, the data collection methods should be varied to include interviews, verbal reports, think-aloud techniques…etc so that more unobservable strategies can be captured.

About The Authors
Zahra EL Aouri holds a doctorate in Applied Linguistics & TEFL from the Faculty of Education, Mohammed V University-Rabat, Morocco. She is a part-time teacher at the faculty of Sciences-Rabat teaching English to science-oriented students. Her main research interests remain within the field of Applied Linguistics (second language acquisition and language learning) and educational issues in general. She is also interested in research methodology and the application of educational statistics.

Badia Zerhouni is associate professor of Applied Linguistics/TEFL at the Faculty of Education, Mohammed V University-Rabat, Morocco. She teaches and supervises research projects in BA English Studies and MA Applied linguistics/TEFL programs. She is currently director of the Doctoral Centre of the Faculty of Education, where she also supervises doctoral research in different subjects related to AL/TEFL. Her research interests include issues relative to reading, writing and vocabulary acquisition and teaching/learning in EFL contexts as well as the issue of academic failure.
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The Five Tier Model for Teaching English Academic Writing in EFL Contexts

Hayat Al-Khatib
English Department
Arab Open University, Beirut, Lebanon

Abstract
Academic writing in English is at the heart of teaching and learning in English foreign language (EFL) contexts. However, despite the need to target and isolate the problems associated with writing academic English in EFL contexts, recent research has focused mostly on the psycholinguistic dimension of academic writing in English. The aim of this paper is to redirect interest in English academic writing and situate it back within linguistic enquiry. The study focuses on targeting and isolating the problems associated with English academic writing at the transitional stage from public high school to university. In contemporary research, educators are raising concerns on the level of proficiency in English academic writing, attained by the end of secondary schooling, specifically in the public education context. A case study, conducted on 470 final year secondary students in public schooling in Lebanon, reflected persistent phonemic orthographic errors, grammatical errors, structural and organizational errors, notwithstanding the fact that the participating students were instructed according to the official EFL programme. Errors were interpreted from contemporary linguistic perspectives and a five tier model was proposed for teaching English academic writing in EFL contexts.

Key words: English academic writing, English as a foreign language, the cognitive code approach, interlingual errors, rhetorical differences

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Introduction

Academic writing in English is at the heart of teaching and learning in English foreign language (EFL) contexts. However, despite the need to target and isolate the problems associated with writing academic English in EFL contexts, recent research has focused mostly on the psycholinguistic dimension of academic writing in English (Bratko, Chamorro-Premuzic&Saks 2006; Gilles and Bailleux 2001; Di Fabio&Busonia 2007) and particularly anxiety, motivation and personality traits, at the expense of the linguistic dimension (Conrad 2006; Furnham& Chamorro-Premuzic 2004; Furnham, Chamorrow – Premuzic, & Mc. Dougall 2003; Propart 2009).

In contemporary research, educators are raising concerns on the level of proficiency in English academic writing, attained by the end of secondary schooling, specifically in the public education context (Al Murshidi 2014; Abdulkareem 2013; Al Fadda 2012; Alsamdani, 2010; Tahaineh 2010). However, Pillai (2014), Bjork and Raisanen (1997) and Badger and White (2000) propose that academic writing is one of the most difficult areas that students in the secondary cycle experience. According to recent research (Dehkordi&Allami 2012, Crosby 2009; Shafie, Maesin, Osman, Nayan&Mansor 2010), notwithstanding the various teaching strategies, persistent errors continue to feature in the academic writing of students, specifically those whose primary language is not English.

From researchers’ perspective, in attempting to trace the causes of the problem, Bacha (2012) propose that the school curricula are loaded with literature courses, the language and linguistic component is weak and may be limited in some cases to two courses in communication skills and a course in writing. From another perspective, the authors of English for Academic Study and English for Academic Purposes, published by Garnet Education and targeting Arab learners, maintain that the cultural contrast between the Arabic-speaking and the English-speaking communities affects the rhetorical organization of texts as manifested by the ways in which cohesive devices are used (Phillips 2017). While the Arabic-speaking community is oralized, collectivist, high-contact, reader-responsible; the English-speaking community is literate, individualistic, low-contact, writer-responsible. English cohesion is text-based, specified, change-oriented, and non-additive; while Arabic cohesion is context-based, generalized, repetition-oriented, and additive. This distinction is perceived to affect the English academic writing frame for Arab students (Phillips 2017).

From the educators’ perspective, despite the fact that high school students in the final secondary year would have completed around 1450 hours in the English language by the time they complete their secondary education, students continue to experience problems in writing academic English. In the public education sector the problem is multiplied. In April 2015, Mr Elias Abu Saab, the Lebanese Minister of Education and Higher Education acknowledged the myriad of challenges and gaps that exist in the public school system. Tutors complain that public high schools have larger class sizes, hence fewer opportunities for small group teaching and little time to comment on students’ written work (Abu Ghararah & Hamzah 1998). In addition, tutors disapprove of the ever-increasing range of writing demands made on students, which, in addition to the wider participation of students from diverse backgrounds, make it difficult to attain curriculum objectives with large class sizes (Abdulkareem 2013).
Teaching academic writing is at best delivered at high school level through the guided composition activity, where a set of guide-questions or words are provided (Bjork & Raisanen 1997). However the outcomes of such activities are texts that are packed with disjointed and artificial sentences (Burke 2010). In a meeting with English coordinators of final secondary year at public schools (Al-Khatib 2017), concerns were voiced that despite the fact that the rules that govern writing have been instructed to students, students finishing high school may continue to grapple with the academic conventions of writing at university level, as well as with the appropriate content and form. The endeavour of writing academic English remains an uncharted territory, specifically in the EFL context (Wenyu & Yang, 2008).

The aim of this present paper is to resituate enquiry into difficulties in English academic writing within linguistic research and contribute to targeting and isolating the problems associated with English academic writing at the transitional stage from public high school to university. The paper is based on a case study conducted with 470 final year secondary students in public high schools spread across Mount Lebanon and Beirut governorates in Lebanon.

Background to the study

In response to the increased numbers of non-traditional, refugee and working students that move to higher education in Lebanon, specifically from public schools, universities have begun to provide pedagogical models designed to foster students’ awareness of the expected academic conventions and practices in higher education (Bacha 2012). Lebanon’s education system is divided into five cycles at the school level. Pre-school education constitutes cycle 1 which starts at 3 or 4 years of age; basic education constitutes cycle 2 and encompasses grades 1-3 and cycle 3 encompasses grades 4-6; the intermediate level constitutes cycle 4 and encompasses grades 7-9; secondary education constitutes cycle 5 and encompasses grades 10-12. Secondary education is usually completed at the age of 18 with a Baccalaureate or a professional certificate; both providing access to higher education.

At the transition phase to higher education, students seem to struggle with the content and form of writing; the specialized language required, the specific genre format, ways of constructing the argument, grammar and punctuation. These seem to be at variance from what they are accustomed to at school level (Amin & Alamin, 2012; Badger & White, 2000).

To facilitate the transition from high school, some universities started offering courses dedicated to teaching academic writing, including mini-courses on specific aspects of academic and other types of writing (Bacha 2012). Similar concerns and solutions have been reflected world-wide with higher education institutions offering courses in “freshman composition” which attempt to bridge the gap between high school and higher education by targeting the presumed generic skills of academic writing (Chou, 2011; Yugianigrum, 2010; Murry & Moore, 2006, Yasuda, 2004). First-year students are required to take remedial or basic writing courses, or more advanced writing courses, based on their attainment in the offered placement tests (Can, 2009). However, this move towards making explicit to students the requirements of different text types has highlighted the gap between English academic writing at university level and high school and underlined the fact that universal text types such as the essay or project report are not being sufficiently treated at the high school level.
Teaching writing at the formal writing class setting in high school often focused on presenting students with “models of good writing”, and asking them to replicate these models (Al-Khatib, 2017). At best, the focus is on specific features of the written texts: spelling, text structure, vocabulary, style. Often little analysis occurs on the rhetorical aspects of the texts or the social contexts in which the texts functioned. The assumption is that students will pick up academic writing at some stage of their schooling, or through the process of imitating the modeled texts (Al-Kasawneh & Maher, 2010; Dahkordi & Allami, 2012; Ghabool, Edwina & Kashef, 2012).

**Methodology**

In a pilot study conducted in collaboration with Mount Lebanon and Beirut Governorates, the writing samples from 470 high school final year students in public schools were collected for analysis, with the aim of determining the extent to which students are able to write successfully and hence are prepared for the conventions of what constitutes “appropriate academic writing” in higher education. The samples were analysed based on the Common European Frame of Reference for Languages (CEFR) grid for writing tasks. The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is an international standard for describing language ability. It describes three main levels of English ability: Basic user for CEFR levels A1 and A2, Independent User for CEFR levels B1 and B2, and Proficient user for CEFR levels C1 and C2.

The texts were clerically marked by two graders. Grades were allocated according to CEFR grid, specifically the number of words, the rhetorical function, text purpose, register, domain, grammatical competence, lexical competence, discourse competence and content knowledge.

Out of the 470 students assessed; 288 in Mount Lebanon and 182 in Beirut, a group of 24 students achieved an outstanding level C1; 206 students in Mount Lebanon and 108 students in Beirut achieved an intermediate level ranging between B2 (190 students) and B1 (124 students), a group of 70 students in Mount Lebanon and 62 in Beirut achieved A2-A1 level (see figure 2).
below). The summary of students’ attainment and CEFR level descriptors is presented in figure 3.

**Figure 2. Students at CEFR Levels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>None. The capacity to deal with material which is academic or cognitively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>level</td>
<td>demanding, and to use language to good effect at a level of performance which</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>none</td>
<td>may in certain respects be more advanced than that of an average native</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>speaker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Operational = 24. The ability to communicate with the emphasis on how well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Operational</td>
<td>it is done, in terms of appropriacy, sensitivity and the capacity to deal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>with unfamiliar topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Vantage</td>
<td>190. The capacity to achieve most goals and express oneself on a range of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Threshold</td>
<td>124. The ability to express oneself in a limited way in familiar situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and to deal in a general way with nonroutine information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Waystage</td>
<td>74. An ability to deal with simple, straightforward information and begin to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>express oneself in familiar contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Breakthrough</td>
<td>58. A basic ability to communicate and exchange information in a simple way.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3. Students’ Attainment and CEFR Level Descriptors**
Findings and discussions
The corrected samples featured persistent phonemic orthographic errors, grammatical errors, in addition to structural and organizational errors. In spelling, the identified errors reflected difficulties in dealing with silent letters, vowels having different sounds and different letters having one sound.

As English is a semi-phonetic language, non-native learners attempting to write in the foreign language face very irregular spellings compared to the Arabic spelling. In phonemic orthographic category, silent letters accounted for 15% of the errors, consonant doubling errors accounted for 10% of errors, syllabic representation errors accounted for 20% of errors, letter mis-ordering accounted for 20%, homophone errors accounted for 20% and compound letter representation errors accounted for 15%.

![Phonetic Orthographic Errors](image)

**Figure 4.** Percentages of Phonetic Orthographic Errors

The most persistent types of errors in grammar concerned verb tense, subject-verb agreement, word choice, preposition, singular and plural forms, and word order. However, errors in tenses accounted for 25% of general grammar errors. There were errors in tense sequence, tense substitution, tense marker, deletion, and confusion in the perfect tenses.

The writing samples reflected instances of using double tenses, analogous to the Arabic verb phrase that has *Kana* and present tense verbs. In addition there was confusion in using the perfect forms, especially the present perfect, which has no counterpart in Arabic.

Moreover, references to the future aspect in English manifested various expanded forms, sequenced in disarray. Equally, errors in using tenses also related to misuses of a tense form after modals, use of nouns instead of infinitives, use of simple present instead of future, use of simple past instead of simple present, use of simple past instead of infinitive, use of simple past instead
of gerund after preposition, use of simple past instead of present perfect, use of simple past instead of future feature and instances of misuse in subject and verb agreement.

The second persistent error category pertained to the inappropriate omission or addition of an article and featuring in 20% of the faulty occurrences in the written tasks. Examples included the omission of indefinite and definite articles when ordering or ranking nouns and superlatives and when making generalizations about certain topics, or their addition when generalizing about countable and uncountable nouns in the texts.

Most of the writing samples featured run-on sentences and sentence fragments in addition to problems in word choice and punctuation. When students attempted to connect ideas, their writing reflected confusion in using coordination and subordination, owing to the fact that Arabic doesn’t make a special distinction between them.

In word formation, morphologic derivations were erratically present in the written texts, sometimes erroneously, owing to the non-uniform English system of adding derivations to roots as compared to Arabic, which is more systematic in deriving words from roots according to preset patterns. However, it is noteworthy that some phrasal verbs and idioms were successfully applied in the texts, contrary to assumptions on their difficulty and cultural relatedness.

The examination of the written production of Arab learners of English revealed common errors that related to the sentence structure and mechanics. Mechanics wise, capitalization is mostly omitted and the English scripts produced by the participants relied mostly on the comma in punctuation at the expense of capitalization and other punctuation devices that are nonexistent in Arabic.

In rhetoric, organizing a piece of writing into introduction, body, and conclusion was mostly missing. Correct paragraph divisions were maintained in less than 20% of the samples. Students failed to implement the rules governing English paragraph writing.

Paragraph development consisted of a concession of parallel structures, similar to the Arabic format. Regarding coherence, some samples had no clear thesis statements; others had thesis statements that were not developed properly in the body paragraphs.

As for cohesion, the manifested problems related to incorrect use of cataphoric and anaphoric reference, ellipsis, substitution, and other grammatical cohesive ties. The challenge that students face while writing is increased by the fact that the rhetorical conventions of the English texts such as the structure, organization and grammar differ from those in Arabic.

In addition, overgeneralization and exaggeration were transferred from Arabic rhetoric to English texts. Arab students resorted to exaggeration and tended to avoid simplicity in writing based on the misconception that equates simplicity with the spoken mode characteristics. The texts featured awkward structures, illogical narratives and difficult to follow accounts.

In the third place comes with equal proportions of 15% each; errors in morphology and wrong word formation as well as errors of omission, misuse, or addition in the plurals; errors in
using prepositions where a preposition was either omitted, added, or misused; and errors in using the relative pronouns.

The smallest error category accounting for 10% of error instances relates to the category of verbs. The verb system in each of English and Arabic is a complicated segment of the grammar. In English, each verb form is used to express different meanings, and sometimes the same meaning is expressed through a different form in Arabic. Examples included the misuse of verbs or omission of verb to do.

![Figure 5. Grammar Errors and Percentages](image)

**Figure 5. Grammar Errors and Percentages**

**The Need for a Multi-tiered Model for Teaching English Academic Writing**

According to Kharma and Hajjaj (1997), there exist major linguistic and organizational differences between English and Arabic, which may impact writing in English for Arab students. As for Leki and Carson (1994), writing is not a skill that is naturally acquired but rather learned through formal educational settings, or handed down as a cultural heritage.

In the EFL context, the task of preparing students is entrusted to formal educational institutions since the cultural heritage is not a contributing factor. On the contrary, according to Gordon (2008), students bring with them a set of conventions that are at odds with those of the academic world they are entering at university level as well as the writing conventions of the target language. The cultural differences between the two language communities may account for part of the errors committed in academic writing in the foreign language.

Kern, (2000) relates the difficulties of writing in a second language to culture specific schemata, or mental representations. Mastering how to write a certain genre in Arabic does not necessarily indicate possessing the same capacity in English. For Arab EFL learners to become proficient writers of English, their Arabic writing style needs to be replaced by that of English. However, learners in the EFL context are not acquainted enough with the culture, rhetoric, and the linguistic structures of English, as they have limited exposure to the foreign language.
From another perspective, the extent to which the native language differs from the target language, which is English in this study, is often assumed to result in the observed error patterns. Dulay, Burnt, & Krashen (1982) refer to the phenomenon as first language (L1) transfer or ‘interlingual errors’.

The cognitive-code method on the other hand undertakes that a comprehensive analysis of the rules of language helps in building language competence. Each of the above perspectives has a different set of implications on teaching English academic writing.

The Five Tier Model for Teaching English Academic Writing in EFL Contexts

The persistent errors in the English academic writing samples of writing indicates that the EFL programmes in the context of the study were not able to address English academic writing sufficiently. In general, EFL programmes in the Arab world fail to give English academic writing sufficient targeting through diverse input, encouraging an analytic approach to genre exploration, differentiating academic lexis and inspiring learners to venture into writing with confidence (Abdulkareem, 2013; Al-Khasawneh, & Maher, 2010). Teaching English academic writing within this frame refers not just to words and sentences in isolation, but to the ways in which such words used in context and the social conventions governing their use.

The cognitive code method postulates that active mental processes are associated with language analysis of rich input. The explicit learning of the rules of the language in terms of grammar accuracy, spelling and punctuation should constitute the first level of targeting English academic writing. The second level should be associated with raising students’ awareness about the communicative purpose or the rhetorical purpose of the text. A key aspect of teaching students English academic writing is to help students identify and apply the conventions within which they are expected to write such as the requirements of each text type and the specialized vocabulary and particular sentence structures needed, and then helping students to add these conventions to their linguistic and cultural repertories.
Therefore, to introduce students to these different aspects of language in use, in addition to presenting good models of English academic writing, tutors in the high school context need to

- Identify the genres with which students need to become familiar in order to write successfully in higher education
- Make these genres available to students in ways which enhance their learning and motivation in writing and participating in higher education
- Help learners identify the rhetorical differences between their two languages.
- Find ways of building on students’ existing knowledge of and uses of language.

Based on the above, a five tier model for teaching English academic writing is proposed where linguistic accuracy constitutes the basic level of the model. The communicative or rhetorical purpose of the writing comes at the second level. Genre awareness and implementation constitutes the third level. Identifying and distinguishing the rhetorical differences between English and the first language constitutes the fourth level. Finally, incorporating appropriate cultural references or cultural customization comes at the fifth level.

Figure 7. The Five Tier Model in teaching English Academic Writing

Conclusion
The aim of the paper was to redirect interest in English academic writing and situate it back within linguistic enquiry. Psycholinguistic factors are peripheral complementarities to the indispensable linguistic processes that are at the core of teaching English academic writing.

The study has identified intrinsic difficulties associated with English academic writing at the transitional phase from high school to university in one EFL context. Notwithstanding the hours devoted to teaching EFL, only few students were able to achieve the Effective Operational Level C1 in the collected samples; 24 out of 470. The majority of the students participating in the study, 314 out of 470, attained Threshold B2 and Vantage B1 Levels, with abilities to express themselves in familiar situations. Moreover, about one third of the assessed students, 132 out of 470, managed to reach only the basic Waystage A2 and Breakthrough A1 Levels.

In mapping the identified difficulties, phonemic orthographic inaccuracies, grammatical mistakes, structural and organizational blunders, errors were correlated with interlingual errors,
The Five Tier Model for Teaching English Academic Writing

About the Author:
Hayat Al-Khatib holds PhD from the University of London. Her professional background includes teaching at the University of London (Institute of Education) and (Goldsmith College), external examiner for PhD candidates at European and Lebanese universities, critical reader for the Open University Master level courses, teaching at the Arab Open University since 2003 and Head of the English Department at Arab Open University in Lebanon since 2005 to date.

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The Five Tier Model for Teaching English Academic Writing


The Five Tier Model for Teaching English Academic Writing

Al-Khatib


Problem-Based Writing Instruction: Its Effect on Students’ Skills in Argumentative Writing

Jumariati

English Language Teaching, Post Graduate Program, State University of Malang, Malang, East Java, Indonesia

&

English Department, Teachers’ Training and Education Faculty
University of Lambung Mangkurat, Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, Indonesia

Gunadi Harry Sulistyo

English Language Teaching, Post Graduate Program, State University of Malang, Malang, East Java, Indonesia

Abstract
Teaching writing has been challenging for some teachers particularly in the context of teaching English as a Foreign Language. Learners’ problems with regard to vocabulary, grammar, organization, and mechanics are among those which can become the sources of the challenge. For that reason, various teaching strategies have been developed to facilitate learners in improving their writing skills among which include Problem-Based Learning (PBL). This paper investigates the effectiveness of Problem-Based writing instruction on students’ argumentative writing skills with regard to content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. It employs a quasi-experimental study by involving the intermediate level students of Lambung Mangkurat University, a state university in Indonesia as the experimental and the control groups. The instrument is a writing test which is statistically proven to be valid and reliable. The findings show that there is a significant difference in the mean scores of argumentative writing skills of students taught using Problem-Based writing instruction compared to those taught using guided-writing instruction in which the obtained \( p \) value is .041 which is less than the \( \alpha .05 \) significance level. A significant difference is also found in the components of organization, vocabulary, and grammar. The results confirm that Problem-Based writing instruction can be recommended as an alternative teaching strategy particularly in teaching argumentative essay writing. The study also suggests that further research involves larger samples and the skills in listening, speaking, and reading to establish more conclusive findings on the roles of PBL in English Language Teaching contexts.

Keywords: argumentative writing, effect, Indonesian EFL learners, Problem-Based writing instruction

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Introduction

Teaching writing skills has been challenging for some teachers particularly in the context of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This is due to the fact that EFL learners commonly face problems with regard to vocabulary, grammar, organization, and mechanics while at the same time they need to produce a good piece of writing. Studies show that writing is a difficult skill for EFL learners (Davies, 2003; Alagozlu, 2007; Suhartoyo, 2014). Accordingly, teachers work hard to help learners develop their writing abilities by implementing process and product approach within active and cooperative learning among which include the Task-Based Learning, Project-Based Learning, and Problem-Based Learning.

Additionally, the instructions today are focusing more on developing the essential skills needed for higher education and career among which include the skills in critical thinking, creativity, problem solving, and collaboration (Duron, Limbach & Waugh, 2006; Darling-Hammond & Adamson, 2010; Soland, Hamilton & Stecher, 2013). These skills are essential to prepare schools graduates who are competent for the 21st century which is getting more competitive and complicated. Consequently, a teaching and learning approach which emphasizes the development of problem-solving skills through a student-centered, inquiry, and collaborative learning is needed. To that end, Problem-Based Learning (henceforth PBL) is a worth teacher’s attention to be implemented in the teaching and learning process.

Literature Review

PBL is originally developed in the medical field of Mc Master University in Canada in 1960s to develop the medical students’ knowledge on the content and skills in taking care of patients. PBL is defined by Hung (2013:31) as “an instructional method aimed at preparing students for real-world settings by requiring them to solve problems as the main format of instruction, practice higher order thinking skill, and self-direct as well as reflect on their own learning”. The basic stages of problem presentation, problem analysis, research, and reporting enable the maximum development of students’ skills in problem solving (Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Savery, 2006).

This approach utilizes problem as the stimulus for learning where the teacher acts as a facilitator and a guide that ensures the learning occurs. Since problem plays an essential role in PBL, it is necessary that teachers select the problem carefully. It is recommended that PBL teachers use open-ended problems to trigger different ideas for solutions and that the argumentation skills can be developed (Knowlton, 2003; Hmelo-Silver & Barrows, 2006; Jonassen, 2011; Dole, Bloom & Kowalske, 2015). Likewise, Larsson (2011) recommends PBL teachers to explore current issues in real life, decide the suitability with students’ levels and needs and ask students to select the most interesting and necessary problem.

Teacher plays essential roles in a PBL classroom that ensures learning occurs. Pertaining to this, Hmelo-Silver and Barrows (2006) assert that the teacher of PBL acts as the facilitator who scaffolds student learning by guiding them and using the questioning strategies. In line with this, Hmelo-Silver (2004) mentions that teacher’s questions help building students’ comprehension and making them responsible to learn. The teacher’s scaffolding is based on an assumption that when facilitators support the learning and collaboration processes, students are better able to construct flexible knowledge (Hmelo-Silver, 2004).
Pertaining to implementing PBL in language learning, students’ skills in the target language are developed during the process of collaborative problem-solving which include report stage to present the result of group discussion. As it is asserted by Mathews-Aydinli (2007), in a language classroom with PBL, students should be given the chance to share the result of their work so that they can apply the target language in the report while at the same time their classmates can listen to and share their opinions. Further, Mathews-Aydinli (2007) proposes that the report is carried out through presentation, debates, creating posters, writing essays and so on depending upon the level of students’ proficiency.

To develop critical thinking skills, it is recommended that the problem is a real-life issue that needs to be solved (Knowlton, 2003; Hmelo-Silver & Barrows, 2006; Jonassen, 2011; Larsson, 2011; Dole, Bloom & Kowalske, 2015). Hence, students in PBL classrooms work collaboratively to come to the construction of knowledge on the issue and problem-solving. This notion rests on the notion of social constructivist perspective derived by Lev Vygotsky who posits that human development is basically a socially situated activity in which exploring information to construct knowledge and interacting with other individuals are essential (Storch, 2002; Shehadeh, 2011; Dobao, 2012). As it gains positive impacts on students’ learning, it soon spreads to other fields which include economics, history, and physical education, and gradually to the field of language teaching.

Research has been carried out to investigate the potential roles of PBL in various fields. A case study by Yeung (2010) showed that the students taught using PBL could analyze problem systematically and respond to the questions properly regardless the varied organization of idea and the depth of the arguments. Meanwhile, a study by Bethell and Morgan (2011) in Physical Education revealed that PBL students improved their critical knowledge on the issues. In the field of history, an investigation by Wynn, Mosholder, and Larsen (2014) found that students of the PBL group demonstrated significant improvement in the reasoning skills. Finally, a research in a medical field by Ho, Whitehill and Ciocca (2014) revealed that the PBL students developed their clinical performance for they had improved deep understanding on the patient’s cases. Additionally, the study also figured out that the PBL students developed their interpersonal skills.

Studies of PBL in language teaching field, however, are not as many as those in other fields. Among the studies in language field is an experiment by Othman and Shah (2013) which figured out that PBL students had better critical argument than the non PBL students. Further, the study found that the PBL students were able to provide relevant supporting details in their essays. Another study by Li (2013) revealed that the PBL students developed their skills in argumentative writing particularly in providing evidence.

These studies confirm that PBL is potential in developing students’ skills in writing. However, to the researchers’ best knowledge, investigation has not been carried out to study the potential role of PBL in the field of teaching argumentative writing in Indonesia. In fact, teaching writing in Indonesia is uneasy as many students are still struggling with the vocabulary and grammar. PBL which puts students in working together to analyze problems offers students’ the chance to build their knowledge on an issue, find the causes of the problem, generate solutions to the problem, and find the consequences of the solution. When these learning stages are implemented in writing classrooms, students have the opportunities to explore an issue which
eventually help them in deciding the claim, selecting evidence, and understanding opponent’s views. Furthermore, implementing PBL and integrating it with process writing will provide students the chance to write an essay through the stages of drafting, revising, and peer-editing. As it is stated by Seow (2002) that process writing is a classroom activity which incorporates the writing stages such as planning, drafting, responding, revising, editing, and sharing which facilitate students to make a piece of writing. In a similar vein, empirical studies by Rollinson (2005), Kim (2010), and Moloudi (2011) show that process writing helps improve students’ writing performance wherein students have the chance to write the draft and review each other’s draft.

These characteristics are not evident in traditional writing classrooms of the setting of the current study where students are usually given a topic to write and then work individually to compose a piece of writing. The assistance was mainly from the teacher who reads the draft and gives written feedback. Therefore, considering the features of PBL and the importance of developing the skills in argumentation, the present study focuses on the skills in argumentative essay writing with regard to organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics.

**Research Questions**

The study aimed to investigate the potential role of PBL in the teaching of writing in Lambung Mangkurat University, a higher education institution in Indonesia. It focuses on the argumentative essay with regard to content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. To be specific, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. Do the students taught using Problem-Based writing instruction have better skills in argumentative writing than those taught using guided-writing instruction?
2. Which writing components (content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics) do the students perform better skills?

**Method**

**Research Design, Subjects, and Setting**

The study employed a quasi-experimental design in which two intact classes were utilized as the experimental and the control groups through random selection. The subjects of the study were the undergraduate students of Lambung Mangkurat University in South Kalimantan province in Indonesia. They were the intermediate level students who were enrolled in the Writing IV Course. Prior to the treatment, the test on homogeneity of variance through employing Levene’s Test of SPSS 16.0 version was carried out to see whether the students in the experimental and the control groups were homogeneous in terms of their skills in essay writing. The homogeneity test of the two classes was deployed by using the students’ scores on the middle term and final term tests in the previous writing course. The analysis revealed that the obtained level of significance was .302 which was greater than the alpha value ($\alpha = .05$). It indicated that the classes were homogeneous in terms of the skills in essay writings taught in the previous course of writing which consisted of descriptive, narrative, and expository essays.

**Research Instruments**

As the research instrument, a writing test and analytical scoring rubric were developed and validated. The writing test required the subjects to write an argumentative essay consisting of 400-450 words by selecting one of two topics provided. In addition to the prompt, an analytical scoring rubric was developed which contained the criteria for evaluating the content,
organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. The scoring used a four-scale score which included “very good”, “good”, “average” and “poor” each of which was scored 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. Further, each component was weighed based on its level of importance; therefore content and organization weighed 6, vocabulary and grammar weighed 5, while mechanics weighed 3.

**Validating the Research Instrument**

The writing test was validated by involving three experts in teaching and assessing essays writing. The validation turned out that the prompt was a direct test that measured the skills in writing argumentative essay; the directions of the prompt were clear while the topics were suitable with the genre. Similar to the prompt, the scoring rubric was also validated by involving the three experts.

Subsequent to expert validation, a field tryout was carried out and the results were analyzed by using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Intra Class Correlation Coefficient (ICC) of the SPSS program 16.0 version. It revealed that the obtained \( r \) value was .000 for the content, organization, vocabulary, and grammar whereas the \( r \) value for the mechanics was .001. These values were less than the .05 significance level and thus the scores were valid. Meanwhile, the ICC analysis showed that the reliability coefficient was .843 which was greater than reliability coefficient of .75; therefore, the scores were reliable. The results of the test on validity and reliability showed that the instrument was ready to be utilized.

**Research Procedure**

The treatment was conducted within eight weeks in which the first two weeks were for the trainings on PBL whereas the six meetings were for the treatment. The experimental group was taught using Problem-Based writing instruction while the control group was taught using guided-writing instruction. The researcher and the teacher of the sample classes taught the classes alternately. Prior to the teaching, discussions were carried out regarded the procedures of PBL, the ways to present problem and how to manage the group discussion. The teaching procedures of the control group were also discussed to highlight the difference of teaching the control group and the experimental group.

The stages of PBL were developed by modifying the model of PBL proposed by Burch (2000) which basically consisted of problem presentation, problem analysis, research, and reporting. In the current study, a modification was made by implementing application after the stage of reporting to give students the chance to practice writing argumentative essay in a process writing approach. The minor modification is made to adjust the model of PBL with the objectives of the course of which the current study was conducted. Besides, it is essential to minimize the modifications and stay consistent with the original model in order to obtain success in the implementation of PBL (Pluta et al., 2013). Figure 1 shows the model of PBL of the present study.
Figure 1 Model of PBL of the Current Study

Figure 1 shows that the stages of PBL of the current study consisted of problem presentation where the teacher introduced a problem through pictures and video. The next stage was problem analysis wherein the students comprehend the issue by analyzing the problem, the causes and the effects, the possible solutions, and the most viable solution. During problem analysis, research was conducted by exploring resources to comprehend the issue. After that, students reported the result of the group work in a class conference, listened to others’ ideas, expressed agreement or disagreement and explained the reasons. Then, students write the draft of an argumentative essay individually as the application stage. These procedures were carried out in one meeting. Then, Phase Two was conducted in the next meeting (next week) where students continued writing their drafts, revised the draft based on teacher’s feedback, and peer-edited their drafts with the classmates.

Results

The first analysis is pertinent to the first research objective that is to investigate whether or not the students taught using Problem-Based writing instruction have better skills in argumentative writing than those taught using conventional, guided-writing instruction. Hence, comparing the mean scores of the experimental and the control group was carried out. Prior to comparing the mean scores, it was essential to conduct tests on the statistical assumption which involved the homogeneity and normality testing.

The test on homogeneity was carried out to investigate whether the data on the writing test in both the experimental and control groups were equal and homogeneous. To do this, the Levene's test which is considered as a more robust test than the other homogeneity tests (Garson, 2012) was employed by using the SPSS 16.0 version with the alpha value .05 as the significance level. The analysis showed that the data on the writing test in both groups were not homogeneous as the $p$ value was .027 which was less than the significance level .05 ($p = .027 < \text{sig.} = .05$). Meanwhile, the test on normality was carried out by employing the Shapiro-Wilk test for it is the most powerful test of normality regardless of all types of distribution and sample sizes (Mendes
Problem-Based Writing Instruction: Its Effect on Students’

& Pala, 2003; Razali & Wah, 2011; Ghasemi & Zahediasi, 2012). The result showed that the $p$ value of the writing test of control group was .045 ($p = .045 < \text{sig.} = .05$) which was less than the significance level .05 ($p = .045 < \text{sig.} = .05$). Hence, the data were not normally distributed.

Referring to the results of the homogeneity and normality tests which showed that the data were not homogeneous nor normally distributed a non-parametric test Mann-Whitney U testing was employed to investigate whether or not the difference was significant. Based on the analysis, it was found that the difference between the students’ writing skills was significant. Table 1 shows the descriptive data of the writing test.

**Table 1**

Descriptive Data of Writing Test Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32.50</td>
<td>59.50</td>
<td>92.00</td>
<td>74.250</td>
<td>8.21527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33.50</td>
<td>51.50</td>
<td>85.00</td>
<td>68.1429</td>
<td>10.53992</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data shown in Table 1 reveals that the scores intervals in the experimental group were from 59.50 to 92.00 and the range was 32.50 while the standard deviation was 8.21. In the control group, the scores intervals were 51.50 to 85.00 whereas the range and the standard deviation were 33.50 and 10.54 respectively. Further, the result of comparing the mean scores is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**

Result of the Mann-Whitney U Testing on the Writing Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Test</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mann-Whitney U</td>
<td>267.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcoxon W</td>
<td>673.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$Z$</td>
<td>-2.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As depicted in Table 2, the $p$ value is .041 which is less than the significance level .05 ($p = .041 < \text{sig.} = .05$). Thus, the statistical analysis revealed that there was a significant difference in the mean scores of argumentative writing skills between the students taught using Problem-Based writing instruction and those taught using Guided-writing instruction.

To answer the second research question with regard to which component the difference was significant, the scores in each writing component of the essays between the experimental group and the control group were compared. The statistical computation by using the
independent samples t-test of One-Way ANOVA was carried out. The results of the analysis are summarized in Table 3.

### Table 3
Result of Analysis on each Writing Component

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>score_content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>23.143</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23.143</td>
<td>1.843</td>
<td>.180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>678.214</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>12.560</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>701.357</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>score_organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>52.071</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>52.071</td>
<td>4.331</td>
<td>.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>649.286</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>12.024</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>701.357</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>score_vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>28.571</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28.571</td>
<td>5.053</td>
<td>.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>305.357</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>5.655</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>333.929</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>score_grammar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>28.571</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28.571</td>
<td>6.926</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>222.768</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>4.125</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>251.339</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>score_mechanics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>.798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>32.705</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>.606</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32.746</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis found that there was a significant difference in the mean scores of the organization, vocabulary, and mechanics wherein the p value was .042 for the organization, .029 for the vocabulary, and .011 for the grammar. These values were less than the .05 significance level (p < sig.05) which indicated that the mean differences were significant. Meanwhile, there was no significant difference in the mean scores in content and mechanics wherein the p value for content was .180 and the p value for the mechanics was .798. These values were greater than the .05 significance level which meant that the mean differences were not significant (p > sig.05). This was to say that the students in the experimental group performed better than those in the control group as far as organization, vocabulary, and grammar were concerned.

### Discussions
The present study investigates the effect of Problem-Based writing instruction on students’ argumentative writing skills compared to guided-writing instruction. Based on the statistical analysis, the students who are taught using Problem-Based writing instruction outperform those taught using guided-writing instruction. This is supported by the result of the inferential statistical analysis by using Mann-Whitney U test which reveals that the obtained p value is .041 which is less than the .05 significance level. This means that there is a significant difference in the mean scores of argumentative writing skills between the students taught using Problem-Based writing instruction and those taught using Guided-writing instruction. This
Evidence is also supported by the mean difference between the two groups which is 6.11 points wherein the mean score of the experimental group is 74.25 while the mean score of the control group is 68.14. Although the obtained $p$ value is .041 which is close to the critical value of .05, it indicates that Problem-Based writing instruction is more effective than guided-writing instruction in developing the students’ skills in argumentative essay writing.

The finding of the present study is relevant with the theory of PBL which postulates that Problem-Based Learning “…enhances students’ learning outcomes by promoting their abilities and skills in applying knowledge, solving problems, practicing higher order thinking skills, self-directing and reflecting on their own learning” (Hung, 2013:31). In the current study, the procedures of Problem-Based writing instruction were designed carefully into the stages of problem presentation, problem analysis, research, reporting, and application each of which facilitates the students in comprehending the issue and writing argumentative essay. The procedures of Problem-Based writing instruction provide the students with the opportunities to work collaboratively to comprehend the problem, explore information relevant to the problem, analyze the cause and effect, and propose the solution. Hence, the procedures of PBL enable the maximum development of students’ skills in problem solving (Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Savery, 2006).

The cooperative learning applied in Problem-Based writing instruction lies within the notion of social constructivist perspective which seems to contribute to the significant difference in the students’ mean scores. Within the cooperative learning principle, students help each other to gain knowledge on problem solutions. This is through the group works where the students have the chance to build knowledge on the problems and discuss the best solution to the problem (Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Savery, 2006; Jonassen, 2011). As it is directly observed during the students’ learning in the experimental group, they work as a team to comprehend the problem, find the causes and the effects, propose viable solutions, and decide the best solution to the problem. They also learn to listen to others, negotiate ideas, and manage any conflict due to disagreement on problem solutions. The group work is pertinent with the social constructivist perspective derived by Lev Vygotsky who posits that human development is basically a socially situated activity in which exploring information to construct knowledge and interacting with other individuals are essential (Storch, 2002; Shehadeh, 2011; Dobao, 2012).

The other contributing factor of the significant difference in the mean scores of argumentative writing skills between students in the experimental group and those in the control group is the process writing approach which is integrated into PBL. In the current study, process writing is manifested in the application stage which enables the students to write the draft of their essays and work cooperatively to read their classmates’ drafts, spot the errors regarding grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics, and provide suggestions for corrections of the drafts. Theoretically, process writing is a classroom activity which incorporates the writing stages such as planning, drafting, responding, revising, editing, and sharing which facilitate students to make a piece of writing (Seow, 2002). It is also confirmed by empirical studies that process writing helps improve students’ writing performance wherein students have the chance to write the draft and review each other’s draft (Rollinson, 2005; Kim, 2010; Moloudi, 2011).

The apparent explanation that the students taught using Problem-Based writing instruction have better skills in argumentative essay writing than those taught in the conventional
Problem-Based Writing Instruction: Its Effect on Students’ Jumariati & Sulistyo

guided-writing instruction is due to the principle of scaffolding from both the teacher and the classmates. In the current study, the teacher of the PBL group helps the students by asking leading questions, providing the worksheets (the research guidance, outlining, revising, and editing sheets), and clarifying. As it is theorized by Hmelo-Silver and Barrows (2006), that in a PBL classroom the teacher acts as a facilitator who scaffolds student learning by guiding them and using the questioning strategies. Similarly, Hmelo-Silver (2004) mentions that teacher’s questions help building students’ comprehension and making them responsible to learn. The scaffolding from the teacher is based on an assumption that when facilitators support the learning and collaboration processes, students are better able to construct flexible knowledge (Hmelo-Silver, 2004).

On the contrary, in the control group where the conventional guided-writing instruction is applied, the scaffolding is merely from the teacher who gives written feedback on the students’ draft; there is no peer-editing as the classmates’ scaffolding during the process. Thus, students who feel uncomfortable with asking or clarifying teacher’s feedback and decide to revise the draft on their own may not improve their drafts.

The findings of the current study are also along with the findings of previous studies. A similar result is found in an investigation by Othman and Shah (2013) wherein college students’ essays in the PBL group are better than those in the non PBL group (traditional lecture) as the PBL students are able to present critical argument and relevant supporting details. The result of the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental group (PBL) shows significant difference ($p = .000 < \text{sig.} = .05$) whereas in the control group (conventional teaching) the difference is not significant ($p = .440 > \text{sig.} = .05$). Further, the study by Othman and Shah (2013) investigates the aspects of writing which the students show significant difference. Based on the analysis, the students in the PBL group improve significantly in the aspect of organization and content. The control group also improves in those aspects even though the improvement is slight. The current study is along with the study by Othman and Shah (2013) which concludes that PBL has significant effect on students’ skills in argumentative writing. The study also applies a quasi experimental design with PBL as the experimental groups and traditional lecture as the control groups and confirms that PBL brings positive impact on students’ learning.

The result of the present study also goes hand in hand with the previous research conducted by Li (2013) which reveals that the students’ abilities in writing argumentative essay improve after they are taught using PBL with .84 points of difference between the scores in the pre-test and post-test. The post-test on the critical thinking skills also shows improvement as .5 points compared to the scores in the pre-test. Similarly, the study by Li (2013) applies a quasi experimental design by integrating the model of PBL and the process writing by putting the students in PBL group work prior to individual essay writing. All in all, the findings of the present study confirm the findings of previous studies which show that students in PBL group write better than those taught using conventional teaching strategy.

Conclusions

Based on the statistical analysis, the students who are taught using Problem-Based writing instruction outperformed those taught using guided-writing instruction. This means that there is a significant difference in the mean scores of argumentative writing skills between the
students taught using Problem-Based writing instruction and those taught using Guided-writing instruction. Furthermore, the significant difference is found in the components of organization, vocabulary, and grammar. It indicates that Problem-Based writing instruction is more effective than guided-writing instruction. Therefore, Problem-Based writing instruction is recommended as an alternative strategy to teach argumentative writing.

**Recommendations**

The study reveals that Problem-Based writing instruction is effective in improving students’ skills of argumentative writing. The empirical evidence confirms that this strategy can be recommended as an alternative teaching strategy to teach argumentative writing. Hence, it is recommended that teachers of EFL implement PBL to teach writing by carefully employing the stages of problem presentation, problem analysis, research, reporting and application. It is also suggested that teachers integrate process writing approach into the stages of PBL to facilitate students in practicing writing.

Since the present study has limitations with regard to sample size that the findings cannot be generalized to larger population, it is recommended that further research covers larger samples. It is also recommended that further research is conducted to investigate the potential roles of PBL in teaching other language skills such as listening, speaking, and reading so that more conclusive findings on its roles can be established.

**About the authors:**

**Jumariati** is a lecturer at the English Department of Lambung Mangkurat University, Banjarmasin, Indonesia. Currently, she is pursuing her Doctoral degree in English Language Education in the State University of Malang. Her major academic interests are in teaching EFL writing and materials development.

**Gunadi Harry Sulistyo** is a professor at English Education Department, State University of Malang. His academic interest includes mainly English learning assessment, research methods in EFL, and research statistics for quantitative data analyses in research on EFL as well as TEFL.

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Problem-Based Writing Instruction: Its Effect on Students’

Jumariati & Sulistyo


A Program to Develop the Students’ Awareness of E-learning and its Applications in English in the Foundation Program of Dhofar University

Sobhy Ahmed Soliman
College of Arts and Applied Sciences
Dhofar University, Salalah, Oman

Ashry Abdallah Mahmoud Waziry
Foundation Program, Dhofar University
Salalah, Oman

Abstract
This study aims to identify the degree to which English language students in the Foundation Program at Dhofar University, Oman are aware of e-learning and its applications in their field of specialization. It further attempts to identify the effectiveness of certain patterns and tools of e-learning in student performance, using both descriptive and experimental approaches. To achieve these goals, researchers use a scale to measure the awareness of e-learning that includes twenty-five multiple choice questions and an evaluation card on e-learning applications in English. The study sample consists of sixty male and female students at the university. There are two primary outcomes. First, the degree of student awareness of English language e-learning is found to be relatively weak, with statistically significant differences in awareness among male and female students in favor of females. There are further statistically significant differences between students’ average scores before and after the development of an e-learning awareness program in favor of post application. The study makes a number of recommendations, including adopting the pilot awareness program in all majors and holding e-learning training seminars for both faculty and students, which, it is hoped, will bolster the effectiveness of e-learning at the university.

keywords: Awareness, E-learning, English language, foundation program

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1.1 Introduction
The beginnings of the twentieth century were characterized by a massive information revolution. One of its most important manifestations was the emergence of the internet, which was the most important technological achievement of this period (Harris, 2005). This technological revolution was accompanied by the spread of a number of concepts that did not exist before, such as simulated classrooms, e-learning, e-books, encyclopedias, digital books, electronic library, electronic scales, electronic activities, e-environment, e-school, e-learning, and virtual labs (Keller, 2005).

E-learning is one of the most important concepts to have captured the thinking of many researchers and scholars over the past few years in terms of theory and application. It is based primarily on the availability of tools provided by technology, represented by the computer and the internet, that were the cause of its spread and development (Zemsky & Massy, 2004). E-learning, as pointed out by Lark & Mayer (2007), is “an educational system that uses information and computer network techniques to strengthen and expand the educational process scale. This happens through a variety of means, including computer hardware, in promoting the educational objectives of the process and the delivery of educational content.” E-learning is an interactive environment in which approved applications are based on these technologies. E-learning enables student access to learning resources in any place.

The Government of Oman has become aware of the importance of e-learning, so it has conducted several conferences that help disseminate technological awareness. The e-government conference was held in the Sultanate of Oman in December 2009, followed by several conferences at the level of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). At the same time, Dhofar University is keen to be in line with government initiatives. It has included the Moodle system in curricula, and official dealings between both students and the university and students and faculty occur through e-mails. The university encourages e-learning through activities built around projects and assignments.

The English language unit in the Foundation Program at Dhofar University adopts all types of electronic applications, from registration to monitoring grades. Since English is the medium of instruction at DU, there is a definite need to approach the teaching of English at the university in a systematic, meaningful and purposeful manner. The Foundation Program at DU offers incoming students with low proficiency in English an intensive program to help them pursue their studies in the major of their choice through the medium of English, with the aim of immersing students in the English language. The Foundation Program at DU takes the advantage of all modern approaches in education, including e-learning (Dhofar University Catalogue, 2013/2014).

In order to develop students’ awareness of e-learning and its applications in English in the FP at DU, the program is dependent on small educational modules containing the concept of e-learning and its characteristics, types, tools and applications in the field of English language.

1.2 Rationale
While teaching English skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) in the FP at DU and during students’ completion of the assignments required of them, the researchers have noticed a weakness in their awareness of e-learning and its applications in the field of English. Many
students do not take the advantage of the internet to complete their assignments. Many of them do not make use of CDs that accompany their textbooks. They cannot even send their files electronically. These shortfalls confirm the results of the exploratory study carried out by the researchers on a sample of students from the FP at DU. A survey was used in the exploratory study which showed that 50% of the respondents had not mastered the use of computers at a university level, and 70% had poor internet skills or could not use what skills they had in the field of education. The survey also found that 95% of the respondents did not have knowledge of the concept of ‘e-learning.’

The Foundation Program at Dhofar University depends mainly on e-learning, where Moodle system and e-mails are used in official communications within the university, not only between students themselves or between students and faculty, but also between students and the administration. All students have electronic usernames and passwords to access all things relevant to them, such as study plans, the dates of tests, their results and online registration. However, the Foundation Program students at DU cannot benefit from e-learning while they still rely on traditional methods. They are still far from benefiting from technological innovations even though the university has numerous labs with many computers and local and global networks.

1.3 Research Questions
The study problem lies in the complaint of faculty members within the Foundation Program at Dhofar University about students' lack of awareness, especially English language students, of the concept of e-learning and its characteristics, types, tools and applications in the field of English language. The current study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What degree of awareness of e-learning do the English language students in the FP at Dhofar University have?
2. What are the effects of the gender variable on awareness of e-learning?
3. What program is used in developing an awareness of e-learning?
4. What is the effectiveness of the program in developing an awareness of e-learning?
5. What is the effectiveness of the program in applying e-learning types in English?

1.4 Purpose
The proposed research aims to:

1. Identify the degree of Dhofar University Foundation Program English language students' awareness of e-learning and its applications.
2. Discover whether there is a difference between males and females in awareness of e-learning.
3. Prepare and design programs for developing awareness of e-learning.
4. Identify the effectiveness of e-learning via the internet in the development of students' awareness of e-learning and its applications in the English language field.

1.5 Significance
The significance of the research is as follows:

1. To inform university administrators of students’ degree of awareness of e-learning and its applications in the field of English.
2. To provide those responsible for university education a model represented in a proposed program to increase awareness of how to deploy e-learning education and how to get the best benefit in the English language Foundation Program.
3. To open the door to further research in the field of e-learning at Dhofar University so as to contribute to the development of curricula.

1.6 Hypotheses
In light of the proposed research problem and its questions, the study’s hypotheses can be formulated as follows:
1. The degree of students' awareness of e-learning in the English language field is weak.
2. Statistically, there are significant differences at the level of (0.05) among male and female students in the same level of awareness of e-learning, with higher awareness among female students.
3. Statistically, there are significant differences at the level of (0.05) between the two averages of the respondent students' scores in pre and post-applications in the development of e-learning awareness, with higher scores among post-applications.
4. There are statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) between the average scores of respondents’ scores in the two pre and post-applications in their applications for e-learning types in the field of English, with higher scores among post-applications.
5.  

1.7 Research Tools
The researchers used the following tools:
1. A scale to measure students’ awareness of English language e-learning.
2. An evaluation card to assess the performance of English language students in their application of some e-learning types.

2. Literature Review
Computer technology is vital to language instruction and learning. This type of learning is called e-learning (Sites, 2004). The importance of e-learning appears clearly when individuals and educational organizations provide a language acquisition opportunity on the internet through computer-mediated methodologies (Dillon & Vallentine, 2006). The wide variety of e-learning includes synchronous and asynchronous computer-mediated communication, language acquisition software, and course management software like WebCT, Moodle, and Blackboard (Petty, Johnston & Shafer, 2004).

Language e-learning theories suggest that learning a language is an active process in which learners construct new knowledge which is based on arbitrated and self-organized input (Baumgartner, Lee, Birden & Flowers, 2003). This idea is supported by Walker’s (2003), as it argues that linguistic and cognitive language theories emphasize the importance of presenting language learners to interact with authentic, contextualized and linguistic activities and materials. E-learning in language helps students to be self-directed and to have good organization and study skills. E-learners are trained to feel comfortable working independently (Askov, Johnston, Petty & Young, 2003). The importance of e-learning and its benefits are also noted by Meskill and Mossop (2000). In this study, the researchers explain how to implement computer technologies in the classroom practically, efficiently and effectively.
In their study, Cuadrado-García & Ruiz (2010) provide wide evidence of the importance of using Computer Assisted Learning for foreign language. This study also presents Spanish students' opinions on using Moodle for submitting their projects and assignments. The students opine that Moodle give them a great opportunity to practice all English skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) and helped improve their English skills.

In the same context, Soliman (2014) includes many studies in her research on using e-learning to develop English as a foreign language (EFL) students' language skills and how it activates their independent learning. She studies advantages of Moodle in language learning. These advantages are summarized in the following points:

- It is an interactive and appealing mode of instruction and learning (Diamond & Irwin, 2013).
- It motivates students and increases their global awareness (Meloni, 1998).
- It encourages foreign language learners to work independently since each student can work on different tasks within the integrated learning environment (Wu et al., 2012).
- It improves students' language skills as they have the chance to practice reading, writing, listening and speaking (Nedeva & Dimova, 2010).
- It increases the students' study time of the target language, which helps improve their language proficiency (Fryer et al., 2014).

In the same context, Jia et al. (2012) customize Moodle to build individualized vocabulary review and assessment functions for English instruction. This web-based system was integrated into the regular English instruction of an experimental class of Grade 3 students in a junior middle school. It was used for one school hour almost every week for an entire school term. Within this blended learning environment, the students' performance of the experiment class in the ordinary and especially vocabulary examinations throughout the school term improved gradually and was better than that of the control class, such that their class achieved a first among sixteen classes in the same grade on the final examination, compared with eighth place before the experiment.

The survey and interview with the students also demonstrate the system's valuable functions for vocabulary acquisition and listening comprehension, and show that the students favor syllabus design with the intelligent course management system. The results show that blended learning in an English class with individualized vocabulary acquisition and assessment systems can improve student performance in vocabulary acquisition and on an ordinary test. The researchers suggest that this system can also be applied to other English classes.

In Taiwan, Shih (2011) investigate the effects of integrating Facebook and peer assessment with college English writing class instruction through a blended teaching approach. The subjects were 23 first-year students majoring in English at a technological university in Taiwan. They participated in an 18-week English writing class. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed in the study. Research instruments include pre-test and post-test of English writing skills, a self-developed survey questionnaire, and in-depth student interviews. Shih’s findings suggest that incorporating peer assessment using Facebook in the learning of English writing can be interesting and effective for college-level English writing classes. Students can improve their English writing skills and knowledge not only from the in-class instruction but also
from cooperative learning. In addition, this Facebook-integrated instruction can significantly enhance students' interest and motivation.

3. Research Approach and Procedure

3.1 Research Approach

The objectives of the study necessitate the use of all the descriptive methods and the experimental research methods of research as follows:

3.1.1 Descriptive Approach

The researchers intend to describe the levels of English language students in terms of the extent of their awareness of the concept of e-learning and its features, characteristics, elements, types and applications in the field of English language. They also intend to interpret students' strengths and weaknesses in this awareness.

3.1.2 Method

The experimental method was used to determine the effectiveness of the program in awareness development of e-learning and its applications to English language students.

3.2 Sample

The study sample consisted of 60 students of the English language students in the FP at DU (7.5% of the total student population of around 800 students).

3.3 Tools

3.3.1 Measure Awareness

The set-up of the awareness scale went through the following procedural steps:

- Measure the objective: To measure the awareness of English language students in the FP at DU of e-learning.
- Measure sources: The researchers depended on several sources, including the theoretical framework for the study, previous field studies and research, and other similar awareness measurements.
- The measure consisted of 25 phrases with multiple choice answers, with a harmony of alternatives. There was also clarity of vocabulary with complete precision.
- The measure was given to a group of examiners to approve its validity and reliability, and to elicit their viewpoints in regard of the importance of the measure to the sample.
- After the arbiters' approval of the measure validity, required adjustments were done, validating the scale.
- The scale was applied initially to a sample of English language students in the FP at DU in the third semester of the academic year 2015/2016. This sample was different from the core sample, and after fifteen days the re-application the correlation coefficient between the two applications was found to be 0.82 by using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program: a high value that indicates the reliability of the measurement.
- After verifying the validity and reliability of the measure, it was applied to an exploratory sample to discover the level of their awareness of e-learning. Then the sample students were directed to study the program on the internet by themselves. Their studies were
followed up with in the form of questions to make sure that they were making progress. After making sure that the students had completed studying the program, done the required assignments and sent them electronically to the researchers, the scale was applied.

- The data was statistically collected and processed.

### 3.3.3 Evaluation Card

Preparation of the assessment card proceeded according to a number of steps, as follows:

- The Objective of the Assessment Card: To know the level of application of English language students for types of e-learning in the FP at DU.
- Based on the theoretical framework of the study and previous research, the evaluation card items were formulated, taking into consideration that the card items were in short, clear content-expressive phrases. The evaluation card phrases included 25 items.
- The evaluation card was given to a group of examiners to approve its validity and reliability, and to elicit their opinion in regard of the importance of the evaluation card to the sample.
- The evaluation card was applied to students’ tasks and assignments during the first and second semesters of the academic year 2015/2016.
- The data was statistically collected and processed.

### 3.4 Program

After applying the awareness scale to the respondents, a program for the development of this awareness preparation was prepared. The process of program formulation went through the following steps:

#### 3.4.1 Overall Objectives

The program aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- Define what is meant by e-learning in terms of its concept and its features and characteristics.
- Distinguish between the web-based and computer based e-learning.
- Clarify the elements of e-learning and their complementary relations.
- Apply e-learning in their education.
- Develop awareness of e-learning.

#### 3.4.2 Program Description

The program began with a preliminary introduction about the developments in education, its features and the need for students to develop an awareness of e-learning as a cutting-edge technological innovation. Its importance for students in light of rapid developments was also introduced. There was an introduction of the general aims of the proposed program. Four educational modules were included: Introduction to e-education, tools of e-learning, elements of e-learning and applications of e-learning in the English language.
Then the e-learning tools were determined to be used and an accurate description was given. After that, the teaching and learning strategies that were used in the program were explained. The next step was to determine activities for each lesson in order to enrich the students' knowledge about the program.

3.4.3 Procedures for implementing the program:

After developing the essential educational teaching materials and prepared the necessary tools to evaluate students, the researchers did the following:

- A virtual learning environment was designed on the internet in order to teach students the content of the educational modules related to e-education through which the modules was loaded in this environment. This was at the following address: http://drsobhy.wikispaces.com/.
- An e-mail was sent to students with a view toward solving any problem encountered during the application period, and in order to send links to sites and files representing a number of enrichment activities in relation with the modules: aabdallah@du.edu.om.
- The students were prepared to study the program with the explanation of its idea. The continuation in its study was according to the desire of each student.
- Students were directed to self-study the program on the internet. They were followed up with on a weekly basis to make sure that they were proceeding well in the study of the program. This was done by asking them a number of questions related to the program in order to explore their follow-up to the program.
- The students’ period of study of the program continued as self-study for four weeks.
- After confirming the completion of the program and assignments by students, results were sent electronically to the professor supervising the application and the post-application test was applied.

3.5 Statistical Treatments

1. The average and percentage were used to identify the students’ awareness level of e-learning of English and the extent to which they could apply the tools needed for e-learning in their area of specialization.
2. Researchers used a T-test to calculate differences between males’ and females’ awareness of e-learning and its applications in the field of English. The statistical remedies were conducted by using SPSS.

4. Results & Discussion

Results are interpreted in accordance with the research questions, and their similarities and differences to previous studies. Finally, recommendations based on these results are presented.
1. Findings in relation to the degree of the English Language students’ awareness of e-learning

Table 1. Quad degree of the sampled individuals’ awareness levels of e-learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Quad</td>
<td>11.21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23.08</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Quad</td>
<td>13.62</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>33.85</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Quad</td>
<td>15.99</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24.61</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Quad</td>
<td>More than 17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18.46</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following can be noted from the above table:

Obviously, 56.93% out of the total of the sampled individuals’ awareness of e-learning was either average or poor, and (33.85%) out of whom their awareness of e-learning was less than 50% and more than 25%, while 23.08% out of the sampled individuals, their awareness of e-learning was poor as their awareness percentage amounted to 25% and below. Therefore, the first hypothesis turns out to be correct, which is that the awareness degree of the English Language students of e-learning is relatively poor. This weak level might be attributed to the following:

- The existing educational modules on preparation of English faculty do not include e-learning as one of the modern breakthroughs of technology in the field of education, although almost all educational and non-educational institutions have adopted the e-government trend.
- Teachers do not address the issue of e-learning in their lectures.
- Students are not usually assigned research on the internet.
- Many students are not interested in searching for new educational subjects.
- E-learning and its educational tools require in-depth knowledge about how they are used and employed in their areas of specialization, but English students do not have such knowledge.

This result is in line with the results of the study case conducted by Michels (2000), which states that non-awareness of the importance of the use of information technology at the colleges and the incapability of using the internet is considered to be one of the reasons behind students’ being unwilling to use computers in the classroom. These results are in agreement with the results of the case study conducted by Abdu and Shirqawi (2005), which notes the poor awareness of students at the colleges of education of the judgment standards for the modernized educational materials.
The e-learning awareness of the percent of 24.61% of the sampled individuals was less than 75% and more than 50%, while a percent of 18.46% of the sampled individuals, their awareness of e-learning was 75% and above. Those who have attained more than 50% of e-learning awareness can be attributed to the following:

- They have benefited from the university’s e-library and have shown willingness to conduct outside research in their area of specialization.
- Some students have their own laptop computers and are trying to develop their skills by using these devices.
- Some of them have their own emails and maintain the capability of talking with others through online conversation programs. Some also subscribe to a number of forums.
- Those students may visit internet cafés and this is why they have a stronger background in e-learning and its applications in general.

2. Findings in relation to gender-related impact on e-learning awareness of the sampled individuals

Table 2. Students’ level of awareness of e-learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>T-test</th>
<th>Significant level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is obvious from the table above that there are significant differences at the level of 0.05 between the average degrees of males and females in terms of e-learning awareness level. The significance level was 0.03 and the degree (T) is calculated at 2.16 is higher than its table value, which indicates differences in statistical significance at the awareness level between males and females in favor of females. This confirms the gender-related impact on awareness level of e-learning. this can be attributed to the following:

- High academic achievement levels of female students at secondary certificate examinations.
- Female students fully comply with attendance at computer lab at the college.
- Female students fully comply with the practical aspects of academic courses as they are committed to achieve these course electronically by using computer and the internet.

3. Findings in relation to the program used in developing the awareness of e-learning of the sampled individuals

To approach this vision, the theoretical framework of the current study is used to be the basis, as well as the results of the previous studies and research in this field. Therefore, a program for the development of e-learning awareness is proposed, which includes the following:
A Program to Develop the Students’ Awareness of E-learning  

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- **General Objectives**
  - To introduce students to e-learning, its concept, significance and characteristics.
  - To enlighten students about e-learning elements and tools adopted therein.
  - To encourage students to put into practice tools of e-learning in the field of English.
  - To develop students’ awareness of e-learning and its applications in the field of English.

- **Modules of the proposed program:**
  - First module: An introduction to e-learning, which includes e-learning concepts, objectives, requirements and characteristics.
  - Second module: E-learning types, including personal computer based e-learning and internet-based e-learning tools.
  - Third module: E-learning elements, including different categories and types, teachers, educational curriculums, communication network, assessment, imaginary classes, e-mail, electronic symposiums, chatting rooms and simulation.
  - Fourth module: E-learning applications in English, including e-learning types that can be used in English topics, some of which are available on both the internet and computers.

- The e-learning types designed to be used in the research include an electronic site which represents the hypothetical educational environment and e-mail.
- Education and learning strategies were used in explaining lessons of the program. These strategies were in the form of introductory lectures accompanied by modern educational media, discussion, brainstorming, self-learning, practical demonstration, discovery learning, self-research, practical model, immediate experience and training duties.
- Enriching activities were designated for each lesson with the aim of enriching students’ understanding of program lessons.
- Objective true-false and multiple choice questions were drawn up with the aim of identifying the extent to which students achieved the program objectives, as well as the information contained in the program and application of the same.

4. **Findings related to the effectiveness of the program in the developing the awareness e-learning of sampled individuals.**

What is the effectiveness of the program proposed for the development of English Language students’ awareness?

**Table 3. Differences between two averages of pre and post measures in Students’ Awareness of E-Learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>T-test</th>
<th>Level of significant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>13.17</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>40.061</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the table above, it is easy to see the growth of the sampled individuals’ awareness of the e-learning after their self-study of the proposed program as the T-test value for the difference between both averages of students’ marks in the pre and post-application amounted to (10.61), which is considered statistically significant at (0.001) level. This indicates the effectiveness of the proposed program in developing students’ awareness of e-learning. Thus, the second hypothesis of the research hypotheses is affirmed by stating the following: There are differences of statistical significant at (0.01) level between both averages of the sampled individuals’ marks in both pre and post-applications in the development of awareness of e-learning in favor of post-application. This may indicate the following:

- Crystal-clear formulation of the educational modules content that matches students’ level of awareness.
- Flexible study of modules that allows students the opportunity to take learning anywhere anytime.
- Easy communication between students themselves and students and faculty through a variety of channels, like emails and chat rooms.
- Availability of opportunities for exchanging opinions about topics being put forward through the forum.
- Continuity in accessing the educational modules as the student can access the information he/she needs at any time.

These results agree with results of the study conducted by Hemenway,(2000) which finds that an internet-based learning environment helps students acquire information and increase their cognitive achievement. This type of learning also leads to the development of cognitive awareness and some strategies of understanding of the sampled individuals. These results are also in agreement with results of the study conducted by Sener (2000), which demonstrates the success of unsynchronized internet-based learning and the use of the internet in designing courses and the strategies of delivering the same. This approach has proved its success in increasing learners’ motivation. These results concur with results of the study conducted by Abdulsalam (2001), which aims at designing and producing multimedia computer programs to train students in the use of worldwide web and then to be assessed in terms of its efficiency. The study has proved the effectiveness of the program as the differences were statistically significant in favor of the test group.

These results are also in agreement with Albatai’s (2001) results, which demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed program for demonstrators, faculty and teaching assistant staffs training in some uses of the internet in accordance with the training needs as the percentage of the adjusted attainment in the cognitive achievement of the program is 89.24%.
5. Findings related to the effectiveness of the program in applying e-learning types in of the sampled individuals:

Table 4. Extent of the application the students to e-learning tools in English Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>H</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>To send to his/her teacher a file on one of the English Language topics.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Exchanging learning experiences with his/her classmates.</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>To send to his/her teacher some activities relating to English Language.</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>2.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>To send to his/her teacher different links relating to tasks in English Language</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Raising queries to his/her teacher about solutions to problems relating to his/ her specialization.</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>2.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Applications in the field of Forum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>To pose a topic for discussion</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>To reply to his/ her classmates’ participations</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>To answer a question raised by teacher</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>2.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Program to Develop the Students’ Awareness of E-learning

<p>| | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>To enquire about one of the teaching subjects</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>To upload one of the submitted files</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C- Applications in the field of Worldwide Web.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>To save an internet page relating to specialization</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>To send to his/her teacher in English websites links.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>2.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>To maintain the research results about one of the English subjects.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>To produce webpage through Word program</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D- Applications in the field of conversation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>To maintain a conversation, he/she was held with one of the English learning topics.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>2.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>To hold a discussion with his/her teacher on one of the contemporary learning topics.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second: Computer-aided electronic teaching applications.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>To maintain various five programs relating to English Language field.</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Program to Develop the Students’ Awareness of E-learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>Total Marks</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>To deliver a PowerPoint presentation on a topic in the field of English Language.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>2.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>To prepare a research in brief on one of the learning tasks through Word program.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>To prepare a textual file through Word program on websites relating to English Language.</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>3189</td>
<td>2.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is obvious from the previous Table 4 that the sampled individuals’ application level for the types of e-learning in the field of English was in a significant grade in general as their average marks was (2.66) with a percentage of (89%). Hence, the third hypothesis of the research hypotheses is realized in the following way: There are differences of statistical significance at (0.01) level between both averages of the students’ marks of the sampled individuals in both pre and post-applications in terms of their applications for the e-learning types in the field of English in favor of the post-application.

Table 4 generates the following conclusions:

A- The sampled individuals’ application level for the internet-based e-learning types in the field of English was found to be significant as the average of their grades was (2.66) with a percentage of (89). Some of phrases of this domain have a significant mark as the average ranged between 2.53 and 2.95, with a percentage ranging between 84% and 98%. Hereunder are the tasks:

- To send to the teacher a file containing one subject of the English subjects.
- To send to the teacher several links related to English.
- To ask the teacher about a solution to a problem in relation to an area of specialization.
- To put forward a subject for discussion.
- To answer classmate feedback.
- To answer a question posed by the teacher about a particular topic.
- To research said particular topic.
- To upload one of the files being submitted.
- To save a webpage related to the area of specialization.
- To send to the teacher website links on English grammar.
- To carry on a conversation with classmates about one of the subjects.

There are some phrases of average application by the sampled individuals as their average ranged between (2.30 to 2.48) with a percentage ranged between (77% to 83%). These phrases are as explained hereunder:

- To exchange teaching experience with classmates.
- To maintain results of research on an academic subject.
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- To create a webpage through Word.
- To discuss a contemporary academic subject with the teacher.

B- The sampled individuals’ application level for the computer-based e-learning pattern in the field of English Language was found to be significant as the average of their marks ranged between (2.55 to 2.70) with a percentage of (85% to 90%). These phrases are as explained hereunder:
- To compile five programs related to English.
- To create a PowerPoint presentation in English.
- To prepare a concise research project in Word on an academic subject.
- To create a text file in Word for an English language website.

It is to be noted that the grading (Poor) does not show any marks in either axis of the assessment card. This seems to indicate the effectiveness of the proposed program in the rising application level of the students for the computer-based e-learning types. This rise can be attributed to the following:

- Easy access to the information, whether simplified or extensive, through software related to English.
- Use of office computer software, especially presentations, in an easy way.
- Availability of the academic subject – modules within a default environment through electronic website that its contents are accessible anytime anywhere.
- Effective communication between students and the teacher through the internet, which may have had a significant impact on the students’ ability to conduct application of e-learning in their area of specialization.

These results are in agreement with the results of the study conducted by Zaher (1999), which emphasized the effectiveness of a proposed program for designing and publishing educational web pages on the internet. The results of this study show the existence of differences, with a statistically significant difference between both averages of female students’ marks on the assessment card used for assessing the skills of basic programming in designing educational web pages on the internet in favor of post application.

Conclusion
The current study attempted to identify the degree to which English language students in the FP at DU in Oman are aware of e-learning and its applications through identifying the effectiveness of certain patterns and tools of e-learning in student performance, using both descriptive and experimental approaches. The study concluded that there are two primary outcomes. First, the degree of student awareness of English language e-learning is found to be relatively weak, with statistically significant differences in awareness among male and female students in favor of females. Moreover, there are further statistically significant differences between students’ average scores before and after the development of an e-learning awareness program in favor of post application. The study makes a number of recommendations, including adopting the pilot awareness program in all majors, holding e-learning training seminars for both faculty and students, and drawing up new courses for their students applying e-learning in education which, it is hoped, will bolster the effectiveness of e-learning at the university.
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About the Authors:

Dr. Sobhy Ahmed Soliman: Sobhy has taught Education Technology and education courses in a career spanning 15 years in higher education (Menoufia University, Egypt & Dhofar University, Oman). He contributed to publications in the areas of educational research, Education Technology, teacher professional development and continues to research by working with school teachers in Oman in building capacity among teachers.

Ashry Abdallah Mahmoud Waziry: Ashry has taught English in many schools in Egypt. He moved to Oman to teach in a private bilingual school. He has taught at Dhofar University as English instructor for four years.

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Pronunciation Errors Committed by Palestinian Students at An-Najah National University: An Analytical Approach

Oqab Mahmoud Jabali
Director of Language Centre
An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine

Yousif Jamal Abuzaid
Nablus, Palestine

Abstract
This empirical study aims at identifying the English consonant sounds that are mispronounced by native speakers of Palestinian Arabic. It also aims to explore the pattern of errors that Palestinian speakers follow in speaking English. Two main questions have been explored in the study: 1) what are the most common mispronounced English consonants produced by Palestinian students? and 2) what patterns do these students follow in so doing? 20 undergraduate students from the English Department at An-Najah National University are observed and their English is recorded to identify the problematic consonant sounds. The study results show that the most problematic sounds include /p/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /ɹ/, and /ŋ/. In the light of the findings, the researchers recommend that the best way to learn the pronunciation of a second language is by listening to native speakers of that language and by practicing it regularly.

Keywords: Consonants, mother tongue interference, Palestinian spoken Arabic, problematic sound(s), pronunciation mistakes

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Introduction
Non-native speakers of English have always aspired to have a native-like accent, but one of the main difficulties that Palestinian students encounter is pronunciation. However, there are still people who desire to learn correct English pronunciation; the students of the English Language Department at An-Najah National University are not an exception. Yet, there are many obstacles that make it really difficult for them to achieve that target.

Palestinians who speak English may commit the same errors that other language learners make namely pronouncing certain consonants because this forms an incorrect formula in their brains; their English may be affected by the Arabic language and the Palestinian dialect as well. For example, the /p/ is different from the /b/ because they are two independent phonemes which distinguish meaning (Baker, 2006). However, through the researchers' observations of Arab speakers learning English, it is found that only /b/ is used in most of the cases to refer to both /p/ and /b/. For example, Palestinian speakers would pronounce both words "bound" and "pound" as /baʊnd/ instead of /baʊnd/ and /paʊnd/ respectively. They might also think that the same sound presented by the letter <g> exists in the final position of the two words (stage, rouge). So it is likely to say that even the errors committed in learning a language are systematic rather than random (Hassan, 2014).

Many studies have discussed and explained English pronunciation errors made by native speakers of different languages all over the world, such as French, Japanese, Thai, Portuguese, etc. Furthermore, many other studies have been dedicated to studying pronunciation errors by Arab speakers of different dialects like Saudi, Iraqi, and Sudanese. However, this study is deemed essential because it is meant to be part of the series of studies that concern pronunciation mistakes made by Arab speakers who speak English as a foreign language. This research aims at exploring the pattern of errors that Palestinian speakers follow in speaking English, so we can abstract the role of their mother tongue on that pattern. This study also intends to help Palestinians improve their language by helping them know where their mistakes exactly are, and providing them with general tips to avoid these mistakes.

Statement of the Problem:
In an English language classroom in Palestine, consonant pronunciation does not receive much attention. Other components, i.e. such as vocabulary and grammar, may be focused on far more than pronunciation. As a result, students graduate from high schools and even universities having many errors in pronunciation in general, and consonant pronunciation, in specific.

One of the most common examples of consonant pronunciation errors under scrutiny is the articulation of the bilabial plosives /p/ and /b/. This can be attributed to the fact that the sound /p/ does not exist in any Palestinian dialect or any familiar dialect to Palestinian speakers. Therefore, speakers choose the more familiar counterpart /b/. So one can hear Palestinians say /ben/ instead of /pen/ for "pen", /æb.əl/ instead of /æp.əl/ for "apple", and /sɪb/ instead of /sɪp/ for "sip".

Another very common problem is the articulation of the post-alveolar affricates /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ and substituting them with the post-alveolar fricative counterparts /ʃ/ and /ʒ/. Inside the Palestinian dialect of Arabic, there are several sub-dialects which use either the fricative or the affricate pair. In their English pronunciation, Palestinian individuals use the pair that is used in
their Arabic pronunciation. As a result, you can hear speakers utter the words "strange" and "garage" either as /streɪndʒ/ and /ɡərædʒ/ or as /streɪnʤ/ and /ɡəræʒ/. (The problem with the sound /ɹ/ is explained below).

The sound /ɹ/ is also problematic for Palestinian speakers of English. The sound which is presented with the letter <r> is a voiced alveolar approximant in standard British English; it is presented in the IPA as /ɹ/. However, for Palestinian speakers it is a voiced alveolar tap; it is presented in the IPA as /ɾ/. Therefore, Palestinians would use /ɾ/ even in English pronunciation. So you would hear them say /ræbɪt/ instead of /ræbɪt/ for "rabbit", /kæɹi/ instead of /kæɹi/ for "carry", and /ɜəʊɹ/ instead of /ɜəɹ/ for "hour"; (the sound /ɹ/ is dropped in syllable-final-position in Standard British English, but Palestinians wouldn't drop it being influenced by Arabic phonetic rules).

The last problematic sound this research explores is the sound /ŋ/. Palestinian speakers mostly do not pronounce this sound because it is not used in any familiar Arabic dialect. They do not recognize that it is a velar sound. Instead, they would substitute it with the two sounds: the alveolar /n/ and the velar /ɡ/. So you will hear them say /kɪŋ/ instead of /kɪŋ/ for the word "king".

Second language learners have to spend great efforts in order to get a native-like accent. This research is meant to identify the problematic English consonant sounds for Palestinian speakers, to identify the reasons why these pronunciation problems exist, and to offer possible ways that Palestinians can follow to improve their English pronunciation.

Objectives of the research

Through this study, the researchers aimed at:
1. Identifying the problematic English consonant sounds for Arab speakers.
2. Explaining the nature of the problematic consonants and to what natural class they belong.
3. Providing some suggestions to reduce these errors.
4. Giving advice to both students and teachers of English to decrease the potential future problems for consonant pronunciation.

Literature Review

The issue of pronunciation has always been a serious topic to be discussed by learners of English. A number of Arab researchers have conducted research in the area of pronunciation. This review of literature includes some of the most prominent research studies that were carried out in the field of pronunciation.

Ahmad (2011), for example, investigates the consonant errors that Saudi learners of English commit in their pronunciation. The researcher uses a laptop and a microphone to record different Saudi speakers from different regions in Saudi Arabia pronouncing different words which have the sounds in question. Those speakers have never taken any training courses in English pronunciation. The researcher finds that Saudi learners encounter many difficulties in learning English consonants like /p/, /d/, /v/, /tʃ/, /ʒ/, and /ŋ/ and he recommends that IPA symbols
should be practiced in every English class to introduce students to the perfect English pronunciation.

Hassan (2014) traces the problems that Sudanese students of English language at Sudan University of Science and Technology (SUTC) encounter. The researcher uses his own observation in order to obtain enough information about the errors that students have. The study results indicate that confusing /s/ with /θ/, /z/ with /ð/, /p/ with /b/, /v/ with /f/, and /ʃ/ with /tʃ/ usually result in mispronunciation.

The phonological analysis of English phonotactics is fully identified by (Al-Saidat, 2010). The researcher explains some factors which affect Jordanians' English pronunciation, such as age, mother tongue interference, and personality. The researcher aims at identifying, classifying, and analyzing errors of epenthesis made by Jordanian Arab learners of English in the area of pronunciation. The researcher concludes that English syllables are difficult to learn for Arab learners of English because Arab speakers sometimes follow the phonological system of Arabic in their English pronunciation. The researcher adds that teachers should introduce the syllable pattern of both Arabic and English, so students can know where their mistakes exactly are.

In another study, Khidhir (2011) traces the pronunciation of the sound /ɹ/ in RP and how it is pronounced by Iraqi secondary school teachers. The researcher aims at presenting an adequate phonetic description of /ɹ/ in the languages under study, i.e. Standard British English and Iraqi spoken Arabic. The researcher gives a detailed description of the sound /ɹ/ and its different realizations depending on the context in which it occurs. The study results show that the type of /ɹ/ is widely used by Iraqi Secondary School English teachers when they speak English and that it is the Arabic flapped /ɾ/ and not the RP frictionless continuant /ɹ/. Therefore, teachers are recommended to be given opportunities of training by different specialists in pronunciation.

Bayoumi and Elhawary (2013) study common pronunciation errors of 40 (males and females) undergraduate students of the English Language and Literature Department at Ain Shams University. Different tools, mainly recordings and questionnaires, are employed to collect information. This study results indicate that the main problematic sounds for Egyptians included /ŋ/, /ð/, /t/ and /θ/; they also find that students were not aware of the pronunciation errors they make. The researchers recommend that more courses in teaching pronunciation must be added because they think that the courses that students take do not help them improve their pronunciation.

Safian (2013) aims to provide description of the sounds realized from the sequence of the letters <th> and the pronunciation of the sound /p/. The researcher states that the pronunciation of the phonetic sound of <th> was the most common error in spoken English of people from the Middle East. Therefore, "they" may be changed to "zey". Moreover, she discusses the sound /p/ and its different realizations and find that the sound /p/ turns into /b/ in most cases due to the differences between Arabic and English. For instance, you may hear people from the Middle East change “Pepsi” into “Bebsi”, “Peter” into “Beter” and “pope” into “bope.”.
The voiceless post-alveolar affricate /tʃ/ and its different realizations for Saudi learners of English as a foreign language are fully investigated by Alqarni (2013). The researcher states that the sound /tʃ/ does not exist in the phonemic system of Arabic, so it would be problematic for Arab speakers of English as a foreign language to pronounce the /tʃ/ as an independent phoneme. Furthermore, Alqarni states that the sound /tʃ/ does exist in some dialects of Arabic, but as an allophone of other phonemes such as /q/ and /k/. The instrument used to conduct this study included 16 words containing the sound /tʃ/ in different word positions. Data is recorded and analyzed using both Speech Analyzer and SPSS software. The results show that Najdi ESL learners encounter difficulties in pronouncing the investigated sound /tʃ/. The only mistake is replacing the sound /tʃ/ with /ʃ/. Word-final position posed more pronunciation difficulties than word-initial position.

In sum, this literature review includes a number of studies which discuss English pronunciation problems by speakers of different Arabic dialects. It has been shown that Arab speakers who speak different dialects of Arabic have similar problems in pronouncing some English sounds such as /ɹ/, /p/ and /ŋ/. However, some other sounds might not be as problematic to some regions as other regions. For example, the affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ do exist in some Arabic spoken-dialects like Saudi and Iraqi but as allophones not phonemes; therefore, speakers of those dialects are able to pronounce those sounds correctly, but they may have trouble in their distribution. This study of Palestinian Arabic is meant to be part of the series of research that study problems in pronunciation by Arab speakers who speak different dialects.

Study Design

Population

The population of this study includes 4th-year students who study English Language and Literature at An-Najah National University. The researchers randomly choose a sample of 20 Palestinian students (8 males and 12 females) who were different in their academic achievement and their level of English fluency.

Instrument

The researchers mean first to observe the way Palestinian speakers of English as a foreign language use the language. The researchers have initial information about the problematic consonant sounds and how they are pronounced and then formulated their own hypotheses. To test and prove these hypotheses, the researchers use digital recordings. Students are asked to pronounce words which have the problematic sounds in all positions (initially, medially, and finally). This method is deemed suitable for this kind of research because the researchers can return to the data collected whenever he needs it.

Procedure

The researchers, who are an instructor and a student of English, go to the English department, meet many 4th-year students, and ask if it is possible to record their voice for the sake of this research. Some students accept and others refuse. Those who accept the test are given a list of words on a paper to read (see the appendix which shows the test used to collect the information). They are asked to read the words slowly and carefully while the researchers are recording the test. Although the choice is random, the researchers intend to have an almost equal
rate between male and female students. The recordings are analyzed very carefully and the data is revised more than once to ensure results' accuracy.

**Results**

The data analyzed show different realizations of the phoneme /p/ in English in all word-positions. Yet, the only incorrect pronunciation that the respondents (males and females) give is the voiced counterpart [b]. In word-initial position, the initial sound of the word "pain" is mispronounced as [b] by 65% of the respondents. In the word "Paper", however, 75% give the wrong pronunciation for the medial consonant. In final-position of the word "sharp", 85% of the students give the incorrect pronunciation. The overall incorrect pronunciations in all positions for the sound /p/ are approximately 75% (See Table 1).

![Table 1: Realizations of /p/](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Realization</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Initial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[p]</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[b]</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Medial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[p]</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[b]</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Final</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[p]</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[b]</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the students are asked to pronounce the words "champion, launching, and church" which all have the sound /tʃ/ in all word-positions, they mainly have two realizations: the correct one [tʃ] and the incorrect one [ʃ]. In word-initial position, the incorrect pronunciation is 55%. In word-medial position, 45% of the students give the incorrect realization of the sound /tʃ/. In word-final position, it shows that 70% give it wrongly. The total percentage of the incorrect pronunciation is 56.6% (See table 2).

![Table 2: Realizations of /tʃ/](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Realization</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Initial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[tʃ]</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ʃ]</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Medial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[tʃ]</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ʃ]</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Final</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[tʃ]</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ʃ]</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The sound /dʒ/ which occurs in all word positions of the words "Germany, Plagiarism, Judge" also has two realizations, the correct one [dʒ] and the incorrect one [ʒ]. In the initial position, 65% of the students have the incorrect phone. However, in word-medial position, 85% of the students pronounce it incorrectly. Finally, only 25% of the respondents give the incorrect realization in word-final position. The overall mispronunciation in all positions is roughly 58% (See table 3).

### Table 3: Realizations of /dʒ/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Realization</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Initial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[dʒ]</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ʒ]</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Medial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[dʒ]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ʒ]</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Final</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[dʒ]</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ʒ]</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the sound /ɹ/, students have the correct realizations which are used in both Standard British English and Standard American English, and the incorrect realization which is the tap sound [ɾ] that is used in Arabic. For the word rabbit, the initial consonant is 80% mispronounced by the students. However, 65% are unable to pronounce the medial consonant in the word "carry" correctly. Nevertheless, the final consonant of the word "hour" is mispronounced by 80% of the respondents. The overall mispronunciation of the sound /ɹ/ in all contexts is around 71% (See figure 4 for detailed information).

### Table 4: Realizations of /ɹ/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Realization</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Initial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ɾ]</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Medial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ɾ]</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Final</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ɾ]</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The sound /ŋ/ involves two problems. The first problem is that students may use the two sounds [ŋ+g] or the two sounds [ŋ+g] to indicate that sound in word-final position. Students are given the words "king, sing, and bring" to pronounce; 20% of the students use the two sounds [ŋg] to indicate /ŋ/ while 70% used the sequence of the sounds [ŋ+g]. This means that only 10% of the students give the correct pronunciation /ŋ/ for this sound in word-final position.

The other problem is that students do not recognize when to follow the sound /ŋ/ with a /g/ and when not to in word-medial position. Students are given the words "singer, finger, longer, and singing". 66.6% of the students who recorded their pronunciation give it wrong (See table 5 for more details about the phoneme /ŋ/ and its realizations and table 6 for the overall results).

### Table 5: Realizations of /ŋ/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Realization</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Medial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ŋ]</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ng]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ŋg]</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Final</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ŋ]</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ng]</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ŋg]</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6: The problematic sounds and how they are realized

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phoneme</th>
<th>Incorrect realization</th>
<th>Percentage of incorrect pronunciation</th>
<th>The words used in the test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/p/</td>
<td>[b]</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>Pain, paper, sharp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tʃ/</td>
<td>[ʃ]</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
<td>Champion, launching, church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/dʒ/</td>
<td>[ʒ]</td>
<td>58.33%</td>
<td>Germany, plagiarism, judge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ɹ/</td>
<td>[ɾ]</td>
<td>71.66%</td>
<td>Rabbit, carry, hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ŋ/</td>
<td>Word-medial [ŋ][ŋ]</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>Singer, finger, longer, singing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Word-final [ŋ][ŋ]</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>King, sing, bring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Discussion

From a phonetics perspective, consonants are classified in three different ways: voicing, place of articulation, and manner of articulation.

The first distinctive feature of sounds is "voicing". It is about the state of the vocal folds while producing sounds. Consonants are referred to as (voiced) or (voiceless). Voiced means that the vocal folds vibrate while producing a certain sound; however, voiceless means that the vocal
folds do not vibrate when one produces a certain sound. For example, the only difference between the pair /p/ and /b/ is voicing; they share all features except for voicing. That's why Arab speakers opt for /b/ instead of /p/; it is the familiar counterpart that they are used to.

The second distinction is "place of articulation". It means which articulators we use to produce a certain sound, or what part in the oral cavity the tongue articulates with to produce a certain sound (Rogers 2000). Sounds have different places of articulation; we have bilabial, labiodental, dental, alveolar, post-alveolar, retroflex, palatal, velar, uvular, pharyngeal, and glottal sounds.

Manner of articulation is the last feature that distinguishes between sounds. Speech is modified breathing. Whether in Arabic or in English, a person speaks when he/she breathes out because all sounds in both Arabic and English are ingressive pulmonic. When people speak, they use different articulators to block the air that comes out of the lungs to produce different consonant sounds. The width of the blockage causes either a turbulent or a laminar airflow. For example, the air may be stopped completely in the oral cavity for stops, partially leaving a very narrow passage for fricatives, or partially leaving a wide passage to let the air freely for approximants. However, for nasal sounds, there is a complete closure of air in the oral cavity, but the air escapes freely through the nasal cavity (Roach 2009).

Palestinians mispronounce some English sounds because speakers are influenced by their own mother tongue, Palestinian spoken Arabic. Therefore, they produce English sounds in an Arabic way; they choose the closest counterpart in their native language to produce each of the problematic sounds which are /p/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /ɹ/ and /ŋ/.

The sound /p/, as in "Pope" is a voiceless bilabial plosive. There is no vibration in the larynx when a native speaker of English pronounces the sound /p/, so it is a voiceless sound. The place of articulation is "bilabial", i.e. there is a complete contact between the upper lip and the lower lip when producing this sound. The manner of articulation is "plosive" (oral stop), i.e. the airflow stops completely inside the oral cavity before the air is released (Rogers, 2000).

The sounds /tʃ/ and /dʒ/, as the initials of "chick" and "Japan" respectively, are both post-alveolar affricates, i.e. the tongue articulates with the post-alveolar area. These sounds have double articulation; they start with a stop, then they move to a fricative. Therefore, the air which is stopped for the "stop" in the oral cavity is released with a narrow passage "fricative" causing a turbulent airflow. As for voicing, the sound /tʃ/ is voiceless while /dʒ/ is voiced (Ogden, 2009).

The sound /ɹ/ is problematic for most speakers of English as a second language not only for Arabs. The sound /ɹ/ differs not only from one language to another, but also from a variety of English to another. For example, the sound /ɹ/ in Standard British English is a voiced alveolar approximant. The tip of the tongue leaves a relatively wide gap with the alveolar ridge to let the laminar flow of air. However, the /ɻ/ which is pronounced in standard American English is a voiced retroflex approximant. The tip of the tongue curls backward when a Native American speaker produces this sound leaving a wide gap to let the air freely as well (Roach, 2009). On the other hand, the Arabic /ɾ/ is a voiced alveolar "tap or flap". The tip of the tongue completely touches the alveolar ridge once and quickly.
The sound /ŋ/ is a voiced velar nasal. As any other voiced sound, the vocal folds vibrate when one tries to pronounce the sound /ŋ/ correctly. The back of the tongue forms a complete contact with the velum (soft palate) to stop the air completely in the oral cavity. However, unlike any oral sounds, the nasal sounds are pronounced with the nasal cavity open to let the air freely through it (Ogden, 2009).

The sample of this research consists of 20 students who were asked to pronounce different words having the problematic sounds that the researchers had already observed.

The first sound which causes mispronunciation is the sound /p/. Students are asked to pronounce the words "pain, paper, sharp". The findings showed that 25% of the students are able to pronounce the sound /p/ correctly in word different positions. Students mispronounce the sound /p/ as [b] as it is noticed in the recordings. The reason why students pronounce the sound [b] in most of the cases is that it exists in the Arabic phonological system while /p/ does not. Thus, there is no distinction of voicing in Arabic between the two sounds in question. For example, if you pronounce the Arabic word "bab" as [pap] or [bab], few Arab speakers would notice any difference in the pronunciation of the word, and if so, they would understand the one and only meaning of the word which is "door".

Another sound that Palestinians have difficulties in is the post-alveolar affricate sound /tʃ/. Students are asked to pronounce the words "champion, launching, church". The results show that 56.66% of the respondents do not pronounce the sound /tʃ/ correctly. Instead, they use the fricative counterpart [ʃ]. The reason why /tʃ/ is problematic is that it does not exist in the Arabic phonological system as an independent phoneme, but it does exist as an allophone of other phonemes, /k/ and /q/, in some dialects in a way that does not affect Arabs' English pronunciation.

The third sound that Palestinians are observed to have problem with is the sound /dʒ/. Students are asked to pronounce the words "Germany, plagiarism, and Judge". The results show that 58.33% of the students who are asked to record their pronunciation of the words had wrong pronunciation of that sound; they replace it with the fricative counterpart [ʒ]. The reason why the students confuse between /dʒ/ and /ʒ/ is because they are allophones of the same phoneme in spoken Arabic. Thus, if you say /dadʒadʒ/ or /daʒaʒ/ for the same thing in Arabic, the meaning won't change and it will remain "hen".

The sound /r/ is also observed to be problematic for Palestinian speakers of English. This sound is physically realized differently in spoken-Palestinian Arabic. Students are asked to pronounce the words "rabbit, carry, and hour". 71.66% of the respondents give the realization which is used in spoken Arabic [ɾ]. So we can generalize that non-professional Arabs get affected in the manner of articulation of the sound /r/ and produce it as a tap, not as an approximant.

The last sound which the researchers observe to be problematic is the sound /ŋ/. This sound involves two problems. The first problem is that students may use the two sounds /n+g/ or the two sounds /ŋ+g/ to indicate that sound in final position. Students were given the words "king, sing, and bring" to pronounce and 20% of the students used the two sounds /ng/ to
indicate /ŋ/ while 70% used the sequence of the sounds /ŋ+ɡ/. This means that only 10% of the students gave the correct pronunciation /ŋ/ for this sound in final position.

The other problem is that students did not recognize when to follow the sound /ŋ/ with a /ɡ/ and when not to in word-medial position. Students are given the words "singer, finger, longer, and singing". It was found that 66.6% of the students who recorded their pronunciation gave it wrong. They are not aware of the rule that states that the sound /ŋ/ is not followed by a /ɡ/ at the end of the morpheme, but it is followed by a /ɡ/ when it occurs in the middle of the morpheme. Nevertheless, this rule has an exception: the sound /ŋ/ is followed by a /ɡ/ even when it occurs at the end of the morpheme only when followed by –er comparative or –est superlative forms (Harris, 1994). Therefore, the words would be pronounced as /sɪŋə/, /fɪŋɡə/, /lɒŋɡə/, and /sɪŋɪŋ/ respectively in standard British English.

In sum, the analysis of the data show that some English sounds are not pronounced correctly by speakers of Palestinian Arabic.

Conclusions
As any other skill, learning pronunciation needs serious practice. The discussion above shows the sounds which Palestinians have difficulties in:

1- /p/ is pronounced as /b/.
2- /tʃ/ is sometimes realized as /ʃ/.
3- The sound /dʒ/ is problematic because Palestinians either use /dʒ/ for /dʒ/ and /ʒ/, or they use /ʒ/ for both. So you hear them say "strange" and "garage" either as /streɪndʒ/ and /ɡəræʒ/ or as /streɪʒ/ and /ɡəræʒ/.
4- /ʃ/ is physically realized as the Arabic /ʃ/.
5- The sound /ŋ/ involves two problems:
   a. It is sometimes pronounced as /ŋɡ/ or as /ŋɡ/ in word-final position.
   b. Palestinian Arab speakers do not know when to have a /ɡ/ following and when not to have it following in word medial-position.

6- The main reasons behind the mispronunciation are attributed to the fact that the problematic sounds do not exist in the phonological system of Arabic; if they exist, they are not physically realized in the same way; and that English pronunciation is not practiced adequately by Arab Palestinian speakers.

Recommendations
In the light of the previous findings, the researchers recommend that:

1- Teachers should make a diagnostic listening test at the beginning of the semester to know what kind of problems their students have so that teachers can help them solve the problem through the course.
2- English teachers must give their students the opportunity to speak in front of the class. They should correct only when necessary and do the correction gently.
3- Students are needed to train their ears to listen to English spoken by native speakers.
4- Students should do extra work; they can watch YouTube videos that teach pronunciation.
5- Students have to patient. Learning the pronunciation of a foreign language takes time.
because a learner needs to establish the sound in his/her mental store before they pronounce it unconsciously.

6- Some knowledge of articulatory phonetics is needed to show exactly how the problematic sounds and other sounds are physically produced.

About the Authors:
Dr. Oqab Jabali is the director of the Language Center and instructor of English in the Department of English at An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine. Besides teaching translation and linguistic courses, he is a freelance translator and he teaches English for specific purpose in the language center. He holds a PhD in Cultural Studies and Political Sciences from the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. His major publications include women studies and translation studies.

Yousef Abuzaid is a graduate student of English Language and Literature. He is the top student in the department. Currently he is doing his master's and working as a teacher for Cambridge School in Nablus.

References


**Appendix**

**An instrument of the research (the recorded test).**

This test is used for the sake of a study which presents consonant pronunciation mistakes committed by Palestinian students at An-Najah National University. The test is going to be recorded.

Pronounce the following words carefully:

- Pain, Paper, Sharp.
- Champion, Launching, Church.
- Germany, Plagiarism, Judge.
- Rabbit, Carry, Hour.
- King, Sing, Bring.
- Singer, finger, Longer, Singing
Compliments across Gender and Power Relation among Indonesian EFL Learners

Rohmani Nur Indah  
Faculty of Humanities  
Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim  
Malang, Indonesia

Abstract
The purpose of this research is to investigate the complexities of compliments faced by English as foreign language (EFL) learners. It covers several aspects such as how interpersonal relationships relate to complimenting behaviour. In addition, it examines how the culture of complimenting is relevant with some conditions such as power relation, and gender. The significance of the study is to explore the cultural transfer might appearing in complimenting. The subjects of research in this study are EFL learners at State Islamic University of Maulana Malik Ibrahim, Indonesia. It employs ethnographical method to gain the explanation for the phenomenon underlying the complexities in complimenting behaviour. The complexities concern with the interference of culture, the influence of gender and power relation. The finding shows that female learners tend to use more complimenting strategies compared to males. The complimenting expression is also various affected by the relation with the hearers. Some variations occurring in complimenting cover overstatement, mixed language, non-sensical, no compliment and question. The context of Islamic institution also results in specific expression related to power display in complimenting strategies used. However, in EFL context, complimenting becomes an issue as there is lack of authentic English examples in course books and the inefficient instructions English learners receive which particularly expose them to variation in English compliments. Therefore, further studies are needed to develop teaching construct that accommodates the improvement of pragmatic competence particularly in complimenting for politeness awareness which today becomes a significant value.

Keywords: complimenting behaviour, Indonesian EFL learners

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Introduction

Compliment is defined as a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker. It concerns with some positive value or goodness that can be related to skill, achievement, characteristics, possession in many others (Holmes, 1988). The positive evaluation uses several evaluative adjectives such as nice, beautiful, pretty, good, great, etc. and it also depends on how interpersonal relationships relate to complimenting behaviours. In EFL context, complimenting is also an issue as there is lack of authentic English examples in course books and the inefficient instructions English learners receive which particularly expose them to variation in English compliments.

Complimenting belongs to a culture aspect as it involves one’s ability to use appropriate expression for both giving and responding to the attributive credit. In terms of speech act, complimenting is affected by the speaker’s native culture as investigated by Kim (2001). The finding shows sociolinguistic transfer phenomenon of the native culture shown by Korean and Japanese college students.

Students might not aware that giving compliments as well as responding compliments have special goal. Sometimes compliments responded by silence or denial may result in unpleasant misunderstanding especially when conversing with native speakers. Therefore, teaching students to compliment as well as to response compliments appropriately is similar to teaching a complex multi-linguistic skill (Creese, 1991). It happens as learning to use language in context should start with the context then learning more on the language. In fact, student with lower proficiency has a limited variation in how to respond compliment compared to those with higher proficiency (Grossi, 2009).

The response to compliment is also various depending on the context and the listener’s perception. In everyday conversation mostly the phrase ‘thank you’ was given in response to a compliment. However, there are several cases in which various responses appear as investigated by Grossi (2009). The response can be related to the function of the expression such as to soften a criticism or make a suggestion, as rejection, or true expressions of admiration on both ability and appearance.

Compliment responses are various related to gender differences. A study on a corpus of 1,063 compliment events shows that male compliments are mostly accepted by female, whereas compliments from women are met with more various types such as mitigate (for instance commenting history, shifting credit, questioning and returning the compliments) , reject, no acknowledgement or request interpretation (such as “I am glad to give it to you as a gift”). These varieties confirm that sex-based differences occur in the function and frequency of compliments as speech acts (Herbert, 1990).

How complex complimenting is understandable as it involves culture. A study conducted by Chen and Rau (2011) examine how American English native speakers perceived differently toward the compliment responses of Chinese speakers. Their study found that the compliment and the responses cover several problems such as improper amount of information, nonsensical exchanges, rudeness, overstatement, no acknowledgment, no answer to the questions, no
Compliment, and wrong person/thing complimented. These problems represent violation of Grice’s conversational maxims.

Complimenting is complex as it also concerns with power relation. As identified by Adachi (2011), social factor of status strongly contributes to the variation of compliments expressed by university students in Japan. This sociolinguistic study strengthened the proposition that complimenting in the speech community displays power plays.

By referring to the above perspectives on complimenting, it is an interesting fact that complimenting is cultural bound so that conducting studies within different contexts might result in different finding. Thus, this study concerns with complimenting within the context of EFL students of an Islamic university. It is done to see whether the condition such as power relation, cultural background and gender contribute to the complexities of complimenting.

**Literature Review**

Complimenting in foreign language contexts has been a special concern as it involves several complexities. A number of studies analyzed it in relation with some aspects such as the interference of learner’s first language. Kim (2001) found that Korean and Japanese students learning English language tend to adopt their native language compliment form. They did not use the common English complimenting strategies. Similarly, Kuwaiti learners of English also have the interference of their first language in both expression and strategies of complimenting (Alotaibi, 2016).

The learner’s first language is also adopted in responding compliment. Falasi (2007) found that Arabic learners of English did not produce target-like compliment responses as they perceive their native norms. Therefore, they still adopt Arabic expression to respond compliment when they communicate in English. Similarly, Sattah and Lah (2008) also found that Iraqi learners also adopted Arabic expression in responding compliments. These studies show that learners have lack of awareness on the different sociolinguistic rules among languages. As found by Zayed (2014) Arabic learners of English in practicing the speech act of complimenting ignored some common forms of English compliments. They used jokes and Arabic transcribed into English rather than using the correct expressions because of the lack of knowledge on English pragmatics.

The knowledge of English pragmatics influenced the practice of complimenting so that high proficiency learners can use target-like compliments response. Meanwhile learners with low proficiency tend to use the pragmatic norms of their native language, for instance using rejecting and downgrading compliment. This fact is found in Thai learners of English by Phoocharoensil (2012). However, when the setting is not in face-to-face interaction, the complimenting strategies can be different. In social media for instance, English learners despite of their proficiency commonly employ acceptance strategy at macro level and appreciation token at micro level. As found by Dehkordi and Chalak (2015) these strategies are used by Iranian learners of English when communicating through social media.
Method
This study involves eighty English department students at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim. As ethnographic research, the observation on complimenting is done during the interaction inside and outside of the classroom. Beside observation, another instrument is used namely questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The questionnaire is given to get the information concerning the student’s cultural background. It uses Indonesian language to facilitate the students to express themselves freely. While the semi-structured interview is done in both English and Indonesian language to confirm the finding related to the analysis from the observation and the questionnaire.

Results and Discussion
In this research, complimenting is viewed under three conditions namely power relation, cultural background and gender. Each of them is analysed by referring to the complexities of complimenting which also includes the responses to compliments.

Power Relation in Complimenting
In the interaction done in two classes, this study finds the influence of different power in the expression of complimenting. The observation on two writing classes of sophomore and freshmen is done to see the way they give compliment in reviewing the paragraph writing.

Sophomore in doing peer assessment tends to find their friends weakness or error identified in their friend’s paragraph writing. They can even mention at least ten errors from their peer’s writing without being able to find the strength to be complemented. From a few compliments given, the following is the sample:

\[
\begin{align*}
&I \text{ like the transition you use. You have done a good job. } (\text{Datum 1}) \\
&The \text{ writing is informative, very good. } (\text{Datum 2}) \\
&You \text{ have arranged the ideas in good logical order, I like it. } (\text{Datum 3}) \\
\end{align*}
\]

As seen in the sample, the construction of the compliment consists of the value judgment using the common word ‘good’ and a short reason such as on the transition, the content and the order. They give general complimenting just like what writing instructors do. This is in contrast with the way they identify the errors made by their peers. They can do it in detail by giving more examples and suggestions for improvement. Complimenting peers is not an easy thing for them. Based on the semi-structured interview, they stated that they learn better from the mistakes not from the compliment. Moreover, they said that finding one’s weakness is easier than identifying one’s strength. Therefore, it can be inferred that social factor or similar status strongly contributes to the variation of compliments expressed by university students. This finding is similar to the complimenting expression of the university students in Japan as identified by Adachi (2011).

When the students were asked to comment on the writing of their junior, they show different expression. They comment differently on the focus on the writing skill and the content. On writing skill, the following are the sample:

\[
\begin{align*}
&I \text{ like your grammatical usage. It is well organized. You have a lot of vocabularies } (\text{Datum 4}) \\
\end{align*}
\]
I love the way you describe it that creates a vivid expression of what you have seen, heard, smelled, tasted or touched (Datum 5)
Your writing is good enough although you’re still in the first semester. You have described about your favourite place in simple writing but very detail (Datum 6)

In datum four to six, the value judgment is more various, not only using the common word ‘good’. The expression is more detail by giving a clear explanation on the strength of the writing. Similarly, the various expressions are stated in other data below.

I like your writing because you write from the general ideas to specific ones and your grammar is good enough (Datum 7)
I like the way you describe it by giving a good logical order, detail information and completed with a good picture (Datum 8)
I love your way to describe it, you chose beautiful words to create your sentences, it’s amazing! (Datum 9)

In datum seven to nine, personal impression is involved by expressing the reviewer’s support for the strength on more various elements showing the writing skill. Compared to the first three data referring to their peers, sophomore students show more careful and detail compliments. They were aware of their power display so that they perform their knowledge on writing proficiency through expressing detail compliment. While, in complimenting those of the same level, they did not have the same role to advice on the writing strength.

The compliment of the sophomore also goes to the content of the writing of their juniors as seen in the sample below

Awesome. Your description is full of details that convey your experience to readers. (Datum 10)
I can imagine how amazing that place is and how lovely your memorable moment there. I like the details you add about those beaches. (Datum 11)
Your story is touching, it reminds me when I’ve been there last year (Datum 12)

In the realization of the compliments, sophomores compliment their junior directly or in unambiguous manner. The direct compliments contain positive connotation that can be in the form of adjective, adverb, verb, etc. (Farenkia, 2011). The finding shows that from the twelve data above 65% belongs to direct compliment with single head act. It means that each utterance contains one compliment. The rest, 35% consists of multiple direct compliments as one utterance involves more than one compliment.

In the above data, the judgment value concerns with various expression such as awesome, amazing, lovely and touching. The elaboration of the compliment related with the content shows their engagement with the text. This fact did not appear in the previous activity where they were reviewing their peer’s writing. Again, complimenting complexities is relevant with the power display as the shown by the finding.
From the instrument of open-ended questionnaire, the students show various expression of complimenting. The situation is given in Indonesian language as follow: Anda adalah tutor bahasa Inggris. Salah satu siswa les anda memakai tas baru. Bagaimana anda memuji siswa tersebut? Anda bisa memilih antara memuji dalam bahasa Inggris atau bahasa Indonesia (You are an English tutor. A student of your private course has a new bag. How do you say to her? You can express it in English or Indonesian language)

The compliments to one with lower status made by the students are expressed more freely in Indonesian language. Only some students prefer using English. When complimenting to children, students use shorter expression as follow:

- That’s cool, it fits to all outfit colours (Datum 13)
- What a beautiful bag! (Datum 14)

Shorter expression exists when they complimented in English. While, more complexities appear when they complimented in longer expression. This case is also similar when they need to respond the situation as that is to compliment the dish served by a friend’s mom.

The situation exploring the power relation is also given in another situation that is to compliment on the Dean’s speech. In expressing compliment across different power relation, some complexities occur as summarized in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Complimenting strategies across power relation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overstatement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well. You have a nice taste. Not everybody have it (datum 15) Your bag is extraordinary, you are energetic and your bag is really helpful in every single activity (datum 16).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Vol.8, No. 2 June 2017

Compliments across Gender and Power Relation among Indonesian Indah

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Compliment</th>
<th>Compliment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonsensical</td>
<td>Tasnya bagus sekali, boleh pinjam ga? (What a cool bag, may I borrow it someday?) (datum 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Masakannya enak sekali, kalo bukan karena kenyang saya pasti bakal nambah sampai tiga kali (This cooking is very delicious, if I’m not full I can finish three plates) (datum 22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No compliment</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep silent. Just smiling (datum 23)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisa nambah bu? (May I have it more?) -laughing- (datum 24)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The complexities in complimenting those of lower status result in overstatement and nonsensical expression. Meanwhile, complimenting the higher status gives more various expressions as it also covers mixed language, question and even no compliment.

When the students compliment lower status, they maintain their role so that they try to be understood more by their children. Therefore, they avoid mixed language. However, the elaboration result in the complexities such as difficulty to relate with a more make sense expression (see data 17 & 18) or to avoid exaggeration (see data 15 & 16).

Complimenting those of lower status results in the use of direct multiple head act. As show in data 15 and 16, each utterance consists of more than one compliment. It reflects the freer expression when complimenting lower status hearers. Meanwhile, more complexities occur in complimenting higher status. Having questions to replace complimenting directly or using gesture and smiling becomes the strategies reflecting the difficulties to complement those of higher level. As the context related to the student’s background namely Islamic institution, it is not easy to express compliment or comment to older people, to their teacher or to those of higher level. As a result, exaggerate statements are made (see data 19 & 18) and they also use mixed language consisting Bahasa Indonesia, Javanese language, English and Arabic (see data 20, 21, 26 and 27). The common expressions characterizing their Islamic identity involve Ya Allah, Alhamdulillah, Subhanallah and Masya Allah. These belong to interjection to open compliment.
The student cultural identity is also shown in the addressing term ‘panjenengan’ used in datum 26.

The tendency of using first language in complementing or to literally translate the expression from first language denotes the negative transfer as well as pragmatic transfer in both complimenting and responding complements. This case is also found in Asian EFL learners (Alotaibi, 2016; Phoocharoensil, 2012; Varol, 2015), and it characterises EFL preferences in complimenting contexts (Falasi, 2007). Furthermore there is also cultural transfer when complimenting in English as shown in datum 23 and 24. It also occurs in complimenting context of Thai EFL students preferring to have different strategy rather than expressing the compliment directly (Cedar, 2012).

The use of interjection or attention getter to start compliment is also common in French, such as oh my god (Farenkia, 2011). That complimenting across power relation includes complexities as found in this study supports the finding of Chen and Rau (2011). They found that the problems represent violation of Grice’s conversational maxims. In this study the violation of the maxim is shown in the strategy of overstatement, nonsensical expression, question and no compliment.

Based on the realization of the complement, the utterances to those of higher status involve some variations. Direct multiple compliments are used in 50% of the data while 35% prefers direct single head compliment. Only 15% uses indirect compliments. That indirect compliment is seldom used is also found in the context of complimenting in Cameroon and Canadian French (Farenkia, 2011).

The different choice of language in complimenting to higher status use of is not related with the language proficiency but it regards to politeness. The students prefer using Bahasa Indonesia which mixed with other language to convey their identity. It shows that there is interaction with the degree of politeness as the pragmatic transferability is not related to the language proficiency as asserted by Takahashi (1996) based on his study to Japanese university students. It refers to similar cultural context of EFL learners in Asia.

Complimenting and Gender

The complexities of complimenting are also related with gender. In the observation on how students of sophomore complimented those of freshmen, male students tend to focus on the writing skill. Meanwhile, female students compliment on both writing skill and the content of the paragraph writing. In average, the length of the compliment of expression of female student is longer than males. However, in terms of the detail of their compliment, both male and female students do not perform significant difference.

The difference related to gender exists in the compliment responses. The freshmen responded the compliment from the sophomore students using four common strategies namely thanking, elaboration, exchange and little refusal. The gender difference is summarized in Table 2.
Table 2. Compliment responses of male and female students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Compliments</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thanking</td>
<td>I really appreciate your compliment. It’s a good thing to know that someone with higher experience commented on my baby step writing (Datum 28)</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I want to thank you for correcting and complimenting my work (Datum 29)</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thank you, I’m glad that you like my topic (Datum 30)</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaboration</td>
<td>Thanks, I’m really proud of reading it. However, it is too much because I still can’t do it well (Datum 31)</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feel so helpful with your compliment. It think I need more experience till my writing reach a good point from readers (Datum 32)</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thank you. You have spent your time reading and giving comment to my writing. I hope you can visit the place someday (Datum 33)</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Because you like my writing and the picture, I’ll invite you to visit that place (Datum 34)</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange</td>
<td>You are very kind. This is the first time I get good appreciation from someone. It helps a lot (Datum 35)</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You say unexpected words, I mean no one gives me compliment on my writing before. Thank you. You are a nice person (Datum 36)</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little refusal</td>
<td>Thank you, although is just a short writing and a little bit boring (Datum 37)</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data show that in responding to compliment the most common strategy is thanking and elaboration. These identify acceptance strategy which is common for Asian complimenting context (Dehkordi & Chalak, 2015). The responses can be various to cover different function. In the study conducted by Grossi (2009), the function of the expression consists of softening a criticism or making a suggestion, as rejection, or true expressions of admiration on both ability and appearance. While in this study, the way to express admiration is shown in elaboration strategies (datum 31 and 33). Admiration indeed becomes an aspect of cultural norms as genuine expression rather than an offer of solidarity. This fact is also found in the complimenting context of Chinese EFL learners (Yu, 2005).

Female students are more creative in varying their response strategies. They used exchange to maintain the two way conversation by complimenting the reviewer as ‘very kind’ (datum 35) and ‘a nice person’ (datum 36). The feeling of inferiority is also shown by the little refusal strategy (datum 37). This finding is also similar to the complimenting responses of Iranian students that accept compliment using appreciation token “Thanks” and with a few reject or no acknowledgement (Mohajernia & Solimani, 2013).

The different complexities of complimenting related to gender differences are analysed further through the use of the result of questionnaire. The summary is given in Table 3.
Table 3. Complimenting in daily life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Keen on giving compliment</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Complimenting friends</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Complimenting in bahasa Indonesia</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Complimenting in mother tongue</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Complimenting in English</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Compliment on one’s appearance</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Compliment on one’s achievement</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Compliment on one’s attitude</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Compliment on one’s good or possession</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Appreciate being complimented</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Complimented by parents</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Complimented by teachers</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Complimented by peers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Complimented based on appearance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Complimented based on achievement</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Complimented based on attitude</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Complimented based on good or possession</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Compliments are made sincere</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Compliments are just conversational feature</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Compliments boost mood</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Keep silent or just smile when complimented</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Exchange complimenting with another</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Refuse or deny compliments</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The culture of complimenting as shown in Table 3 to some extent explains the background for the difference in complexities of complimenting across gender. Male students are superior in giving compliment and complimenting friends. Males tend to use their mother tongue in complimenting. They would really appreciate being complimented. However, they prefer to keep silent or just smile when being complimented.

Female students chose to compliment in Bahasa Indonesia or in English with the purpose to compliment on one’s achievement, attitude or sometimes on possession. Females are more complimented by their teachers and peers. They usually got compliment on their appearance or attitude. Yet, more compliment goes to their achievement. In this case, they believe that compliments were given sincerely although sometimes they only function as conversational feature as lip service. Most of the female students assert that compliments boost mood. Sometimes they deny or refuse compliments from other.

In fact, males never being complimented based on appearance, whereas female students stated that they never being complemented on their good or possession. Despite the difference, both male and female students share similar responses on complimenting. They were complimented by their parents and the compliments refer to their achievement. That males and
females have different kinds of consideration of the compliments is not only found in this study but also similar to the EFL context of Iranian students (Khaneshan & Bonyadi, 2016).

Based on the analysis, in the context of writing class of Indonesian learners, both compliment and compliment responses show the on-going construct of linguistic and sociocultural norms related with power relation and gender. Similar to the finding of An, the complexities of complimenting in bilingual context further reflect cultural values and social norms. In the context of bilingual Chinese and English speakers, there are different strategies employed in expressing compliment responses (An, 2013; Chen & Bhoonkongsan, 2012). While, in this study, the difference strategies also exist in complimenting in different power relation. The students tend to use Bahasa Indonesia to compliment those of different power relation.

**Conclusions**

This study explores complexities of complimenting across power relation and gender which support the result of previous studies with a more specific context namely Islamic institution. The difference in power affects the strategies as well as the problems occurring. Social factor or similar status strongly contributes to the variation of compliments expressed by university students so that when they complimented more easily to those of lower level. While, in complimenting higher level some problems appear cover overstatement, mixed language, nonsensical, no compliment and question. The context of Islamic institution also results in specific expression related to power display in complimenting strategies used. Pedagogically, the finding of this study implicates the need of pragmatic competence development through several ways in EFL classes.

Related with gender differences, female students tend to use more complimenting strategies compared to males. Females employ thanking, elaboration, exchanges and little refusal. In average, the length of the compliment of expression of female student is longer than males. However, in terms of the detail of their compliment, both male and female students do not perform significant difference. The difference also occurs based on the culture of complimenting in their social life which is also dissimilar between male and female students. In fact, complimenting in English is not for both males and females. However, in EFL context, complimenting becomes an issue as there is lack of authentic English examples in course books and the inefficient instructions English learners receive which particularly expose them to variation in English compliments. Therefore, as the implication, more empirical finding is needed to establish a better teaching construct to accommodate the improvement of pragmatic for politeness awareness which today becomes a significant value.

**About the Author:**

**Dr. Rohmani Nur Indah** is a lecturer in the English Language and Letters Department and the editorial chief of El Harakah Journal on Islamic Culture at UIN Malang. She earned her doctorate in English Language Teaching from State University of Malang, East Java, Indonesia. Her research concerns on psycholinguistics, writing skills, critical thinking, and autism.
References


Power Distance and Individualism-Collectivism in EFL Learning Environment

Abdulaziz Alshahrani
Department of Foreign Languages
College of Arts and Humanities
Albaha University, Albaha City, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Abstract
The aim of this review was to critically evaluate the research works done on power distance and individualism-collectivism in English as a foreign language (EFL) and other types of English language learning. There is a more or less agreement on what happens to teaching and learning processes in high and low power distance (PD) classrooms. However, there are some findings suggesting the simultaneous existence of both individualism and collectivism (e.g. North Vietnam). In that case, individualism and collectivism have separate identities, rather than being mutually exclusive parts of a single dimension. There are some works in which Hofstede’s (1983, 1986) cultural dimensions could not explain observed differences in the learning environment. There are possibilities of learning-specific new sets of cultural dimensions in classrooms due to the attitudinal changes of students compared to the average culture of the general population. In many works, a variety of approaches has been suggested for the teacher either to adapt to the culture of the classroom or to use methods of low PD and individualistic methods in high PD-collectivist classrooms in a cautious manner. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) seems an effective alternative to Grammar-Translation Method (GTM). Contradictory findings have been reported on Japanese classrooms. In one, the students desire to study independently, which the high PD and the collectivist culture of Japan does not allow. Two, for the Japanese learners, group working is more effective due to the collectivist culture. The contradictions involved in the two contentions need to be resolved through more research.

Keywords: classroom environment, EFL, English language learning, individualism-collectivism, power distance

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Introduction
Out of the six cultural dimensions proposed by Hofstede, (1984, 2011), power distance (PD), individualism-collectivism (IC) and uncertainty avoidance and to a lesser extent, masculinity-femininity are apparently the most researched dimensions. In learning environments, especially in the EFL context, power distance and individualism-collectivism seem to be the only two dimensions, which have been studied by most researchers.

The aim of this review is to critically evaluate the published research works on power distance and individualism-collectivism of Hofstede cultural dimensions related to EFL and other types of English language studies.

Power distance (PD) - Power distance denotes the extent to which less powerful members of organisations and institutions like family accept and expect the uneven distribution of power. Cultures endorsing low power distance accept and expect power relations that are more consultative and more democratic. A low score indicates more egalitarian society and a high score indicates wide variations of the power structure and authority in the social systems. In general terms, power distance scores are very high for countries in Asia, Africa, the Arab region and Latin America. The scores are low for countries of Germanic and Anglo regions.

Individualism (IC) versus collectivism – This dimension refers to the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. When the society is more individualistic, the achievements and rights of individuals have primacy over the rights or achievements of the society as a whole. Collectivism only refers to groups, not a nation. A clear gap exists between developed Western countries and developing countries with respect to individualism-collectivism index. High scores indicate a high level of individualism and a low score indicates a high level of collectivism. Scores are high for North America and Europe, where rights of individuals are paramount(Hofstede, 1983). Countries of Asia, Latin America, and Africa have low scores. The Arab world has middle values(Hofstede, 1983). Guatemala has 6 points out of 100 against 91 out of 100 for the USA(Hofstede, 1983).

The method of literature search used in this review is explained in the next section. This is followed by the section on the results and discussions of the selected literature. Conclusions are drawn from the review given next. Limitations of this review are indicated in the final section.

Method of Literature Searches for this Review
Search terms were used in Google Scholar search engine and the relevant works from the first five pages for any time period and for the works published in 2015 and 2016 were selected and used in the following critical review. The method yielded 36 useable papers for this review. Only the works which reported PD and IC in EFL and other types of English language learning and containing detailed methodology and data were included.

Results and Discussions
There had been several studies on the effect of PD in EFL context. The more relevant ones are discussed here.

Hofstede,(1986)differentiates low and high PD cultures in general terms, as well as family and school contexts. Reproduced in Figure 1, the classroom differentiation points are
relevant here, although real life conditions are more nuanced. In low PD classrooms, small group works are common as against routine whole class teaching in high PD cultures. In relation to education, low PD scores indicate the possibility of student-centred education and high PD scores indicate a greater likelihood of teacher-centred education. Low PD scores may indicate unequal roles that have been established for convenience. In the case of high PD scores, there is existential inequality. Religions have the possibility of equality amongst believers for low scores. A hierarchy of priests exists when the score is high. In educational institutions with low PD, a number of teachers expect some initiative and interactions with students. In such classrooms, students are expected to express doubts, and they can even challenge the teachers. On the other hand, in educational institutions with high PD, teachers are regarded as parents and treated publicly with respect and honour, especially older teachers, regardless of what students privately feel. However, it is the private feeling which affects actual learning. Disobedient students are punished severely.

Figure 1. High and low PD in family and classroom contexts (Hofstede, 1986)

A few studies on single country contexts available are discussed here. The increasing intake of international students in the United Kingdom (UK) necessitated identification of differences in cultural perceptions and expectations of new entrants on one side and UK teaching and learning expectations on the other. This information was vital for the smooth cultural transition. McEwan, (2013) reports the results of a study on the comparison of the typical academic culture of new entrants with that of their teacher. International students were identified as collectivists with lower power distance. Their teachers expressed individual traits and valued power equality in the classroom. Thus, there were significant differences in PD and IC between teachers and students. In a study about the Chinese core cultural values on communication behaviour of overseas Chinese students in the UK learning English, Abubaker, (2008) found their
PD high in their relationship with staff. They scored a medium level of uncertainty avoidance and weak masculinity (affecting the only achievement with weak gender effect) from the survey response. This result demonstrated that the Chinese students carried the high PD from their culture to the classroom learning environment of UK. Although not directly discussed, elements of PD were found to influence questioning power of Indonesian students as reported by Mahmud, (2015). Out of 46 questions asked by undergraduate students of an Indonesian state university, 40 were referral types, requiring detailed answers. About 67% liked to ask questions. About 90% wanted to ask questions because they did not know the answers to these questions. However, only 20% of them wanted to ask questions to their teachers, but not in the classroom. They rather preferred a face to face discussion outside the classroom. This behaviour might be because they were afraid (72%), or shy or unable to express their questions properly (68%) in the classroom which could result in their loss of face. These problems of asking questions were reflected in a study on Japanese learners in another way, as was explained by Kasuya (n.d.). He pointed out that voluntary interactions are absent in Japanese classrooms due to its high PD. This practice prevented effective language teaching in Japan. It is not easy to change what is rooted in culture. Teachers, especially those teaching English, need to be aware of the cultural differences between Japan and the countries where the target language is spoken. The functions of culture are conducted through language. Teaching is an activity firmly fixed with culturally bound assumptions on students and teachers. Thus, culture affects teacher responsibility and classroom interaction. The communicative approach is critical for second language learning as it needs an interactive process, especially in small groups. Interaction modifications like meaning negotiation further accelerate the language learning process. The best language students in South-East Asian countries learn by interaction even if it is not practised in classrooms. Many Japanese teachers learned English through a traditional Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) and sometimes, they too have difficulty in communicating in English. In high PD cultures, deductive approaches like GTM are used. In low PD countries, inductive approaches (communicative approach) are used. Japanese teachers may not be comfortable using inductive approaches if they were trained by deductive methods. According to Fisher and Waldrip, (1999) the most consistent predictors of teacher-student interpersonal behaviour were: collaboration, deference, competition, teacher authority and modelling scales.

In country comparisons involving a high PD country (China) and a low PD country (Netherlands), the effect of PD on non-verbal cues of university students was investigated by Mui, Goudbeek, Swerts, and van der Wijst, (2013) using a gaming context. Chinese students showed greater submission than Dutch students in their non-verbal behaviour. The cultural difference was more pronounced when the opponent was a professor rather than a fellow student. Santilli and Miller, (2011) tested both symmetrical (immediacy of best friend) and asymmetrical (immediacy of a teacher) power conditions among student samples from Kenya, USA, and Brazil. There was effect for gender and PD on non-verbal communications. Under symmetrical power conditions, women used more non-verbal immediacy than men. There was no gender difference in the case of asymmetrical power distance. The authors do not explain any country difference in this regard. Observing that PD can cause misunderstanding in ESL classrooms, Nelson, (2000) discusses how the ESL classes in low and high PD cultures can be handled effectively. In the studies of Badri, Amani-Saribaglou, Ahrari, Jahadi, and Mahmoudi, (2014) using a causal model based on an Iranian sample, path analysis showed that basic psychological needs and intrinsic motivation had a positive effect on academic achievement. PD
and uncertainty avoidance negatively affected basic psychological needs, but femininity influenced psychological needs positively. As a fulfilment of basic psychological needs was positively related to academic performance, high PD could be regarded as negatively related to academic performance. There was no significant effect of collectivism.

Using a questionnaire survey administered by 14 high school EFL teachers on their 436 students in Turkey, Cetin and Dogan, (2014) note that students perceived experienced teachers as more cooperative than fresh teachers. The influence of behaviours by old and new teachers did not differ significantly. The way the students perceived their teachers influenced their attitude towards the course and the teacher. Out of the eight behaviour variables listed, the variables: leadership, helpful/friendly, understanding and student freedom can be linked to classrooms in lower PD situations or teachers using better teaching methodologies to handle EFL classes in high PD contexts. The absence of difference between new and experienced teachers in influencing students could be due to the high PD of Turkey, in which teachers are role models, whether old or new. All the characteristics of teacher-student relationships in high PD cultures affect the influential relationship. Close relationships, cooperation and care with influence and direction and ability to control the class with tolerant authority can promote the teacher-student relationship well. Even non-verbal communication like positioning in the centre of the class, standing and eye contact and other behaviours like a clear voice, and short verbal instructions are helpful. Proximity is promoted by trusting students, allowing them the freedom to express, willingness to explain when they do not understand, and patience are also favourable points in this regard. These qualities are more related to lower PD culture. It is interesting to note that in a high PD country like Turkey, the EFL teachers assessed their style to be low PD.

Experiences of an English Language Teacher (ELT) in Japan in terms of PD were reported in Hadley, (2001). The existence of hierarchical relationships among students was a major problem. A strictly stereotyped situation was non-existent. Global influences caused the shift in Japanese educational culture from a high PD type towards lower PD culture. This process resulted in the presence of elements of both cultures in classrooms. The susceptibility of Japanese classrooms to influences of low PD was higher compared to some other high PD Asian countries. On the other hand, the influence of high PD of native teachers, teaching methods and materials acted as bottlenecks. The author discussed the current tilt towards low PD structure in ELT classrooms with literature support. The author herself adapted her low PD practices to the high PD practices of Japan in a number of ways.

In another study on the interaction between students from a collectivist country, South Korea, and an EFL teacher from an individualistic culture, Yoo, (2014) notes that reflective teaching and a flexible approach with respect to the context was the best method. Here, the author narrated her sole experience of EFL teaching in the two different cultural contexts, and the authors’ conclusions are based on their first-hand experiences. This study also lacked any attempt to quantify the relationship between a PD approach and EFL student learning outcomes.

Lagas, Heijkant, Printzipa, and Jørgensen, (2007) measured the relationship between students’ individual beliefs on power distance and their perception of teachers by sampling students from schools in the US and Hungary. They found that there was no relationship between individual student beliefs about PD and their perception of teachers. This could mean that students (especially those without any international exposure) may be unaware of PD as an
influencing factor in their classrooms. They might not have given much thought to the high PD styles used by their teachers as it was the only approach they have ever seen.

Based on the results of a survey on 1900 Indonesian school students of maths and English, and 55 teachers, Maulanaa, Opdenakker, den Brok, and Bosker, (2011) reported a positive inter-personal relationship of students with their teachers in line with the high PD and collective culture of Indonesia. Conflicts between teachers and students do occur sometimes due to the unequal power relations between them. However, the ultimate control is with teachers due to high PD. Teacher-centred rather than the participative teaching of maths and English also indicated the same cultural pattern. The influence was more dominant than proximity with respect to student motivation. Thus the higher the cooperation and dominance by teachers, the higher is the student motivation for learning. However, the relatively higher rating for drudgery and repression in the survey response is indicative some problems in some Indonesian classrooms.

More formalised email communications were noticed by Bjørge, (2007) when students from high PD sent emails to their teachers. This implies that the high PD culture of the country and classrooms reflected in the use of technology by the stakeholders.

Zhang, (2005) studied on the apprehensions of Chinese college students on classroom communications. He obtained significant positive correlations for student-level PD and student perceptions of humour orientation of instructor with classroom communication apprehension. However, multiple regression analysis showed student level PD as the only predictor of classroom communication apprehension. Perceived tutor verbal and non-verbal immediacy had no effect. This implies that any changes in the PD between student and teacher have the potential to bring about a change in classroom communication apprehension. This can possibly lead to better student learning outcomes.

In the virtual classroom settings of distance education, the Arab teaching staff of English in a Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) university may feel lost as they are unable to get first-hand knowledge on whether the students are attending, understanding and whether they are recording. The absence of transparency in online tests is also viewed with suspicion by these teachers. These reactions can be related to the high PD cultural background of the country (Elyas & Basalamah, 2012).

Fewer studies are available on the sole effect of IC or the combined effect of both PD and IC. There is some relationship between PD and IC. Large PD with low individualism is observed in the case of Guatemala, Panama, Ecuador and Venezuela. On the other hand, although PD is large in the case of Belgium and France, they are also highly individualistic. Latin European countries of France, Italy and Belgium are large PD countries but with a high level of individualism. Collectivist countries are always large PD cultures, which especially applies to developing countries (Hofstede, 1983). This is explained in Figure 2 reproduced from Hofstede, (1983). From Figure 2, it would appear that changing PD without affecting IC or the other way is difficult.
The benefits of introducing a drama-based pedagogy observed by Donnery, (2009) seem to be primarily due to the increased communication and cooperation reducing the PD in the high PD Japanese traditional EFL classroom. This method was found to be compatible with the existing traditional and cultural educational systems of Japan. The results show that it is possible to integrate methods to reduce PD in EFL learning environment. This possibility was demonstrated, although in a sample of 69 students by Tananuraksakul, (2013), methods of PD reduction simultaneous with positive reinforcement can boost the confidence of EFL learners in oral communication and positive attitudes towards their own accents. These methods are also useful in developing and enhancing their confidence in their own abilities of speaking English.
Thus, teachers can reduce cultural power distance in a listening and speaking class, using methods like calling students by an nickname instead of the first name and complimenting them when they make an effort to speak English. The implication can also extend to other EFL contexts with high cultural PD, such as Korean and Japanese in that PD reduction and positive reinforcement can gradually build up students’ confidence in speaking English. Being an exploratory work, the low samples size is excusable.

In second and foreign language learning contexts, technology (mobile phones) was the most important factor shaping culture in the survey undertaken by Viberg and Grönlund, (2013) on a total of 345 students in China and Sweden. Notably, Hofstede cultural dimensions could not explain the differences in mobile-assisted language learning attitudes. Sweden is a low PD, highly individualistic country and China is a high PD, highly collectivist country. It seems, the very use of mobile phones, a technology which connects people and enhances communication and collaboration, decreased PD and increased individualistic tendencies in the Chinese context and brought it nearer to Sweden with respect to PD and IC. Such a possibility may explain the absence of explaining the power of Hofstede factors for mobile-assisted learning attitudes. Thus, use of technologies like mobiles may be another method for reducing PD in high PD classes.

In their study, Rafieyan, Sharafi-Nejad, Khavari, Damavand, and Eng, (2014) conducted a pragmatic comprehension test on 30 EFL students each at a university in South Korea and in Germany. Baseline data was obtained by doing the same procedure on two British natives an ensuring consistency through inter-rater reliability test. It was found that the EFL students in a culturally distant country like South Korea experienced greater difficulties in pragmatic comprehension than those coming from a culturally nearer country like Germany. The authors recommended the provision of opportunities for the students of English as a Foreign Language to be exposed to the culture of the target language community through cultural instruction, educational sojourn, or tele-collaborative partnership. In-classroom methods of reducing PD was not considered by the authors. Although the procedure and the validity tests justified the small sample sizes, there is need to validate the findings by other independent works.

The need for culturally appropriate pedagogy was expressed by Nguyen, Terlouw, and Pilot, (2006). Learners from Confucian heritage culture (CHC) countries like China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia are known to excel in studies where group settings have been used in the pedagogy. This has been explained in terms of the collectivist culture and the Confucian emphasis on interpersonal relationships and group orientation. However, Western models of group learning have been found to be inappropriate for CHC contexts. From a Western perspective, group learning means working within a social constructivist environment. The students, use their collective knowledge and thus, may exceed the knowledge of their teacher. This brings the teacher’s knowledge into question. This change of status also means non-existence of a quiet, orderly class and its replacement by various social complex situations. With respect to teacher-student relationships in high PD learning contexts, it will be difficult for a teacher to play the role of a know-it-all, above anyone else image of a teacher if mistakes are pointed out by students. Equally, it will be impossible to degrade from a superior role of a teacher to an inferior role of a facilitator. Competition rather than cooperation, resistance to group learning, Educational selection and jobs also encourage competition between students.
With respect to individualism-collectivism, the common notion that the two components are opposite to each other is questioned by the findings of Ralston, Van Thang, and Napier, (1999). They showed that North Vietnam was more individualistic than South Vietnam and South China. At the same time, North Vietnam was also most collectivist of all the five countries compared in their study. The question arising here is: if collectivism is not the opposite of individualism, what is the scope of using collectivism for group learning in high PD and highly collectivist classrooms. In that case, why CHC learners prefer to work alone, meaning more individualistic traits. Fear of losing face prevents CHC learners from volunteering ideas in their classes. Allowing a person to save face is more important than telling the truth. Thus, all those involved keep their mouths shut to save face, give face or assert face. Keeping away from controversial topics and adopting an obliging style to protect the interest of others than that of own are two indirect tactics used by highly collectivist learners. The virtue of harmony is held high in a collectivist classroom by avoiding confrontations and conflicts. Students obey the orders of the teacher to be quiet. In group learning situation, such students can only suppress their feelings, desires or claim of any authority. They tend to avoid criticising peers. These tendencies affect group interactions. Therefore, the Western approach of group learning (consisting of challenging each other’s conclusions and reasoning, advocating the exertion of effort, influencing each other’s efforts, striving for mutual benefit, and maintaining a moderate level of arousal) is inappropriate for high collectivist learners. The introduction of constructivist and cooperative learning approach in highly collectivist learning needs to be done carefully. These factors related to losing face may negatively influence the effectiveness of group learning.

The authors cite the culturally appropriate models of pedagogy for different cultures of international students proposed by Munro-Smith, (2003- as cited by Nguyen et al, 2006), reproduced in Table 1.

Table 1. Culturally appropriate pedagogy for students from culturally different countries in Australia (Munro-Smith, 2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRUCTURED</th>
<th>SELF-DIRECTED</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Collective, high PD, high uncertainty avoidance (CHC students)</td>
<td>B. Collective, low PD, low uncertainty avoidance (Indian students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Individualistic, high PD, high uncertainty avoidance (German students)</td>
<td>D. Individualistic, low PD, low uncertainty avoidance (Australian students)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From a comparative study on PD of Chinese-English and non-English teachers in classroom communications, Li and Guo, (2012) found that the PD of English teachers was shorter than that of non-English teachers. The most important reason for this was their different length and depth of learning and using the English language. Thus, English became a vehicle for directing the cultural values of its users. The original cultural value was affected by the new cultural values of the language. These two types of teachers used different strategies for teaching and managing their students.

Moderately high collectivism (low individualism) and moderately high PD are characteristics of Japanese culture. However, the learners prefer individual learning style,
although they need to work in groups formed by teachers in their classrooms. Japanese learners do not have the autonomy required for distant learning. However, independent learning style is unknown to them. In collectivist societies, students learn only to pass examinations and not to acquire knowledge. Apart from student-teacher relationships, in-group relationships of students are also affected by PD (Aoki & Bray, 2007).

In the observations of Govea, (2007) student-student interaction is determined by the pedagogical opportunities allowed by the teachers within their curriculum. The Mexican-American, with a blend of individualistic and collectivistic characteristics as an assistant English teacher in Japan (ATE) working under a Japanese English teacher (JTE) with collectivist character, was emboldened to introduce highly communicative low structured classroom methods to teach English.

There is always scope for potential differences in inter-cultural communications as cultural differences are not always respected. Inter-cultural communication dynamics, often leading to conflicts, can happen between foreign English language teachers and native English language teachers and native learners. Based on Hofstede concepts, anxiety, feelings and misunderstandings can contribute to such conflicts. However, some studies have not shown significant in PD perception between foreign EFL teachers and Japanese students. As an extension to this finding Kajiura, (2009) used questionnaire survey on 13 foreign EFL teachers and nine Japanese English teachers based on Hofstede, (1983). The results showed no significant difference between them regarding PD. Most Japanese teachers had some experience of living in foreign countries of small PD. The foreign teachers also had more than 13 years of living and teaching experience in Japan. Thus, in both cases, some cultural adjustments might have taken place. Looking from this angle, choice of population and samples were not appropriate to the aim of this study. Both groups of teachers favoured combinations of student-centred and teacher-centred teaching. Thus, the original intention of evaluating conflicts and their sources between the two groups of teachers was not fulfilled by this study.

Looking at the findings on Japanese classrooms, it appears, there are two contradictory contentions. One, the students desire to study independently, which the high PD and the collectivist culture of Japan does not allow. Two, for the Japanese learners, group working is more effective due to the collectivist culture. The contradictions involved in the two contentions need to be resolved.

The success achieved by establishing a self-access centre (Japan) in terms of student autonomy was evaluated through teacher surveys by Lander, (2010). Notably, all teachers agreed on the usefulness of SAC. However, they pointed out that SAC helps only those students who are already autonomous. The teachers should understand the need for SAC and encourage students to use it. The author noted that the same students repeatedly used the SAC and no new student came to use it, proving what the teachers said. In this manner, the experiment was a failure. There should have been a pulling component to attract students to SAC and the indicator of success will be an increasing number of students till it reaches a maximum. This is proved by the author’s data that 98% were willing to SAC if there was one. It also means that many students were unaware of SAC.

Categorising South Korea as a Confucian, large PD collectivist country undergoing change, Jambor, (2005) dealt with the effect of these dimensions on student-student and teacher-student relations in an second language or L2 (language different from that of the person or
country) environment. In teacher-centred class, the authority of the teacher determines the manner and extent of student-student interactions. Although students interact and help each other, there is very little dialogue. The Grammar Translation Method (GTM) used in South Korean L2 classes do not allow dialogue to encourage acquisition of oral skills. Older or senior students, especially male, dominate over other students. They are respected and determine the interactions between students. Gender separation in South Korea restricts interactions within the same gender only. If the gender of the teacher is different from that of the student, the already formal teacher-student interaction is less. It is difficult to stress on content than structure in the currently used GTM. The task of converting introvert students into extroverts is very heavy. GTM heavily stresses on grammar rules and writing styles and there is little importance on how to speak the language. The need for teachers to encourage more student-student interactions while themselves interacting more with students is stressed. However, in the current cultural setting, it is difficult to practice. The most popular Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method needs to replace GTM. The didactic approach of the teacher is vital, but may be limited by the inadequate cognitive abilities of the teacher for this purpose. The audiolingual method followed by Situational Language Teaching (SLT) before introducing CLT is suggested for L2 learning in South Korea. Hong Kong and Thailand are two countries, where CLT can be directly introduced as the two countries are exposed to English and western culture for a long time.

In a master thesis, Whalen, (2016) compared university students of USA, Turkey, Russia, China, South Africa, Vietnam, France and Finland on whether Hofstede findings on IBM can be extended to the classroom behaviours of students and teachers. A total of 625 students participated in all. National means of each item failed to support the contention of Hofstede. On the other hand, provisional support was obtained for the development of a new set of classroom cultural dimensions specifically for learning. Principal component analysis identified three such components. The author admits to the non-generalisability of the findings to a global level as the number of countries was limited. Additionally, the sample size was too low (48-64) for six out of the eight countries compared and for the remaining two countries, it was less than 200. The additional three dimensions were identified from high significant correlations of certain inter-related items in the survey questionnaire and large variations in national means and the author called them intellectual autonomy, achievement motivation, and behavioural autonomy. Student autonomy is an important aspect discussed in relation to effective language learning in many works. This has been pointed out to be very low in high PD collectivist cultures/classrooms. The author has effectively split it into two: behavioural and intellectual autonomies. Achievement motivation is an altogether a different dimension, which acts as a pull factor for language learning and learning in different ways. Achievement motivation can either promote individual learning due to the desire to be above all in competition or collaborative learning when language learning becomes a challenge for an individual approach.

Noting that Grice’s theory of conversation is influenced by culture, Cutrone, (2015) applied it to the L2 English speaking ability of the Japanese in cross-cultural communications. In the context of Japanese EFL pedagogy, Grice’s theory can be used as a framework for inter-cultural analysis. The author identified some issues regarding cross-cultural misunderstandings between Japanese and native English speakers. The author suggests incorporation of targeted awareness enhancing strategies in such contexts with followed up with providing opportunities to develop better conversation management techniques. There is a very little focused discussion in this article and one has to search important points.
Using a qualitative study on 19 expatriate English teachers at a Saudi university, Etri, (2015) found that these teachers applied varied contextual frames for their ELT in their individual classrooms. Their pre-existing biographical frames were useful to reduce inter-cultural sensitivity. When context and the biographical frame converge in the ELT, a circumstance of discordance was created. This work also has many vague statements and hence it is difficult to precisely decipher what the author wished to convey.

Conclusions
This review critically evaluated the research works done on power distance and individualism-collectivism in EFL and other types of English language learning.

There is more or less good agreement on what happens to teaching and learning processes and outcomes in high and low PD classrooms. However, there are some findings suggesting the simultaneous existence of both individualism and collectivism in one country like North Vietnam. In that case, individualism and collectivism have separate identities, rather than being mutually exclusive parts of a single dimension. There are some works in which Hofstede cultural dimensions could not explain observed differences in the learning environment. There are possibilities of learning-specific new sets of cultural dimensions in classrooms due to the attitudinal changes of students compared to the average culture of the general population.

In many works, a variety of approaches has been suggested for the teacher either to adapt to the culture of the classroom or to use methods of low PD and individualistic methods in high PD-collectivist classrooms in a cautious manner. CLT seems an effective alternative to GTM.

Contradictory findings have been reported on Japanese classrooms. In one, the Japanese students desire to study independently, which the high PD and the collectivist culture of Japan does not allow. In the other, group working has been found more effective for Japanese learners due to the collectivist culture. The contradictions involved in the two contentions need to be resolved through more research.

Limitations
Research works on the specific topic of PD and IC in EFL alone are very few, although these two dimensions are the most researched ones among the six dimensions of Hofstede.

Not enough details were available in many works. A few of them were very descriptive and thus it became very difficult to find out what was the real message of the paper. These problems have been pointed out in the discussions.

Methodological or interpretive problems found in some papers have been pointed out in the text.

About the Author:
Dr. Abdulaziz Alshahrani is an assistant professor of Applied Linguistics, graduated from the University of Newcastle, Australia. He was admitted to the degree of MA with distinction in Applied Linguistics from the same institution. His works are related to the fields of language acquisition and the roles of the social variables. At the moment, he works as an assistant professor at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Albaha University, in Saudi Arabia.
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Exploring the Status and Teachers’ Perceptions of Technology Integration in EFL Classrooms at Chadli Bendjedid University, Algeria

Ladaci Naima
Department of English
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Chadli Bendjedid University, El Tarf, Algeria

Abstract:
In the realm of language education, technology has reshaped the state of the teaching/learning framework in different ways and there is no surprise how a number of classes around the world have now turned from chalk and board classes to technology-based ones. However, whether teachers adopt or reject technology in their teaching depends primarily on the way they perceive it. Consequently, the current paper intends to capture the various perceptions of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers from the department of English at Chadli Bendjedid University, El Tarf (Algeria) towards the use and the integration of technology in their teaching practices. It also aspires to answer the question: to what extent is technology used in their teaching? In order to collect data for this study; a questionnaire was administered to ten teachers from the above-cited department. Although the findings revealed that all the participants have a positive attitude towards technology; they all face different barriers that impede them from integrating it.

Keywords: Level of technology usage, problems of integration, teachers’ perceptions and attitudes

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Introduction:

In educational settings, technology has earned a solid foothold owing to the qualitative improvements it brought to the language classrooms. Actually, it is very rare to find a modern classroom that does not make use of any form of technology as this latter is constantly offering a plethora of authentic resources that may emulate and bring real life language to the teaching/learning environments, and hence facilitates the teaching/learning of languages in efficient ways. Unfortunately, this technology appears to be inefficiently used in many developing countries and Algeria is no exception. Though this latter has laid great emphasis on the significance of enhancing a national policy for technology education and training, the level of technology integration is still in its beginnings.

In fact, the Algerian government has initiated partnership with many international agencies to implement projects that would boost the status of technology in education and make it available for all; but unfortunately different educational institutions in the country still face problems of poor infrastructure and connectivity issues.

Accordingly, this study intends to provide an account on the status of technology in the department of English at Chadli Bendjedid University (El Tarf) and capture EFL teachers’ perceptions of technology usage in language teaching. Moreover, it attempts to call attention on the challenges that hamper teachers from integrating technology into their teaching practices.

1. Research Questions

This study was designed to elicit answers to the following questions:

a. How do EFL teachers at Chadli Bendjedid University perceive technology in language teaching?

b. To what extent is technology used in their teaching?

2. Literature Review

Defining Technology

The term technology has been documented in literature under various concepts and this is due to its dynamic nature. Consequently, it has often been used as a synonym to words like: Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI), Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Technology Enhanced Language Learning (TELL), Information Communication Technologies (ICT’s), Media Technology, New Media, etc. In fact, they all refer to the technical tools such as but not restricted to: software, email, interactive whiteboards, TV, computer and the internet that can be used to ease and heighten teaching and learning. However, the most dominant and favored term in technology is CALL “because of its now well-established presence in the discourse surrounding the topic” Hubbard and Levy (2006, p.9), and more importantly because of its inclination to focus more on learning than on teaching.

A review of the literature about technology in language teaching reveals that it has gained considerable attention from a number of scholars. Satya (2007), for example, refers to it as “an approach to language teaching and learning in which the computer is used as an aid to the presentation, reinforcement and assessment of material to be learned, usually including a substantial interactive element” (p.125). Moreover, Chapelle and Jamieson (2008) define CALL as: “the area of applied linguistics concerned with the use of computers for teaching and learning.”
a second language” (p.1), and according to Egbert (2005) it means “learners learning language in any context with, through and around computer technologies” (p.4). However, the most succinct and ample definition is the one provided by Levy (1997) in which he considers CALL as “the search for a study of applications of the computers in language teaching and learning” (p.1). This definition draws attention on the empirical feature of CALL and stresses its importance to both teachers and learners.

Therefore, building on these definitions, one can simply define CALL as an approach or a device that is used by teachers to facilitate the transmission of knowledge and to assist learners to comprehend and acquire that knowledge. Moreover, what can be added here is that learners may deal with technology in two different ways; they can either learn from it when they will be only receiving the information, or they can learn with it when they do not only take the information but also interact with it.

3. Technology in FL Classrooms

It is definitely true that “everyday language use is so tied to technology that learning language through technology has become a fact of life with important implications for applied linguists, particularly those concerned with facets of SLA” (Chapelle 2001,p.1). In reality, technology has reshaped and refined the state of the teaching/learning framework in different ways due to the huge authentic material that has opened up the language classroom to the outside world. As a result, there was a clear shift from the familiar medium of textbook and its traditional literacy practices to the medium of the computer screen and its innovative form of multi-modal discourse (Kress & Leeuwen, 2001).

Generally what happens within the traditional methods of language teaching is that a very little time is devoted to the teaching of authentic language that learners may face beyond the boundaries of the classroom; they frequently fail to handle real life situations where language is used divergently. Moreover, teachers within these methods are often required to teach many hours so that to lead learners to a level where they will perform hesitantly and timidly. By contrast, in a technology based classroom, teachers are no more stuck to a prescribed syllabus which they need to follow to the letter since excellent material is available at their fingertips. However, this is not to say that technology substitutes the traditional way of teaching and learning but rather enhances and supports the regular work done inside the classrooms.

Murphy (1995) summarizes the learning effects that technology usage may breed to the language classrooms. They are as follows:

1. Social growth.
2. Problem solving.
3. Peer teaching.
4. Independent work.
5. Exploration.

4. Relevance of Technology to Language Teaching

In education, technology has made its way in the mainstream teaching of second/foreign language (L2/FL) (Hubbard, 2008) and it would seem illogic for language teachers to stick to the traditional methods of chalk and talk without profiting from the various resources that are
regularly accessible at their fingerprints. In fact, a variety of media technologies seem to have the potential to meet the new demands of foreign language teachers and learners, e.g. more humanistic, student-centered and communicative approaches (Training Agency, 1990), and as Brinton (2001) puts it: “media material may lend authenticity to the classroom situation, reinforcing for the students the direct relation between the language classroom and the outside world” (p. 461).

Therefore, technology has the considerable potentials to contribute to language teaching/learning development and admittedly, it has improved the quality of language education as it brought valuable applications to the field. There are abundant free of charge websites that afford excellent opportunities to learners to learn different aspects of language like grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc. Moreover, in modern classrooms where technology is applied, new strategies and approaches are constantly developed to satisfy the expectations and needs of the 21st century learners.

As with research on technology, several studies were empirically conducted to examine the efficiency it may breed to language teaching and learning. As a result, they have provided ample support for the assertion that the use of technology in language teaching/learning heightens learners’ proficiency, raises their motivation and involvement in the classroom (Zhao, 2013, Grycovic, Chapelle & Shelley, 2013). Echoing this view, Odabasi (2000) maintains that among the benefits of technology usage is the increase in learners’ motivation.

Eaton (2010) has also found that computer-based communication is a critical feature for language teaching/learning, and computer-based discussions are more liable to engender better participation than face-to-face discussions. Hence, it usually results in more collaborative and encouraging environments where all students are given equal chances of language practice.

In addition to that, Rivers (1987 as cited in Bani-Hani, 2009, p.43) records different advantages of CALL from which we mention the following:

- **Interaction**: the computer is a beneficial instrument through which the interaction in the classroom can be effectively used. The computer can also help student-student interaction, student-teacher interaction, teacher-teacher (from other schools) interaction, school-school interaction and finally student – computer interaction.
- **Immediate feedback**: Rivers pointed out that the computer can provide immediate notification that an error has been made. It is worth mentioning here that the teacher may forget to provide feedback but, on the contrary, the computer will never do.
- **Error analysis**: the computer can identify specific errors and explain them.
- **Self correction**: clear error messages may help most students to achieve satisfaction of reaching the correct answer at the end.
- **Reinforcement**: through which students are encouraged by congratulatory messages for correct answers.
Hence, the aforementioned scholars have practically reached the same results i.e. all viewing technology as paramount to language teaching and learning and as a medium that has a positive impact on the learning process and the quality of language instruction.

5. Teachers’ Attitudes towards the Use of Technology

One of the most serious challenges facing EFL teachers in the 21st century classrooms is how to meet the expectations and needs of today’s’ learners who grew using and breathing technology. Therefore, “the use of technology in teaching becomes more important in present times because teachers also have to keep with the technological knowledge of their students” (Richards, 2014.p.2). In fact, language teachers handiness to use technology is mentioned amongst the effective teachers’ characteristics in higher education (Koureos & Everipidou, 2013) and it is a must for foreign language teacher candidates in many teacher training programs (Barzaq 2007).

Moreover, it should be noted that among the many factors that affect the success of technology usage in language classrooms apart from the teachers’ knowledge of education is their attitude towards its use. Teachers’ attitudes, then, is pivotal in whether they welcome technology as an integral tool in their teaching practices or they reject it.

Recently, several studies were conducted to examine teachers’ attitudes and perceptions towards technology. Albirini (2004), for instance, explores the attitudes of EFL teachers in Syrian high schools towards the use of technology in education; he found that most Jordanian teachers possess positive attitudes towards the use of ICT for educational purposes. In the same vein, Mollaei & Riasati (2013) found that teachers in Iran had positive attitudes toward using technology to develop learning through a computer–oriented instruction. Thus, all the above mentioned researchers regarded the importance of teachers’ attitudes as a key factor that can determine the extent to which technologies are used in language teaching.

6. Methodology

6.1. Participants

In order to attain the research goals and fully capture the perceptions of university teachers towards the integration of technology in their teaching practices, we conducted a study on ten teachers from the department of English at Chadli Bendjedid University.

6.2 Data Collection Method and Instruments

To portray teachers’ opinions about the use and usefulness of technology in language teaching, a quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire which was carefully designed to meet the purposes of the study. The questionnaire was printed and distributed to the participants.

7. Results

The analyses of the first three questions revealed basic information about the participants. All of them (100%) hold a magister degree; their ages range from 20 to 30 (40%), from 30 to 40 (50%) and from 40 to 50 (10%) and they have been teaching English for eight years (30%), some for a period of five years (40%) and the others for three years (30%). This indicates that most teachers of English at Chadli Bendjedid University are young teachers who may well have a
better disposition for technology use than older teachers. Turning to question (Q4) (see Appendix), all the participants confirmed their possession of personal computers which reveals the significance of computers in the life of every individual. For the purpose of answering question five (Q5), six teachers (50%) argued that they always use computers, three teachers (30%) use it often, while only two teachers (20%) selected sometimes. When asked whether they used the computer for teaching purposes in question (Q6), all the participants answered yes.

In question seven (Q7), respondents were asked to describe their experience in using technology. The majority of them (70%) reported that they are advanced users; the other teachers (30%) revealed that they are average users. In order to understand the policy of the aforementioned department towards the integration of technology in language classrooms, we asked question (Q8). The entire population (100%) confirmed that the department does not have a clearly set policy towards the integration of technology; some teachers added some notes next to this question saying that only in oral expression modules that the department mandates the use of language laboratories. Unfortunately, their answers to question (Q9) confirmed the absence of adequate technological devices that can be used in language teaching. They all selected computers in the language laboratory and overhead projectors as the sole tools available at the department. Moreover, when they were asked in question (Q10) to select among the tools those that are imperative in language teaching, the participants reported that they are all indispensable.

With reference to question (Q11), all the participants (100%) affirmed their interest in using technological tools for language teaching. The answers they provided to the next question (Q12) supports their interest. Ninety (90%) of the participants answered the first segment of the question by (yes) which means that they rely on the internet in the preparation of their lessons, whereas only one teacher (10%) chose (No). The second part of the question attempts to identify the reasons of their choices. The teacher who chose (No) claimed that s/he prefers using books for teaching; however, the nine teachers who chose (yes) stated that the internet is the technology that provides authentic up-to-date material that will greatly boost the teaching/learning of English. The comments they provided are summarized in the following points:

- Technology provides both teachers and students with authentic and original inputs that could improve the quality of EFL teaching and learning.
- It boosts students’ motivation especially when it brings fun to the classroom.
- It encourages communication and collaboration in the classroom; it may also boost students’ self-confidence especially if they are familiar with technology use.
- It offers a sort of enthusiasm for students.
- It raises students’ autonomy and allows them to learn freely and anywhere.
- The internet can deliver instantaneous and genuine access to the target language.

The nine teachers who answered question (Q12) positively, answered (Q13) as follows: they stated that they always use the internet to prepare their lessons (50%), and (40%) often prepare their lessons through the internet. The analysis of questions (Q14) and (Q15) respectively demonstrates that (70%) of the respondents think that technology is very useful for students while (30%) think it is somehow useful. Nonetheless, they all think that technology must be an integral part of the teaching/learning process as it makes the process more active and meaningful.
The last question of this study is crucial in finding the main barriers that impede teachers at the department of English from incorporating technology in their teaching. Sixty (60%) selected lack of technological material, (10%) claimed that they are unfamiliar with technology while (30%) added that beside the poor technological equipment of the department; the lack of time, training and support also impedes them from integrating any technology in their classes.

8. Discussion

There are many factors that contribute to the success of implementing technology in educational settings; primarily among them are teachers’ attitudes towards the integration. As a matter of fact, it was clear from the results that the participants of the present study have positive attitudes towards the use of technology in English language teaching which means they are well aware and convinced that the ever rising stream of technical material has a lot to offer to foreign language learners. It appeared, then, that they accepted the use of technology as a binding facet of instruction. Actually, this finding is in compliance with other studies exploring teachers’ perceptions and attitudes of technology inclusion in language teaching (Albirini 2004; Isleem 2003; Merç 2015).

However, while the findings provide evidence that the subjects in this study considered technology essential in foreign language teaching and learning, there is no correlation between their attitudes and their real adoption of technological devices in the teaching classrooms. In fact, these teachers complained about the dearth of technical software and they considered it as the main inhibiting factor that slows the adoption of technology and deprives students from broader learning experiences. Therefore, the department of English at Chadli Bendjedid University was found to be poor as regards the technological equipments that it may provide to language teachers and learners.

In addition to that, the participants revealed that they received no support for technology use i.e., the department does not encourage them to use technological aids for teaching the language except for the language laboratories which do not satisfy their aspirations nor meet their learners’ needs.

9. Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, we may put forward the following recommendations:

- In order to lift the teaching and learning of English at Chadli Bendjedid University, the administrators should offer pedagogically firm ways of incorporating technology in the teaching methods. Successful technology incorporation must start from the curriculum wherein technology will no more be viewed as an optional teaching aid that can be adopted or abandoned voluntarily but rather as an integral part of the teaching process. Therefore, they need to provide larger opportunities for teachers to integrate technology into their curricula.
- EFL teachers need to receive adequate training and ongoing support to ensure an effective use of technology in the classroom. It is worth noting here that teachers will not be only trained on how to control material, but also on how to incorporate resources into classroom activities in order to attain successful technology integration.
In order to expand education beyond traditional boundaries, teachers should use technological tools more often in the teaching of different tasks. Over head projectors, for example, can be used for the teaching of literature, civilization, grammar and other courses. Moreover, power-point may offer colorful texts, photographs, drawings and tables which will make learning motivating, attractive and more enjoyable.

Teachers should also be convinced that 1) they are no more the omniscient sole sources of knowledge inside the language classroom and 2) technology in the 21st century classroom is a mandate requirement that will take their teaching one step further.

In addition to that, there could be a culture of teamwork in which teachers work jointly, share and expend their experiences with technological equipment and resources.

EFL learners at Chadli Bendjedid University could also be encouraged to use technology more often inside and outside the language classroom in order to boost their learning capabilities.

**Conclusion**

Teaching with technology has become the number one fashion that is in favour of many foreign language teachers around the world who seek to render their classes livelier, more collaborative, and more learner-centered. Therefore, the overriding purpose of this study was to probe the level of technology usage in EFL classrooms at Chadli Bendjedid University (El Tarf) and how teachers perceive its integration. The findings of the study indicated that technological tools are barely used for the teaching of English the fact that deprives EFL students from a wide range of authentic material which may motivate them, engage them in different interactional tasks and boost their overall language proficiency. Besides, the results have also revealed that the main reason for not using technology in the teaching of English is due to its unavailability at the university. With regard to teachers’ perceptions, it has been found that almost all the teachers who participated in this study have a positive attitude towards the implementation of technology and they are fully aware of the great potential it offers. Unfortunately, they are not provided with the adequate facilities that may support their teaching. In fact, this study is an appeal to the supervisors at the university to reconsider the relevance of introducing technological equipments in the language classrooms. Finally, teachers need to understand that successful language teaching cannot be met by courses only following traditional, instructional methods; they should rather believe that technology in the 21st century classroom is a must and not an option.

**About the Authors:**

**Naima Ladaci:** Assistant professor in the Department of English at Chadli Bendjedid University, El Tarf, Algeria. She holds a Magister in Language sciences and is currently completing a Doctorate research in Applied Linguistics. Her research interests are technology and language learning/teaching, learning strategies, and foreign language listening.

**References**


Exploring the Status and Teachers’ Perceptions of Technology


TEACHER’S QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Colleague,

This questionnaire is part of a research study carried at the department of English at Chadli Bendjedid University (El Tarf); it attempts to provide an account on the status of technology and capture teachers’ perceptions and attitudes towards technology use in the teaching of English as a foreign language. You are kindly requested to answer the following questions to help us accomplish this study.

Thank you for your collaboration!

1. Degree: B.A. / Licence □ M.A. / Magister □ Ph.D. / Doctorate □
2. Age range (years): 20-30 □ 30-40 □ 40-50 □ over 50 □
3. How many years have you been teaching English at the university?

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4. Do you have a personal computer? Yes □ No □
5. If yes, for how often do you use it?
   a) Always □ b) Often □ c) Sometimes □ d) Rarely □
6. Do you use it for teaching purposes? Yes □ No □
7. How do you describe your experience with technology?
   a) Unfamiliar □ b) Newcomer □ c) Average □ d) Advanced □
8. Does your department have a clearly formulated policy about the use of technology in language teaching?
   a) Yes □ b) No □
9. What Hardware facilities are available at the department?
   a) Classroom computer for teachers’ use □ b) Overhead projector □
   c) Students’ computers in a lab □ d) Students’ computers in a classroom □
   e) Digital camera □ f) TV □ g) CD/DVD Player □
   other ............................................................................................................................

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10. Among these tools, which one(s) do you think is/are imperative for language teaching?

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11. Are you interested in using these tools for language teaching?
   a) Yes □ b) No □
12. Do you rely on internet in preparing your lessons?
   a) Yes □ b) No □

Please justify your choice?

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13. If you answered yes, how often do you use it to prepare your lessons?
a) Always □ b) Often □ c) Sometimes □ d) Rarely

14. How useful do you think technology is for students?
   a) Very useful □  b) Somehow useful □  c) Not very useful □  d) Not useful at all □

15. If you do not use technology it is due to:
   a) Lack of technological material □  b) Lack of familiarity with technology □
   c) Lack of adequate content □  d) Dislike/Fear of using technology □
   Other(s)..........................................................................................................................
   .................................................................................................................................
   .................................................................................................................................
   .................................................................................................................................

16. Do you think technology in language teaching must be?
   a) An integral part  b) A peripheral resource.
   Why?............................................................................................................................
   .................................................................................................................................
   .................................................................................................................................
   .................................................................................................................................
   ..................................................
The Effect of Gender and Proficiency Level on Writing Strategy Use among Iraqi High School Students

Qusay Mahdi Mutar
Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia

Vahid Nimehchisalem (Corresponding Author)
Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia

Abstract
This study aims to 1) explore the extent Iraqi high school students’ use of writing strategies; 2) identify the contribution of proficiency level to writing strategy use; and 3) compare male and female students’ writing strategy use. This study employed a quantitative approach, whereby a total of 132 high school students were randomly selected from the Karkh’s district of Baghdad to constitute the sample of the study. A 30-item 3-point Likert scale questionnaire on writing strategy use that was adapted from Petrić&Czárl’s (2003) writing strategy questionnaire served as the instrument of the study. The results of the study reveal that the frequency of strategy use was low among the participants. In addition, no significant difference was found between high and low proficiency students’ strategy use. Finally, it was found that there is significant difference between female and male students’ strategy use. Female students were found to use writing strategies more than males. The paper concludes with a discussion on the implications of the findings.

Keywords: gender, Iraqi EFL learners, language proficiency, writing strategy

1. Introduction

English nowadays is the lingua franca of the world; it is the language worldwide used in different communities and walks of life (Pakir, 1999). Thus, students aspire to master English with its different skills so as to be able to find job opportunities among other reasons (Flanegin & Rudd, 2000). However, learning English is not an easy task for many learners. Communicative skills both oral and written are difficult. Writing is one of the key skills of the English language, and it is of paramount important in achieving academic success. It is an active, productive skill that students need to learn. Out of the four main skills in English, writing is considered one of the most difficult and challenging skills to acquire (Erkan & Saban, 2011; Fatemi, 2008; Mourtaga, 2010). Such difficulty may be ascribed to many factors. Richards and Renandya (2002) state that difficulty in writing arises from the difficulty in generating and organizing ideas, and translating these ideas into readable texts. Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) and Milton (2006) explain that problems in writing may be caused by grammatical inaccuracy. In total, the literature reveals that English as a foreign language (EFL) students from different proficiency levels suffer from serious problems in writing (Kurt & Atay, 2007; Latif, 2007).

In relation to the above, some researchers suggested different strategies to reduce writing errors and to overcome writing challenges. Ferries (1994), for example, suggests an editing approach, whereby learners edit their own work. Similarly, Bates, Lane, and Lange (1993) recommend that students be taught how to find out their errors by themselves. They should be independent and critical self-editors. In relation to this, Raimes (1985) states that the second language (L2) learners make less planning before writing as well as during writing; they also pay less attention to revising and editing. Polio, Fleck and Leder (1998) declared that students underscore the importance of revision and editing so as to produce good quality piece of writing. Thus, there are certain strategies that can be followed to minimize errors in writing and to enable students to write efficiently. In addition, using writing strategies has been proved to be effective in improving even the most basic students’ performance (e.g. García & de Caso, 2004; García-Sanchez & Fidalgo-Redondo, 2006; Graham, Harris, & Mason, 2005).

This study is expected to contribute to literature theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study will be a reference for the future researchers who desire to conduct studies on one of the most challenging skills in the field of second language acquisition. Practically, this study will also raise the awareness of learners as well as educators of the writing strategies used by second language learners, especially Iraqi high school students. This will also help policy makers design curricula that cover such strategies to overcome the problems encountered by students in their writing process. Thus, this study aims to investigate the writing strategies used among the Iraqi high school students, and the effect of gender and proficiency level on writing strategy use.

1.1 Research objectives

This study explores the extent the writing strategies are used among high school students in Iraq, and the contribution of proficiency and gender to writing strategy use. This study specifically seeks to:

1. Explore the extent Iraqi high school students’ use writing strategies;
2. Identify the contribution of proficiency level to writing strategy use among Iraqi high school students; and
3. Compare male and female students’ writing strategy use.

1.2 Research questions
Based on the research objectives, the following research questions were formulated:
1. To what extent do Iraqi high school students use writing strategies?
2. What is the contribution of proficiency level to writing strategy use among Iraqi high school students?
3. To what extent does gender affect writing strategy use among Iraqi high school students?

2. Literature review
This study is based on the cognitive approach of writing theories. The theoretical framework adopted in this study is Flower and Hayes’ (1981) cognitive theory. This theory postulates that writing involves a set of distinctive hierarchical thinking processes which writers follow during the act of composing. This theory was used because it is the theory that inspired the adapted questionnaire. In addition, the research questions of the study fit it into such paradigm, i.e. the cognitive approach of writing. The study hypothesizes that students use a set of hierarchical thinking processes during the writing process. Thus, according to this theory writing involves three main stages: planning, composing, and reviewing. During writing process, a writer serves as a writing strategist. He/She decides when to move from one process to the next (Flower & Hayes, 1981). This theory views writing as a recursive than linear process.

Peng (2011) conducted a study to examine the effectiveness of writing strategies’ use in enhancing 13-15-year-old Chinese ESL learners’ writing performance. Peng selected Two categories of strategies based on Hayes and Flower's (1989) theory of writing. The first category of writing strategies was Julia's (in James, 2000) 8-step writing strategy and the second category originated from Englert's (1991) POWER strategy. Two questionnaires and two writing tests served as the instrument of the study. Fifteen Chinese students, who were selected randomly from middle school. Pre-test was used to evaluate these students' primary level of English writing. Later on, a posttest was conducted. In the posttest, students were divided into three groups: the first two groups received treatment on a separate category of the two writing strategies while the last one was a control group. Then, the scores of the two tests were compared. The findings revealed the effectiveness of the given writing strategies.

Alnufaie and Grenfell (2012) explored the writing strategies of 121 second-year EFL undergraduate Saudi student writers. They were studying English as a foreign language and for English specific purposes. They investigated two types of writing strategies, that is, process-oriented writing strategies and product-oriented writing strategies. A self-designed questionnaire was employed as the instrument of the study. Their findings revealed that almost all of the participants (95.9%) used both types of strategies. It was also found that the students used the process-oriented writing strategies more than the product-oriented strategies.

Raoofi et al. (2014) investigated the writing strategies of Malaysian university students learning English as a second language (ESL). Twenty undergraduate university students aged 19 to 21 served as the qualitative sample of the study. For the purpose of data collection, interviews were conducted. The research findings revealed that all of the participants reported doing some pre-writing activities, and having awareness of their own writing problems. It was also found that
the highly proficient student writers reported the use of more metacognitive strategies, such as organizing ideas and revising content in comparison to the less skilled student writers.

Sadik (2014) explored the relationship between cognitive writing strategies and students’ writing performance. Thirty-seven students at intermediate level were selected systematically from population of 80 students at the English department of Hasanuddin University in the Academic year of 2008 - 2009. The participants were asked to sit an achievement test, whereby they were asked to write about approximately 300 words in 60 minutes. The participants were also asked to answer strategy questionnaire. The findings of the study revealed that there was insignificant relationship between the achievement test scores and writing strategy scores.

3. Method

3.1 Research design

Recapitulating the objectives of this study, it aimed at identifying the strategy use among Iraqi learners, and the contribution of proficiency level and gender to any significant difference in strategy use among these learners. Thus, a quantitative research design was deemed appropriate. This study, in particular, had a cross-sectional design and followed survey method to collect data.

3.2 Sampling of the study

This study employs probability sampling. There are two main types of sampling: probability and purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is mostly used in qualitative studies. On the other hand, probability sampling is utilized in quantitative studies. This kind of sampling requires large numbers of respondents (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). One of the subtypes of probability sampling is the stratified random sampling (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). It is the most well-known of all sampling strategies. In stratified random sampling, the sampling frame (i.e. the list of available target population) is divided into homogenous and non-overlapping groups or strata (Bhattacherjee, 2012). The sampling frame in the current study was the 4th preparatory students from the Karkh’s district of Baghdad. They were then divided into groups based on their proficiency level. The students who scored from 50-65% were considered low proficiency students, while those who scored above 90% were considered high proficiency students. Then, within each proficiency level, 33 female students were selected and 33 male students were selected to make up a total of 132 students. The participants had been learning English for five years. Their mean age was 15. They were selected from four high schools at Karkh’s district of Baghdad. They were divided into low and high proficiency groups, based on their final exam score at the final year middle school stage. This standardized high-stakes exam is centralized at a national level. The students who obtained from 90-100% were considered high proficiency level students, while the students who achieved 65-50 were grouped as low proficiency level students. This classification is based on the Iraqi educational system which identifies 90% and above as excellent while students who obtain from 50% to 65% are regarded as satisfactory level students (pass grade). This number of students (132) was chosen because such kind of survey research requires large sampling, and thus 132 is considered large sampling in regards to the target population, which is estimated to be around 4000 students.
3.3 Instrument
A 30-item Likert scale questionnaire on writing strategy use was adapted from Petrić and Czárl’s (2003) writing strategy questionnaire. It was a three-point Likert scale instrument with 1 signifying ‘always’, 2 ‘sometimes’, and 3 ‘never’. The questionnaire is divided into three parts, preceded by an introduction about the research. The first part handles the before-writing strategies, and it consists of seven items. The second part is about the strategies used during writing, and it comprises 11 items. The last section is about revision strategies, and it includes 12 items. This questionnaire was adapted as the instrument of this study for a number of reasons. First, the questionnaire has been designed for nonnative speakers of English, as the case in the current study. Second, the questionnaire is about writing strategies, and not like some other questionnaires (e.g. Oxford, 1990; O’Malley & Chamot, 1990), which discuss learning strategies in general. Third, the questionnaire was validated qualitatively and quantitatively, and was published in a prestigious high impact journal, that is, System. For all the aforementioned reasons, the questionnaire designed by Petrić and Czárl (2003) was chosen as instrument of this study. In relation to the grading scale, Likert 3-point scale is followed in the questionnaire. The numbers in a Likert scale are the indicators of opinion strength. The scale was reduced for this study to 3-point scale (instead of 5-point Likert scale as in the original questionnaire) to make it more comprehensible for the participants. The students may not have been able to differentiate between the slight differences used in the questionnaire, and thus it was reduced to a 3-point scale.

3.4 Data collection
Data were collected through a questionnaire which was distributed to a random sample of students within the classification mentioned in the sampling section. Students were asked to write the score of their middle school final year exam, a standardized national test. The questionnaires were collected, coded and then computed and analyzed. Questionnaires have many positives which are established in literature like offering an objective means of collecting information about people’s knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and behavior (Boynton & Greenhalgh, 2004). Questionnaires can extend and quantify the findings of an initial exploratory phase. As established in the literature, using a previously validated and published questionnaire saves time and resources; it makes it easy to compare one’s own findings with those from other studies. That is why the researchers used Petrić and Czárl’s (2003) questionnaire. For reliability purpose, Cronbach alpha was used to test the internal consistency of the questionnaire. In addition, the questionnaire has been used previously (e.g., Maarof & Murat, 2013; Sadi & Othman, 2012) and been validated by the designers of the questionnaires. All such factors make the questionnaire valid and reliable for the study. The instrument was piloted on 15th April 2016, on a sample size of 20 Iraqi high school students. The purpose of conducting the pilot study is to detect any problems that cause the main research project to fail, and to ensure the appropriacy of the instruments used (Baker, 2006). Cronbach’s Alpha offers a measure of the internal consistency of a test or scale (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The accepted range of Cronbach’s Alpha value is from 0.70 to 0.95 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The result of the reliability analysis test showed acceptable internal reliability of the questionnaire items, as Cronbach’s alpha value was found to be .718. Additionally, the participants’ final scores in the English exam of the academic year 2014/2015 were retrieved from the Iraqi Ministry of Education. These scores represent the results of a national standardized exam. Written consents were obtained from the participants.
before collecting the data. They were reassured that their information will be used for research purpose only.

3.5 Data analysis
The statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS, version 20.0) was used to analyze the data. Descriptive and inferential statistics methods were performed.

4. Results
4.1 Students’ writing strategy use
Descriptive statistics was run to identify the mean and standard deviation values for the strategy use among the participants. The following table summarizes the results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-writing</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While-writing</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revising</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KEY: 3.5 (M≥3.5) is a high strategy user, between 2.5 and 3.4 (2.5≤M≤3.4) is a medium strategy user, and below 2.4 (M≤2.4) is a low strategy user.

As illustrated in Table 1, the overall strategy use (M=.50, SD=.05) was found to be low among the participants, as based on Oxford’s (1990) classification, the student whose mean score is above 3.5 (M≥3.5) is considered to be a high strategy user, the one whose mean score is between 2.5 and 3.4 (2.5≤M≤3.4) is a medium strategy user, and the one below 2.4 (M≤2.4) is considered a low strategy user.

As seen in Table 1, while writing strategies (M=.11, SD=.02) and revising (M=.25, SD=.19) strategies are the most commonly used strategies by the participants. However, the pre-writing strategies (M=.24, SD=.19) were far less frequent than the other strategies. Thus, the participants are categorized as low strategy users across the all writing strategies types, based on Oxford’s (1990) classification.

4.2 The contribution of proficiency to writing strategy use
To address the second research question, which was related to the contribution of proficiency level to writing strategy use among Iraqi high school students, independentsamplest-test was conducted. Table 2 indicates the results of this statistical analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficiency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>66.01</td>
<td>5.98</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>-.366</td>
<td>.715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>66.44</td>
<td>7.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table 2, high proficiency students ($M = 66.44, SD = 7.26$) scored almost similar to low proficiency students ($M = 66.01, SD = 5.98$). Based on the results of independent samples t-test, $t(130) = -0.366, p = .715$, since the significant value was greater than alpha at .05 level of significance, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between high proficiency students and low proficiency students in terms of their strategy use.

### 4.3 Contribution of gender to writing strategy use among Iraqi high school students

Finally, the significance of difference between male and female students’ strategy use was examined. Table 3 presents the results of independent samples t-test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>69.32</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>6.034</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>63.14</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in Table 3, overall female students ($M = 69.32, SD = 5.86$) scored higher than males ($M = 63.14, SD = 5.92$). Based on the results of independent samples t-test, $t(130) = 6.034, p = .000$, since the significant value was lower than alpha at .05 level of significance, there is significant difference between female and male students’ strategy use.

### 5. Discussion

The findings of the study as presented earlier indicated that Iraqi high school students are low strategy users. However, it was found that low proficiency as well as high proficiency students use writing strategies in a very similar way, and the difference is statistically insignificant. This is consistent with some previous studies. For example, Baker and Boonkit (2004) found that there was no significant difference in the frequency of writing strategies used between high and low achievers. Alkubaidi (2014) also found that 75 Saudi undergraduate students’ writing proficiency did not contribute significantly to their strategy use. However, Khalil (2005) in his study of 194 high school students and 184 freshman university EFL learners in Palestine found that proficiency level and gender correlate positively with writing strategy use among the participants. The reason for this lack of consistency could be that Khalil’s definition of language proficiency was different from that of our study. He identified language proficiency based on the differences between the participants in their academic levels throughout the number of years the participants were learning English. Unlike the present study, language proficiency in Khalil’s (2005) study was not measured based on specific writing tasks.

Maarof and Murat (2013) mentioned that the quantity of strategies used by students does not reflect their appropriate use of such strategies. Some learners use writing strategies significantly high. However, they do not use such strategies effectively. For example, planning as a strategy may be used frequently among high proficiency language users (Mu & Carrington, 2007; Ridhuan & Abdullah, 2009), while low proficient users tend not to use planning strategies less (Chien, 2010); they do not often plan their writing and frequently begin writing immediately (Ridhuan & Abdullah, 2009). Hu and Chen (2007) noted that proficient ESL writers care more about what to write and on how to proceed; they care about the quality of planning over time spent during planning. In contrast, low proficiency language users tend to spend their time inefficiently, and thus they fail to generate ideas. Therefore, highly frequent use of writing
strategies does not necessarily indicate that the language user will be more efficient in writing. One important study that supports the idea that the amount of strategy use does not necessarily reflect language or writing proficiency is what has been found by Indra (2004) who observed the writing behaviors of four writers who came from different cultural backgrounds. The findings of the study revealed that proficient Chinese writers tended to plan their ideas using outlines while the proficient Indian writers tended to plan their ideas through putting down visual representations. In contrast, low proficiency student writers spent a longer time on planning, which was done mentally; however, their effort seemed to be ineffective in helping them to develop ideas for their writing task.

The findings of the current study are consistent with those of some other previous studies. Nisbet, Tindall and Arroyo (2005) found a minimal correlation between learning strategies and proficiency (using TOEFL scores). They reported that only metacognitive strategies were significantly correlated with TOEFL scores. In the same vein, Shmais (2003) and Feng (1995) reported no significant difference in terms of the frequency of strategy use between high proficiency and low proficiency students. They only found differences in the use of cognitive strategies, which were more used by high proficiency users than low proficiency users. Likewise, Baker and Boonkit (2004) reported that high and low achievers did not differ significantly in their use of writing strategies, but still there were some variations in using some strategies. Their results seemed to suggest that low achievers did not follow any plans when they started writing and habitually used the strategy of translation throughout the writing process. Likewise, Mahlolo (2003) and Halbach (2000) reported that there could be no claims of causality between strategy use and proficiency.

In respect of contribution of gender to differences in writing strategy use, Guobing (2015) found that female students significantly obtained higher writing strategy use scores than males. In his study, female students utilized various writing strategies' types in English writing. These findings are similar to Bremner’s (1999) who found that female students used compensation and affective strategies significantly more often than male students did.

Some researchers (e.g. Bremner, 2009; Brooks & Grundy 2008) mentioned that language strategies help learners improve their language proficiency. However, it may be argued that the quality and the proper use of writing strategies matter more than the frequency of writing strategy use.

6. Conclusion
This study aimed at identifying the extent the Iraqi high school students’ use writing strategies, the contribution of proficiency level and gender to writing strategy use among these students. For this purpose, 132 Iraqi high school students were randomly selected and requested to fill out a writing strategies’ questionnaire. Thus, a quantitative approach was adopted in this study.

Based on the results of the study, strategy use was found to be low among the participants. This may be attributed to the fact that the participants were not mature enough to be able to use writing strategies. In relation to the contribution of proficiency level to writing strategy use, it was found there is no significant difference between high proficiency students and low proficiency students in terms of their strategy use. It was also found that there was a
significant difference between female and male students’ strategy use. Female students used writing strategies more frequently than males.

It has been proposed that writing should not be looked at from a single sided perspective (Reid, 2001). Put simply, it should not be viewed as either product-oriented or process oriented. It should be rather looked at as both a product and a process. Writing is a complex skill that involves different factors together. This has been highlighted by Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) who mentioned that writing “fundamentally depends on writers purposeful interactions with print, with fellow readers and writers, and with literate communities of practice” (p. 31). Thus, there should be no such kind of dichotomy between the process-oriented approach and the product-oriented approach. In Iraq, the focus is on writing as a product rather than a process, which justifies the insufficient use of writing strategies, as indicated by our results. Thus, focus should be driven to writing as a process to help students develop writing strategies that help them perform better in their writing. This has been also suggested by Alnufaie and Alnufaie (2012) that writing as a process should be given more attention, as this can help learners compare findings in different contexts, and help teachers diagnose learners’ needs of specific writing strategies. This also can help raise the awareness of learners about their strategy-use (Petrić&Czárl, 2003). When adult and undergraduate writers tend to expand the type of writing strategies they use, we could argue that the nature of EFL writing might be more dynamic, complex and probably more sophisticated.

About The authors:
Qusay Mahdi Mutar holds an MA in Applied Linguistics from the Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia.
Vahid Nimehchisalem holds a PhD in TESL and is a senior lecturer in the Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. He is chief editor of the International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies.

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The Effect of Gender and Proficiency Level

Mutar & Nimehchisalem


An Assessment of Iraqi EFL Learners’ Performance in Using Synonymy and Antonymy

Dhea Mizhir Krebt
University of Baghdad, College of Education Ibn Rushd
Baghdad, Iraq

Abstract
The knowledge related with lexical items can be realized as including relations of meaning across words. Words that share a similarity of meaning are called to be synonymous, and words that share a contrary of meaning are called to be antonymous. Both of them are universal linguistic phenomenon that exist in terms of linguistic system of every language. The present study aims at finding out areas of difficulty that Iraqi EFL learners encounter in the use of synonymy and antonymy, both on the recognition and production levels. Also tries to detect the main reasons behind such difficulties. A diagnostic test of two parts, namely, recognition and production, is designed. The test is built to include two linguistic phenomenon which are: synonymy and antonymy. A random sample of one (100) third year College students of two Colleges of Education, in University of Baghdad and University of Diyala, (50) students each. Data analyzed were based on Cruse's taxonomy (1986). The study has come up with the following conclusions: in spite of being students at an advanced level in learning English, they used a general lexical item, instead of their other synonyms and antonyms which imply a narrower sense of meaning. And although Iraqi EFL learners learn a number of synonym words and antonym words during their academic years of studying English, still they cannot utilize them correctly in context.

Keywords: antonyms, production, recognition, synonyms

1. Introduction
The most intrinsic problem in teaching vocabulary is the flexibility of word meaning and it’s closely related to context. This fact may create difficulties for the description of word meaning as well as in relation with each other. The relations of synonymy as well as antonymy are particularly considered as intricate fields in teaching, and it is worthy to illuminate such kind of relations. Thus, the present study is an attempt to shed light on the following areas:

   a) Identifying Iraqi EFL learners’ level of performance in using English synonymous words.

   b) Identifying Iraqi EFL learners’ level of performance in using English antonymous words.

   c) Finding out areas of difficulty that Iraqi EFL learners encounter in the use of synonymy and antonymy, both on the recognition and production levels.

2. Literature Review
2.1 Synonymy
Synonymy, as Jackson (1988) describes, is a term which can be derived from Greek. It is comprised of two parts (syn- + -nymy) which is meant "same + name". The notion of synonymy is observed in two facets, either more than one word have the same meaning, or the same meaning is exemplified by more than one word. Kempson (1977), Cruse (1986), Taylor (2003) describe synonymy as mutual entailment, and it can be defined as a special type of hyponymy, as Palmer (1981) calls it, symmetric hyponymy. More generally, mutual entailment is the connection, in which the propositional components of sentences are identical, as a result, the truth of one sentence is entailed by the truth of other, and vice versa, e. g.,

   (2-1) The proposition 'the statesman spoke at the conference'.

   (Cannet, al., 2009: 8)

Harris (1973) defines synonymy simply as sameness of meaning, as a matter of fact, two or more lexical items are synonymous if they manifest the same meaning, and can be replaced one by another in different contexts. Thus, this interchangeability of synonyms pairs must be utilized in certain contexts because it is difficult to find two synonyms pairs which can be interchanged in all contexts (Lyons, 1968). This is due to the fact that each synonym pair which has variety idiomatic usage, e. g.,

   (2-2) 'I'm afraid Mr. John is busy/ occupied at the moment', but 'busy' cannot replace 'occupied' in :

   (2-3) 'I'm afraid this seat is occupied.'

   (2-4) 'I'm afraid this seat is busy' (Jackson, 1988:66)

Nevertheless, in order to be identified synonyms pairs, though, each pair of lexical items must be included a silent amount of semantic overlapping, and can be contrasted in "peripheral trait", e. g.,

   (2-5) 'honest' and 'truthful' are synonymous, while 'truthful' and 'purple' are not synonymous (Cruse, 1986: 267).

2.2 Cruse's Taxonomy (1986)
Cruse (1986) classifies synonymy as a scale of synonymy. He exemplifies this linguistic phenomenon as “within the class of synonyms some pairs of items are more synonymous than others, and this raises the possibility of a scale of synonymy of some kind” (p, 268). He confines
'absolute synonymy' at the zero point on the scale. To clarify this point, he confirms the pairs 'green' / 'expensive' and 'long' / 'short' which can be regarded as zero synonyms. Thus, discriminating that zero point on Cruse’s scale is held by ‘absolute synonymy’. It is considered only as “referential point” on the scale of the synonymy (Cruse, 2000). As a matter of fact, it could be theoretically unnatural and uncommon for language to have absolute synonyms with exactly the same meaning. This fact is due to two important reasons for synonymy:

1- Utilization of absolute synonymy is gradually become impossible, so it would be vanished or dropped.
2- The condition of interchangeability in all contexts can neither dominated nor proved, on one hand, the quantity of contexts is endless, and the other hand, the special cases from absolute interchangeability are impossible.

In brief, it could be concluded that absolute synonymy is very seldom because when two lexemes are existed in the language, there are two conceivable results, either one is vanished, or one is altered into a new word.

Basically, the first point of Cruse’s scale refers to 'cognitive synonymy' in which it can be described as a mutual entailment between two lexical terms which are both syntactically identical and truth conditions are equivalent in the same situation (Cruse, 1986). For instance, lexical terms such as ‘violin’ and ‘fiddle’ are cognitive synonyms pairs in (2-6) and (2-7) respectively since the two sentence have the same truth-conditions.

(2-6) ‘He plays the violin very well’.
(2-7) ‘He plays the fiddle very well’.

Cruse (1986) draws a distinction between plesionymy and cognitive synonymy. He asserts that plesionsyms have produced sentences with different truth-conditions and the correlation between them are not mutually entailing. Accordingly, there is always one lexical item which is possible to assert, while “simultaneously denying” is the other item. The following example can show this:

(2-8) ‘It wasn’t foggy last Friday- just misty’ (p, 285).

Plesionsyms or (near-synonyms) are related with overlapping of meanings and senses, but this overlapping is not entirely (Murphy, 2003). Furthermore, the borderline between plesionymy and cognitive synonymy is in principle explicit, but it much harder to draw a discrimination between plesionymy and non-synonymy. Mainly, there are two possible outcomes:

1- Languages users should intuitively know whether or not lexical items are synonymous.
2- In order to recognize lexical items as synonymous, they should not contrast with each other, i.e., it is essential of their contractiveness to be explicit.

### 2.3 Discrimination of Synonymy

Synonymy pairs can be differentiated by some vital parameters, which are:

#### 2.3.1 Collocation

The important role of collocation is utilized to discriminate the meaning of near-synonyms, i.e. near-synonyms verbs 'tremble', 'shake', 'shiver', and 'shudder' are denoted to
movement, but only one of them which is the verb ‘shiver’ can be applied with the adverbial ‘with cold’, as in:
(2-9) ‘He was Shivering with cold’.
(2-10) ‘*He was shaking with cold’.
(2-11) ‘*He was trembling with cold’.
(2-12) ‘*He was shuddering with cold’ (Thakur, 1999: 48).

2.3.2 Dialect
Dialects are continually changing, indeed, this is due to everything in this world is interconnected with the history of dialect, which considered as a basic notion of historical change. Predominantly, some pairs of synonyms are determined to different dialects of the language. For instance, in the United States and in some Western countries of Britain, the lexical item ‘fall’ is utilized, while others use the lexical item ‘autumn’ instead. Thus, the concept of dialect is simply illustrated by people uttering different forms of the language having various vocabulary terms (Palmer, 1981).

2.3.3 Register
Synonymous items might be discriminated by the impact of register, e. g., ‘lady’ and ‘woman’ are synonymous nouns in which they express the same meaning. However, ‘woman’ is neutral and used by every person, whereas ‘lady’ is more commonly used by upper class (Thakur, 2001). Another example is the verb ‘slip’ has different sense of meaning because of register limitations, i.e., the verb ‘slip’ has the component [+ HAND] applied in scientific register, while [+ FEET] applied in literary register, e. g., (Abdul Sattar, 2003).
(2-13) ‘she let the robe slip from her shoulder.’
(2-14) ‘He slipped on the icy road and broke his leg’

2.3.4 Stylistic Variation
Stylistic variation implies alternation between formal and informal styles of speech which utilized by an individual speakers, regularly this variation may be connected with social variation such as, gender class, sex of participant (Pfauet.al., 2012). When dealing with synonymy, one should take into consideration alterations encompassed by stylistic variation which reflects the differences in meaning between synonymous items ‘commence’ and ‘kick off’, for example, are synonymous items, in that they express the same meaning, but in different styles. The following example can show this:
(2-15) ‘when did the meeting commence ?’ (formal)
(2-16) ‘what time did the meeting kick off’ (informal) (Cowie, 2009: 36).

2.3.5 Connotation
It is considered as a part of a classification for kinds of meaning (Crystal, 2003), in particular, it can be referred to the personal facet of meaning, i.e., ideological, emotional and so forth. These are basically associated to the interpreter’s class, ethnicity, gender, etc. (Chandler, 2007). Connotations have changed according to the experience of people, this is true, because each person has a common experience towards words, for instance, the lexical items ‘fiddle’ and ‘violin’ are regarded to be synonymous items since they share the same referent, but they differ in connotation, ‘fiddle’ is the neutral one which is applied for human or to reflect affection, and the other ‘violin’ is the usual item. The following example can show this explanation:
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(2-17) ‘He plays the fiddle very well.’
(2-18) ‘He plays the violin very well.’ (Kreidler, 1998: 45).

2.4 Antonymy

Antonymy, oppositeness of meaning, has been considered as one of the most principle of semantic relation. Thus, many linguistics tried to construct a comprehensive analysis of antonymy, in English, in order to be applied and understood easily. Antonymy is more prototypical than synonymy and it is used by semanticists to refer to semantic differences (Murphy, 2003). The term antonymy, according to Lyons (1977), was coined by C. J Smith as an opposite of synonymy. Cruse (1986) refers to antonymy as a semantic relation which exist between words that have opposite meanings, so the pairs of words that have opposite meanings are termed as ‘antonyms’, for instance, ‘good’ and ‘bad’ is a pair of antonyms and the relation between them is called as ‘antonymy’.

Alternatively, Gross (1989), describes antonymy as a lexical relation between words rather than meanings. To clarify this point, if antonymy is only a sort of lexical relation, so the semantic component could be unnecessary, as a matter of fact, it seems to be a crucial component, and this is due to a semantic component is based on semantic representations.

Cruse (1986) observes that English speakers have strong institutions about relation of oppositeness, for instance, speakers could accept that ‘good’ is the opposite of ‘bad’ and ‘cold’ is the opposite of ‘hot’ and so forth, this is because of the affection of prototypical category for oppositeness while, types of opposites are referred to logical definition, this is true, because English speakers cannot differentiate among types of oppositeness.

2.5 Cruse’s Taxonomy (1986)

Cruse (1986) designs his taxonomy of opposite’s types, in particular, subtypes of antonyms, which includes polar, overlapping, and equipollent, so their patterns are established with special properties. As for the first type, polar antonyms, as in ‘long/short’, ‘wide/narrow’, ‘fast/slow’, are objectively descriptive, and evaluatively neutral, in some extent, this property can be applied to measure in conventional units, such as, grams, inches and miles per hour. In how question, one item of a pair is only applied, and the other one is not, e.g.,
(2-19) ‘How long is that string?’
(2-20) ‘*How short is that string?’

In comparative construction, both items are applied, e.g.,
(2-21) ‘This string is longer than that one, but it’s still short.’
(2-22) ‘This string is shorter than that one, but it’s still long.’

As for the second type, the overlapping antonyms are used to measure an evaluative polarity, in this case, the positive item is used in uncommitted question as is, ‘polite’, ‘good’, ‘pretty’, ‘honest’, and so forth, while the negative item is used in committed question as in, ‘rude’, ‘bad’, ‘plain’, ‘dishonest’.

Both terms of the pair is used in how question, but one item is uncommitted, and the other term is committed, e.g.,
(2-23) ‘How good is that book?’
(2-24) ‘How bad is that book?’
In comparative constructions, one item of a pair can be applied, and the other one cannot, e. g.,
(2-25) 'This book is better than that one, but it’s still bad'.
(2-26) 'This book is worse than that one, but it’s still good'.

As for the third type, the equipollent antonyms are used to refer as emotional states and subjective sensations such as, ‘cold/hot’, ‘happy/sad’, ‘proud/ashamed’, and so forth. In how questions, both items are committed, e. g.,
(2-27) 'How cold is the weather?'
(2-28) 'How hot is the weather?'
This subtype of antonyms cannot be applied in comparative constructions, this is true, because, semantically, meaning is unacceptable, e. g.,
(2-29) '* The weather is colder than that one, but it’s still hot'.
(2-30) '* The weather is hotter than that one, but it’s still cold'.

3. Method
The sample of the present study is randomly chosen to the third year for the academic year (2016-2017). They represent one stratum of the whole population which includes of four strata. For this purpose, the sample, by conducting the percentage formula, represents (24%) for group (1), students of college of Education Ibn Rushd, University of Baghdad and (26%) for group (2) students of college of Education, University of Diyala of the whole population. The total number of the sample is (205) for group (1) and (208) for group (2). The number of participants was (50) for group (1), and (50) for group (2).

Essentially, an objective test is the basic procedure adopted in the present study, tries to find out the areas of weakness in their performance, and difficulties of Iraqi EFL university students, in which they have been faced with discrimination of synonymous and antonymous expressions at the recognition and production levels.

The test is considered as a diagnostic one since it clarifies where the problem exists (Oller, 1987). Moreover, it also checks student’s knowledge about lexical relation, in particular, synonymy as well as antonymy by enriching information about the type and the nature of difficulties which can be systematically utilized in the test.

Technically, the test of the present study is divided into two parts, recognition and production, it consists of 30 items of recognition and 20 items of production. Each parts includes several types of synonymous and antonymous words, in which each task in the recognition and production levels measures a specific aspect.

4. Discussion of Results
In order to identify the level of Iraqi EFL students’ performance in using synonym and antonymy words. The t-test formula for one sample is used to identify the students’ standard on the two parts which includes the recognition and production levels. The results are computed as shown in tables 1 and 2.
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Test</th>
<th>No. of sample</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Theoretical mean</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Level significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Synonymy</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>16.96</td>
<td>7.239</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>-11.107</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 1 by comparing the computed mean scores is (16.96), whereas the theoretical mean is (25). This shows that the computed mean is lower to the theoretical mean, by comparing the computed t-value which is (-11.107) bigger than the tabulated t-value which is (1.98) at the level of significant (0.05) with degree of freedom (99), this result shows that students’ performance in using synonymous words is lower than the mean level. This indicates that the students' standard of the test is lower than the success line.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Test</th>
<th>No. of sample</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Theoretical mean</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Level significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antonymy</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20.84</td>
<td>5.365</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>-7.754</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 2 the computed mean scores is (20.84), whereas the theoretical mean is (25). This shows that the computed mean is lower than the theoretical mean, by comparing the computed t-value which is (-7.754) bigger than the tabulated value which is (1.98) at the level of significant (0.05) with 99 freedom degree. This result shows that students’ performance in using antonymous words is lower than the mean level. This indicates that the students' standard of the test is lower than the success line.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N. of Sample</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>∑(x1 – x2)</th>
<th>Sd</th>
<th>t – value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Synonymy</td>
<td>16.96</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>7.0313</td>
<td>-5.518</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>Recognizing and producing synonymy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Antonymy</td>
<td>20.84</td>
<td>7.0313</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>Recognizing and Producing synonymy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Krebt
Figure 1 The Differences in the Students' Performance Level in both Parts (Recognition and Production)

Table 3 and figure 1 show that the computed value is (-5.518) which is bigger than tabulated t-value which is (1.98) at (0.0.5) significant level with (99) freedom degree. It indicates that there is a statistical significant difference between two mean scores which is (3.88), and this difference is in favor of antonymy (recognizing and producing antonymy> recognizing and producing synonymy).

Lack of semantic knowledge is considered as the main reason of difficulties. It is related to students' total or partial lack of semantics which has led to inappropriate recognition and production of synonymy and antonymy. Consequently, as found in the present study, synonym errors have variable causes, including 'denotative meanings, connotative meanings, different underlying meanings, similarity of semantic features, inclusion meaning', whereas antonym errors, including 'different underlying meaning, inappropriate meaning and distortion of meaning.'

Lack of linguistic knowledge is regarded as the minor reason of difficulties. It is attributed to students' total or partial lack of morphology.

Some students have left out some sentences unanswered. This might be related to the total lack of linguistic knowledge.

5. Conclusions
1- Iraqi EFL learners are incompetent at discriminating and producing English synonymous words.
2- Iraqi EFL learners fail to demonstrate shades on meaning that antonymous words implies.
3- Students in both colleges committed endless errors in all linguistic levels, particularly, semantic level because of faulty or partial knowledge of English language.
4- In spite of being students at an advanced level in learning English, they used a general lexical item instead of its other synonyms and antonyms which imply a narrower sense of meaning.

5- Although Iraqi EFL learners learn a number of synonym words and antonym words during their academic years of studying English, still they cannot utilize them correctly in context. This is because of lack of semantic knowledge, in which synonymy and antonymy differ in their meaning or in their collocation range in various contexts.

About the Author:
Dr. Dhea Mizhir Krebt is a head of English department and instructor of ELT and applied linguistics, University of Baghdad, College of Education/Ibn Rushd. His research interests are curriculum and methods of teaching English, and assessments.

References
Classroom Interaction in English Language Class for Students of Economics Education

Ima Isnaini Taufiqur Rohmah
Post Graduate Program of Semarang State University
Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia

Abstract
This research is attempts to find out the types of teacher and students talk and also the patterns of teaching-learning interaction. This research was qualitative case study conducted in English Language 1 class Economics Education Study Program of Teacher Training and Education Institute Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia Bojonegoro, East java. The participants were an English teacher and thirty four students. Observations were conducted twice in November 2016. The data were analysed by using the combination of interaction analysis system adapted from (Flanders, 1970; Moskowitz, 1971; Brown, 1975; Al-Otaibi, 2004; and Erling et al., 2012). The findings show that the teacher produced almost all types of teacher talk. They also produced almost all types of student talk in learning process. The teaching-learning activities used produced the patterns of group work, choral responses, closed-ended teacher questioning (IRF), individual work, student initiates-teacher answers, open-ended teacher questioning, and collaboration. Consider the result of this study. It is important for the teacher to build interactive and communicative teaching-learning activities involving more interaction and participation among the students. It is also advisable for the teacher to consider the factors that might affect the teaching-learning interaction in the classroom.

Keywords: classroom interaction, interaction pattern, student talk, teacher talk

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**Introduction**

In classroom interaction, all the classroom events are included, both verbal interaction and non-verbal interaction. Meng (2011, p. 98) states that “teachers should include both verbal and non-verbal languages. Verbal interaction covers written interaction and oral interaction”. Meanwhile, non-verbal interaction refers to behavioral responses in classroom without using words such as head-nodding, hand-raising, and so on. Moreover, successful interaction may promote involvement between teacher and student or among students, enhance learning, and motivate students. Crago (1997) states that “teacher and students also build on each other’s communicative behavior as they work together to achieve goals, relate experiences, and meet curricular demands” (p. 246). Whatever purpose they bring into the classroom, the outcome is a co-production by both the teacher and the students who jointly manage interaction as well as learning (Allwright, 1984, as cited in Zhang 2012, p. 980).

In addition, when students are engaged in direct classroom activities, they will learn better. The students who are active in classroom through taking turns may develop their language. Meanwhile, those who are passive in classroom will have less opportunity to learn language. It is clear that the active role between teacher and students is needed to create a good interaction in the classroom. They should actively engage in the communication event or interaction in classroom. Therefore, the quality of teaching and learning process in the classroom is mainly determined by teacher and students in how they interact with each other actively. Brown (2000) explains that “interaction is the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas between two or more people, resulting in a reciprocal effect on each other” (p. 165). Interaction occurs not only from one side but also from at least two people who give and receive messages in order to achieve communicative process. It is in line with Wagner (1994) who asserts that “interaction is reciprocal events that require at least two objects and two actions” (p. 8). Interaction occurs when these objects and events naturally influence one another.

In teaching process, the teacher may set a topic and material, give directions, give and take the responses, determine who contributes in teaching and learning activities, provide feedback to the students, and so forth in order to make the students get the output effectively. The teacher may share his/her own experiences with the students and encourage them to talk about their own ones. The teacher is supposed to elicit more student talk in a classroom conducted in such a manner. Therefore, the amount of teacher talk and student talk should be balanced or the amount of student talk should be more dominated because the good proportion of talk may facilitate interaction effectively and efficiently. Since teacher talk and student talk are the important parts that establish classroom interaction, teacher may not be allowed to dominate the class during teaching and learning process. The teacher should give the students more opportunities to initiate topics for interaction with others. According to Cullen (1998) “good teacher talk means little teacher talk” (p. 179) because too much talk by the teacher may deprive students’ opportunity to speak.

In this present research, the researcher analyzes the classroom interaction by using the combination of interaction analysis system from some experts (Flanders, 1970; Moskowitz, 1971; Brown, 1975; Al-Otaibi, 2004; and Erling et al., 2012). All of interaction categories by those experts divided into teacher talk and student talk categories and also the pattern of interaction. The teacher talk categories used are accepting student’s feelings, praising and
encouraging, joking, accepting or using student’s ideas, asking questions, repeating student’s response verbatim, lecturing or giving information, giving directions, criticizing or justifying student’s behavior and response, and giving feedback. Meanwhile, the categories of student talk include student talk-response (specific), student talk-response (choral), student talk-initiation, student talk (inquiry), expressing lack of understanding verbally, student talk in single, student talk in pairs, student talk in groups, silence, silence-AV, confusion (work-oriented), confusion (non-work oriented), hand-raising participation, and laughing.

A number of studies had been conducted in the same field but most of them taken in regular and English classes. Then, to analyze teacher talk and student talk, most of some previous studies use Flanders’ Interaction Analysis Categories (1970) and Foreign Language Interaction System (FLINT) by Moskowitz (1971). For example, the study conducted by Hussain & Bakhsh (2011) who investigated the effects of classroom interaction on students’ academic achievement at secondary school level. Rashidi (2010) conducted classroom interaction analysis research in order to find out the pattern of classroom interaction in EFL class in Iran. Tsui (1994) to analyze the classroom interaction of English subject including the verbal and non-verbal interaction of teacher-students and among students. Pujiastuti (2013) conducted interaction analysis focusing on the investigation on the realization of verbal classroom interaction, types of teacher talk, teacher talk implication on student’s motivation, student talk and teacher’s roles in classroom interaction. Suryati (2015) reports a study on teachers’ use of interaction strategies in English Language Teaching (ELT) in lower secondary level of education and Liu and Zhu (2012) conducted a research which attempted to investigate and analyze the phenomenon of teacher talk time, questioning pattern, and feedback pattern.

This present research intensively analyzed the type of teacher’s talk and student’s talk and also the pattern of interaction using the combination of some interaction analysis systems from (Flanders, 1970; Moskowitz, 1971; Brown, 1975; Al-Otaibi, 2004; and Erling et al., 2012). The researcher chooses English Language 1 class of Economics Education Program since the teacher did not has qualification requested, that is English background. It is expected that this research is able to be one of reflection and evaluation media for the teacher and students during the process of teaching and learning.

Methodology

The design of this research was a qualitative case study. The researcher used classroom interaction discourse analysis which focused on the interaction happened in the class. The unit of analysis are teacher and students utterances; phrases, words and sentences. The data were dig up from the teacher and the students in English language 1 class of Economics Education Study Program. Here, the data were obtained from observing two meetings in November 2016.

The instrument that used in this study was the combination of interaction analysis system from (Flanders, 1970; Moskowitz, 1971; Brown, 1975; Al-Otaibi, 2004; and Erling et al., 2012). The researcher used an interactive model of analysis proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994: 10-12). In analyzing data, the three main components were data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing/ verification. In this research there were some strategies used to obtain trustworthiness of the data. Those strategies were used to check accuracy or validity the findings of the research. Creswell (2007, p. 207-209) mentions eight strategies of verifying the
trustworthiness of the research. From the eight strategies proposed, the researcher used three techniques. They were: triangulation, member checking, and rich and thick description.

### Findings and Discussion

**Types of Teacher Talk**

From the two observations conducted, it showed that the teacher performed almost all types of teacher talk, except accepting student’s feeling. It can be seen from the table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of teacher talk</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>The example of utterances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giving feedback</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Sometimes-sometimes, in our lives-in our lives, we-we want to be someone who are ideal for us. OK! Who are ideal for us? For example, Felizia wanted to be architect. And then, Evan wanted to be—wants to be a doctor. OK. And I think that no one want to be a thief.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Criticizing or justifying behavior & response | 2.0 | T | Why do you choose to be a doctor?  
S | Because my parents is…  
T | My parents? … |
| Giving directions     | 24.3 | Well, first, you have to look at in the slide… expression intention. Expression intention!  
Oke, Naila, please read the text “pilot”. Read louder ya mbak Naila!  
Now…open page nine ya…do the task with your group… |
| Lecturing or giving information | 8.4 | Although this one is not English language, OK, but you know from the subtitle |
| Repeating student's response verbatim | 19.9 | No…Ooo…No one…really…pilot is good lho… |
| Asking questions      | 23.9 | Teacher want to know, who wants to be a pilot? |
| Accepting or using student's ideas | 2.8 | T | So, you, both of them, choose amusement park because the place is …?  
S | Emm. Comfortable  
T | Comfortable to refresh our mind. |
| Joking                | 1.2 | Kamu itu, Sisca itu the wrong person in the wrong place. |
| Praising & encouraging| 15.5 | Good answer mas arham….give applause to mas arham… |
| Accepting student's feeling | 0.0 | - |

From the data in table 1, it can be seen that the types of teacher talk used by the teacher, from high percentage to low percentage, are giving directions, asking questions, repeating student’s response verbatim, praising and encouraging, lecturing or giving information, accepting or using student’s ideas, criticizing or justifying student’s behavior and response, giving feedback, and joking. Meanwhile, accepting student’s feeling is never used by the teacher.
During the observation in teaching and learning process, the teacher was always straight to the point to greet students then ask them to start the lesson. Without asking the student’s feeling, teacher directly give directions to them to follow the learning activity such reading the text, playing game or watching the video related to the lesson material.

The teacher also tended to focus on the teaching and learning activities instead of asking and accepting what the student’s feeling was. Giving directions takes up the higher percentage during teaching and learning process. The teacher often gave directions to the students. It occurred when the teacher gave instructions about the games that would be played by them or when the teacher asked them to do something like reading the text, opening the page of book, doing task with partner and asking students to come in front of the class.

**Types of Students Talk**

The first issue deals with the types of student talk used in the first grade students. From two observations, the students performed all types of teacher talk. It can be seen from the table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of student talk</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>The example of utterances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laughing</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand-raising participation</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confusion (Non-work-oriented)</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confusion (Work-oriented)</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silence-AV</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silence</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student talk in groups</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td><em>(They discussed with his group to decide who will be the representative.)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student talk in pairs</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td><em>(The students started to do their work in pair to make dialogue of conversation.)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student talk in single</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Oh iya ding sightsee, bener. Eye-catching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing lack of understanding verbally</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student talk, inquiry</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Pak, pak, pak, tanya kalo misalnya sebelum selesai pak, terus udah… (Her word was cut by teacher because the teacher got the point from her question.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student talk, initiation</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>Because we can do (before completing it, the teacher cut his words.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student talk, response (Choral)</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>T OK, can you, can you tell what condition? S Thief. Child T A child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student talk, response (Specific)</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>T The places? S Places. We prefer the mall T You prefer the mall. S eee..I like to wear white dress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In two observations conducted, the types of students talk used by the students from high percentage to low percentage are student talk-response (specific), student talk-response (choral), silence, laughing, student talk-initiation, student talk in single, student talk in groups, student talk-inquiry, student talk in pairs, confusion (work-oriented), expressing lack of understanding verbally, silence-AV, confusion (non-work-oriented), and hand-raising participation.

First, Student talk-response (specific) gets the highest percentage in the two observations. It occurred when a student gave response to teacher’s question and directions. The student responded directly and predictably with the specific answers. The second is student talk-response (choral). The students are speaking in chorus at the same time. This might be in response to teacher’s question or reading in chorus. At the beginning of lesson, the students used this type to answer the greeting from the teacher. When the teacher greeted ‘morning class!’; the students later responded chorally by saying ‘morning!’ . The third and the fourth type of students’ talk are silence and laughing. The condition of the classroom was not always noise. Sometimes, the students got silence too. The fifth and the sixth are student talk-initiation and student talk in single. The students used student-talk initiation when they initiated to participate and comment on the lesson content with their own ideas, opinions, and reactions. Then, student talk in single occurred when the teacher asked one student to read aloud the text from the book. The next type of student talk is student talk in groups. When students got a task in group, they presented it and read it in front of the class. Next, the types of student talk that got the same percentage in 2.8% are student talk-inquiry and student talk in pairs. The students used student talk-inquiry when they asked for further information. Student talk in pairs is the next one. Here, the teacher gave the students peer task like making dialogue. They were also asked to present and read their work in front of the class.

Furthermore, the other types of student talk are confusion (work-oriented), expressing lack of understanding verbally, silence-AV, confusion (non-work-oriented), and hand-raising participation. Confusion (work-oriented) occurred when the teacher served them with a game and exercise, they all spoke at the same time and called out excitedly. Then, expressing lack of understanding verbally occurred when the students asked the teacher to explain something that they did not understand yet.

Next, silence-AV occurred when the teacher played a video or short movie. During watching that video, all the students got silence in a period of time. In confusion (non-work-oriented), the students were out-of-order. They might not be concerned with the task at hand. Lastly, the students could be said that they rarely used hand-raising participation. It was because they were not accustomed to use it. They never raised their hand to participate during teaching and learning process. Meanwhile, from two observations conducted, the students raised their hand when they knew sure about the answer. If they did not know, they would follow the other friends to answer together It can be said that the type of student talk that is mostly used by students in the class is student talk-response (specific). It is followed by student talk-response (choral), student talk in single, silence, laughing, student talk-initiation, confusion (work-oriented), expressing lack of understanding verbally, student talk-inquiry, student talk in groups, silence-AV, student talk in pairs, confusion (non-work-oriented), and hand-raising participation.
The Pattern of Interactions

The patterns of interaction occurred in the teaching and learning are choral responses, closed-ended teacher questioning (IRF), collaboration, and student initiates-teacher answers. First, choral responses pattern occurred when the teacher greeted the students by saying ‘morning class!’ and the students responded ‘morning’. After checking students’ attendance, the teacher tells about today’s teaching material. Here, choral responses pattern occurred when the teacher asked the students about what they wanted to be in the future. Another choral responses pattern occurred when the teacher asked the students whether they had finished their work. Secondly, closed-ended teacher questioning (IRF) pattern occurred when the teacher gave some reflections on the short movie that they watched.

This pattern showed how the teacher initiated the students to ask a question; the student responses to the teacher’s question; and the teacher gave feedback. The third is collaboration pattern. It occurred when the teacher gave the students a warmer activity like a game. In expressing intention material, the students had to do a warmer activity to discuss the picture of four interesting places with their friends. The last pattern is student initiates-teacher answers. This pattern occurred when the student thought for questions and asked to teacher directly and then the teacher responded the student’s question. The example of each pattern is figured out in the table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The pattern</th>
<th>The example of utterances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>choral responses pattern</td>
<td>Who wants to be a doctor? Mas reza….do you want</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No sir…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Who… no one??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hahahahaha (laughing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>closed-ended teacher questioning</td>
<td>I just want to know ….kalau kalian semua do a good thing to your friend, kira kira ada yang akan ask the return nngak ya?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(IRF)</td>
<td>No…..!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes good… don’t ask the return lho ya.. Allah will give us later…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collaboration pattern</td>
<td>Good morning friends… we are from the first team will explain our picture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In the picture, many people go to the beach because they want to watch sunrise or sunset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student initiates-teacher answers</td>
<td>Read all…or…. Not teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read all ..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table 3, it is seen that the teacher dominated the classroom. The teacher frequently gave directions and asked question. Although the class was still dominated by the teacher, it did not mean that the students were passive. The students seemed to be active since the teacher sometimes used interactive and communicative activities such as game, exercises, and discussion to raise the students’ interaction and participation. These activities can be done
individually, in pairs, or even in groups. These activities also refer to the student-centered because the students are forced to get involved actively.

Discussion

The teacher plays dominant roles in the classroom interaction because he used almost all types of teacher talk during teaching and learning process such as giving directions, asking questions, lecturing, repeating student’s response verbatim, and praising and encouraging. This consistency of findings is similar to the previous research as mentioned by Nunan (1991) who states that “many language teachers were surprised by the amount of talk that they used in classroom” (p. 190). The dominance of teacher talk proportion in each meeting occurred since the teachers mainly explained grammatical rules and gave directions on learning activities.

The current research findings also revealed that the roles of the teacher which were mostly adopted by the teacher are controller, director, manager, facilitator, and resource. It can be shown from the high percentage of giving directions, asking questions, lecturing, repeating student’s response verbatim, and praising and encouraging by which the teachers led the flow of interaction. The roles of teachers are supported by Brown (2000, pp. 166-168) & Dagarin (2004, p. 130) who stated that “teacher’s directions is the highest percentage, it is needed since the students need guidance in their learning process”. Without teacher’s directions, the students might get confusion and doubt about what they do next. The most important point that determines how successfully students learn is the way instructions are formulated well by the teacher. It is line with Brown (2000, pp. 166-168) & Dagarin (2004, p. 130) in the previous chapter who mentioned that “the roles of teacher as controller, director, manager, facilitator, and resource”. The teacher stated that directions were needed to invite the students to follow the teaching and learning activity.

The type of teacher talk that is rarely or never used by the teacher is accepting student’s feeling. This type always gets the lower percentage from both observations. The teacher used this type depending on the student’s feeling. If they were happy, the teacher would keep it on in order to make them more excited. Then, the teacher asked the students to be calm when they got nervous. Next, the teacher asked them personally when they look sad. There is need for teachers to be aware and appreciate the mood of the learners. In short, the teachers produce this type in order to help the students to understand the student’s feelings and attitudes by letting them know that they will not be punished when they are expressing their emotions.

It can be stated that all types of teacher talk are the important part of classroom interaction for student’s acquisition. It is supported by Nunan (1991) who argues that “teacher talk has crucial importance not only for the organization of the classroom but also for the process of the acquisition” (p. 189). The types of teacher talk used by the teacher are so far from the traditional classroom, the teacher only sits or stands behind a desk and spends a large amount of time giving lecturing and directions whereas the students’ role are sitting, listening, and taking note passively. However, Brown (2001: 99) recommends that teacher talk should not occupy the major proportion of class hours, otherwise, the teachers are probably not giving students enough opportunity to talk.
From the research findings, it is also found that almost all the types of student talk are used by students in the class. Some types of student talk in the classroom might be intentionally used by the students as a learning strategy. Regarding student talk, this research has shown the types of student talk covering responses and initiation. Many directions, lectures, and questions posed by the teachers have motivated the students to give responses and initiation. Senowarsito (2013) supports it by stating that “the students tend to use some interpersonal function markers such as cooperation, agreement, disagreement, response, reaction, and confirmation during teaching and learning process” (p. 94).

Candela (1999) claims that “when the students get more engaged with the academic task, their participation in knowledge construction is more active and they can manage to make various discourse moves to use their power and yield it” (p. 157). Some types of student talk in the classroom might be intentionally used by the students as a learning strategy. Regarding student talk, this research has shown the types of student talk covering responses and initiation. Many directions, lectures, and questions posed by the teachers have motivated the students at giving responses and initiation. In conveying the responses, the students do not always do it individually. Sometimes, the students give response chorally. It is in line with Brock-Utne (2006) who says that “chorus answer is safe to talk for students” (p. 35).

The patterns of interaction during teaching and learning process is not fully dominated by the teacher because the students also actively participate in teaching and learning process. The teacher emphasizes student-centered, relying heavily on hands-on activities, group work, peer work, individual work, projects, and discussion to engage students and encourage active participation. The patterns of interaction during teaching and learning process in this research occur between teacher and student or student and student. This result is similar to Brown (2000) who states that “interaction is the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas between two or more people, resulting in a reciprocal effect on each other” (p. 165). The term of interaction implies an action-reaction or a two-way influence which may be between individuals (e.g. student-student or teacher-student) or between an individual and a group (e.g. teacher-audience) or between materials and individuals (Biddle, 1967, as cited in Sadeghi et al., 2012, p. 167).

Learner-centered activity such as group work, which forces students to talk to each other spontaneously, ask each other questions, and respond in a natural way, is one of example how this might be practiced. In group work pattern, the students are given a group task in doing learning activities like playing game and doing a task from the book. To support it, Meng & Wang (2011) assert that “group work activity is a good way to change the traditional teacher talk that dominates the class” (p. 102). Besides, Jones (2007) states that “when students are working together in English, they talk more, share their ideas, learn from each other, get involved more, feel more secure and less anxious, and enjoy using English to communicate” (p. 3). It is in line with Lightbown & Spada (1999) who argue that “students produce not only a greater quantity but also a greater variety of language functions, for example, disagreeing, hypothesizing, requesting, clarifying, and defining” (p. 85).

The last pattern is collaboration. The collaboration pattern is also well-known as pair work pattern. It occurred when the students work in pair to do the activity or task given by the
teacher. The activity that is used by the teacher is in line with what Watcyn-Jones (2002) mentioned that “there are several types of activities for working in pairs such as ice-breaker or warm-up activities” (p.7). Wallace, Stariba, & Walberg (2004) note that “frequent collaboration gives chances to the students in communicating meaningful ideas one another and being active learners” (p. 14). To strengthen it, Storch (2001) argues that “collaboration pattern seems to be a good idea for teachers to give a communicative activities because it immediately develops the amount of student practice” (p. 53). In short, collaborative work often exerts a beneficial effect on task performance.

Conclusion and Suggestion

The findings of the research show that the teacher perform almost all types of teacher talk in order to make their students get involved and talk actively in teaching and learning process. They provide many communicative learning activities that make them use teacher talk continuously. Giving directions, asking questions, lecturing or giving information, praising and encouraging, and repeating student’s response verbatim are the most frequently used by both teachers during teaching and learning process. Meanwhile, criticizing or justifying student’s behavior and response, accepting or using student’s ideas, giving feedback, joking, and accepting student’s feeling are rarely used by them.

The students also perform almost all types of student talk in participating learning process in the classroom. They use the types of student talk continuously with different proportion because the teacher provide interactive learning activities. The use of each type of student talk depends on the learning activities given by the teacher. It is found that the students are often given individual task, peer task, and group task during teaching and learning process. The more interactive activities they get, the more talk they use.

The patterns of interaction are not fully dominated by the teacher because the students also actively participate in teaching and learning process. These patterns might increase talk and interaction both teacher and students. When the teachers use the learning activities like game, drills, individual task, peer task, and group task, the patterns of group work, choral responses, closed-ended teacher questioning (IRF), individual work, student initiates-teacher answers, open-ended teacher questioning, and collaboration emerge during teaching and learning process. These patterns occur between teacher and student(s) and between student(s) and student(s).

Based on the conclusion above, it is highly recommended that the teacher should decrease their proportion to give lecturing, asking questions, and giving directions by providing the students an interesting theme or the latest topic to be discussed in group work or in pair work, challenging questions as well to engage higher order thinking skills of the students. The teachers should also give a wait-time for them to think then convey what things are going on their mind, more creative in designing the teaching style, communicative activities, materials, and tasks in order to make students actively participate in the class. The students should be more actively engaged in the classroom interaction and braver to talk and interact with their teacher and students directly during teaching and learning process.
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About the Author:
Ima Isnaini Taufiqur Rohmah is a Doctorate Student of English Education Study Program of Semarang State University, Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia. She has special interest in English Language Teaching Methodology. She has published some articles in journals in the area. She has also presented some of her research results in international seminar such as TEFLIN.

References


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**Appendix A**

The Interaction Analysis Systems from
Flanders, 1970; Moskowitz, 1971; Brown, 1975; Al-Otaibi, 2004; and Erling et al., 2012

|---------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------|

Arab World English Journal
ISSN: 2229-9327
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Interaction in English Language Class</th>
<th>Rohmah</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accepting feeling</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deals with feelings</td>
<td>Teacher’s responding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praising or Encouraging</td>
<td>Praises or encourages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joke</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting/using ideas of student</td>
<td>Uses idea of the student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeats student response verbatim</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking question</td>
<td>Ask question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturing</td>
<td>Gives information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving direction</td>
<td>Gives direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criticizing/justifying authority</td>
<td>Criticizes student behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Criticizes student response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding</td>
<td>Student response specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Student response choral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiating</td>
<td>Student response open ended, or student-initiated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silence or confusion</td>
<td>Silence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Silence A-V</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The combination of Interaction Analysis System from (Flanders, 1970; Moskowitz, 1971; Brown, 1975; Al-Otaibi, 2004; and Erling et al., 2012).

(Observation Categories and Definitions)

1. Accepting student’s feelings
   (Accepting, discussing, referring to, understanding of past, present, or future feelings of students in a non-threatening way. Feelings may be positive or negative.)

2. Praising and encouraging
   (Praising and encouraging student’s action and behavior. Praising, complimenting, and telling students why what they have said or done is valued. Encouraging students to continue, trying to give them confidence, and confirming that answers are correct.)

3. Joking
   (Intentional joking, kidding, making puns, attempting to be humorous, providing the joking is not at anyone’s expense.)

4. Accepting or using student’s ideas
   (Clarifying, building or developing, using, interpreting, and summarizing the ideas or suggestions from a student. The ideas must be rephrased by the teacher but still recognized as being student’s contributions.)

5. Asking questions
   (Asking questions about content or procedure with the intent that a student should answer the question and an answer is anticipated.)

6. Repeating student’s response verbatim
   (Repeating the exact words of students after they participate.)

7. Lecturing or giving information
8. Giving directions
(Giving directions, requests, or commands that students are expected to follow; directing various drills; facilitating whole-class and small-group activity.)

9. Criticizing or justifying student’s behavior and response
(Rejecting the behavior of student; trying to change student behavior from the non-acceptable to acceptable pattern; communicating anger, displeasure, annoyance, and dissatisfaction with what students are doing; Telling the student’s response is not correct or acceptable and communicating criticism, displeasure, annoyance, rejection by words or intonation.)

10. Giving feedback
(Responding to something students have said or done, and evaluating or commenting on it.)

11. Student talk, response (specific)
(It is talk by student in responding to the teacher within a specific and limited range of available answers. Student responds directly and predictably to teacher’s question and directions.)

12. Student talk, response (choral)
(One student or more attempting to give responses without being selected by the teacher or without raising their hands; All of the class is speaking in chorus at the same time. This may be in response to the teacher’s questions, or reading in chorus.)

13. Student talk, initiation
(It is talk by student in responding to the teacher with students’ own ideas, opinions, reactions, feelings. Initiating the participation or commenting on the lesson content.)

14. Student talk, inquiry
(Asking for further information, asking for clarification, for examples, asking about lesson content.)

15. Expressing lack of understanding verbally
(Asking the teacher to explain something or responding to a teacher’s question by saying I don’t know, for instance.)

16. Student talk in single
(One student is speaking at this particular moment. The student may be talking to the teacher or with another student, or s/he may be reading aloud.)

17. Student talk in pairs
(All of the students are talking to each other in pairs.)

**18. Student talk in groups**
(All of the students are talking to each other in groups.)

**19a. Silence**
(Pauses in the interaction, periods of quiet during which there is no verbal interaction.)

**19b. Silence-AV**
(Silence in the interaction during which a piece of audiovisual equipment, e.g., a tape recorder, filmstrip projector, record player, etc., is being used to communicate.)

**20a. Confusion (work-oriented)**
(More than one person at a time talking. Students are calling out excitedly, eager to participate or respond, concerned with task at hand in which communication cannot be understood by the observer.)

**21. Hand-raising participation**
(Students raising their hands to participate and to answer the teacher’s questions.)

**22. Laughing**
(Laughing and giggling by the class, individuals, and/or the teacher.)
Teaching Writing to Second Language Learners: Bench-marking Strategies for Classroom

Syed Sarwar Hussain
Department of Linguistics and Translation Studies
College of Languages and Translation
King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Abstract
This study assesses teaching writing skills to the second language learners by utilizing bench-marking strategies of classroom. The study has used mixed approach of qualitative and quantitative analysis to evaluate learning and writing skills of second language among 400 students from different primary and secondary schools in Riyadh. The teachers were instructed to fill an assessment form to evaluate skills of students in learning second language through Bench-marking techniques of brainstorming, fable writing, speed writing, loop writing, and mini saga. The data was analyzed using a statistical software (SPSS) 20.0 version. Cross tabulation technique has been applied on the data collected through questionnaires to observe the appropriate responses of the teachers. The results revealed that 75% of the students were interested in learning writing in second language. Brainstorming technique (56.3%) was found to be most popular among the students and teachers. The majority of the teachers (84.4%) believe that acquiring writing skills is the toughest task for the second language learners. Moreover, brainstorming (p=0.000), narrating fables (p=0.002), and loop writing (0.000) were significant among students for learning second language. It has been concluded that the technique of brainstorming was effective among the students to learn writing skills in second language.

Keywords: second language, brainstorming, loop writing, speed writing, mini saga, fable writing

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1. Introduction
The development of second language skills among the students has always been an interesting task. The process of writing suggests that the students are actually taught how to write with coherence, acceptable spellings, and appropriate grammar structure in second language (Freedman et al., 2014). The strategies for classroom refers to the second language learning sense, which has been introduced to the complex shifts made by second language speakers. These strategies can be different in nature, which include cognitive learning strategies and metacognitive learning strategies (Cohen, 2014). Students need to personally get involved in writing exercises to make the learning experience valuable. In the second language learning classrooms student motivation is enhanced by explaining them the steps involved in effective writing (Santangelo & Graham, 2015). The writing activities need to be geared according to the needs and interests of the students. Moreover, these activities should be linked to the real life whenever possible.

An effective approach is needed to encourage students’ participation in writing exercises, refining, and expanding writing skills (Hopkins, 2014; Airey, 2016). The teachers should be clear about the skills that are needed to be developed and the factors that facilitate learning in the target areas. The field of learning second language (L2) writing has been well-established over the last two decades (Hyland, 2016; Alharbi, 2017). For effective teaching of writing to L2 learners, the teachers should select a target area that is able to facilitate learning. Moreover, language teachers must mostly emphasize on the topic that yields maximum student participation after identification of the target skill areas (Angelova & Zhao, 2016). The pragmatic combination of these objectives is helpful in better understanding and effective learning among the students (Entwistle & Ramsden, 2015).

Once the teachers are confident about their students’ interest in being involved in the activities of learning better writing skills, they mainly focus on the involvement of students in order to promote long term positive learning experience (Wood et al., 2016). The evolution of sensitive context pedagogies is helpful in better understanding of the texts presented in classrooms, the ways of writing among the students, and the significant use of text among the targeted communities (Ariffin, 2016). The teachers teaching writing to L2 learners, are extensively becoming researchers by the development of texts’ understanding (Pressley & Allington, 2014; Arzt & Kost, 2016). The action research is termed as the systematic research-reflection cycle that is democratized by the implication of new knowledge and skills in the classrooms (Burns, 2013; Bailey, 2016).

The factors that complicate learning and writing in second language mostly include first language literacy, proficiency in the target language, and difference in rhetorical approach to the text (Archibald, 2001; Barkaoui, 2016). Proper guidance can be helpful in the improvement of student proficiency through various language areas. Despite increased interest in learning and writing second language, there are relatively few models that demonstrate the role of guidance and instruction in learning second language (Grabe, 2001; Chun et al., 2016; Collier et al., 2016).

Teaching writing to L2 learners can be explained under two broad aspects; including writing to communicate and learning to write (Cornell et al., 2016). The learners are needed to go beyond the early writing skills and use target language to write something and communicate...
Teaching Writing to Second Language Learners

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with the readers (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Crusan et al., 2016). Language proficiency has been linked with appropriate use of words and expressions to the given task. The language proficiency is depicted through the language skills of L2 learners (Cumming, 2001; da Costa et al., 2016). The teachers are needed to choose the most efficient and effective method that facilitates the specified writing area. Firstly, the teachers need to choose the correct means of teaching writing to L2 learners that would encourage the students to learn L2 with interest, rather than discouraging them (Dahlberg, 2016).

In the present study, useful techniques about the development of writing skills among the second language learners have been discussed. Moreover, some practical teaching ideas have also been addressed that contribute to improve the writing skills among the second language learners. The study has focused on some benchmarking techniques, which include brainstorming, fable writing, speed writing, loop writing, and mini saga. These techniques are referred as benchmarking.

2. Literature Review
The proficiency in writing is associated with overall proficiency in all the language skills that greatly influences the proficiency in writing with regard to second language learners. Yet the toughest task for the L2 learners is to acquire the writing skills (Barkaoui, 2007; Daud et al., 2016). The learning of writing skills requires mastery in cognitive, sociocultural, and linguistic competencies (Ellis, 2015; de Oliveira & Silva, 2016; di Gennaro, 2016). Great interest is shown by the researchers for the implementation of new approaches in teaching and assessment of writing (Hoffman & Zollman, 2016). A teacher can focus on the means to achieve a specific type of learning after deciding the targeted area (Cumming, 2001). S/He can start considering the involvement of students by distinguishing the interests of students after targeting the area. The three significant aspects of learning writing in second language include (Cumming, 2001):

- Composing processes used by people while writing
- Feature of the texts produced by the people
- Socio-cultural texts written by the people

Each aspect has micro and macro perspectives for writing in second language.

Table 1. Learning Writing in Second Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Macro</th>
<th>Micro</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Composing</td>
<td>Syntax, morphology, and lexis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Planning and revising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searches for words and main focus is towards ideas and language collectively</td>
<td>Planning and revising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Individual self-image development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation in discourse community for a social change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1 Requirement for L2 Learners
The importance of learning and teaching in L2 learners is needed to be emphasized on the basis of various theoretical orientations that focus on different factors, associated with L2 learning (Hyland, 2002). The features of texts produced by L2 learners constitute the development in L2 writing skills, observed by the text-oriented research (Hung et al., 2016). On the basis of this orientation, L2 learners need to learn syntax, orthography, lexicon, discourse and rhetorical
conventions along with morphology of the L2 (Barkaoui, 2007; Johnson & Lyddon, 2016). The L2 learners need to acquire competency for achieving proficiency in L2 learning for producing lengthy texts with appropriate meta-discourse features, vocabulary, and syntactic structures (Barkaoui, 2007).

Discussing about the importance of effective approaches for teaching writing to L2 learners, Oxford & Crookall (1989) write “Learning strategies are step taken by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, and retrieval of information. Strategies are referred to as learning techniques, behaviours, or actions; or learning to learn problem solving, or study skills. No matter what they are called, strategies can make learning more effective and efficient.” (p. 405). The writing skills of L2 learners are tested and evaluated with regard to writing skills and improving second language proficiency (Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016). Therefore, learning L2 has been observed as combining both macro and micro strategies. The macro strategy involves the drafting, planning, and revising; whereas, micro strategies are responsible for automatic searching of words and syntax (Cumming, 2001; Lee, et al. 2016). In this respect, the L2 learners are needed to be capable enough to manage complex mental representations and rhetorical goals. These learners are trained to use specific problem solving procedures to formulate texts (Lee, Chodorow & Gentile, 2016).

The different stages of composition process have been distinguished as revision and editing, which are two different operations. It eventually results in adoption of flexible attitude towards the use of rhetorical devices (Larios et al., 2002). Proficient L2 writers are those, who are capable of cultivating new settings effectively (Hyland, 2002; Master, et al. 2016). Through the process of socialization, the L2 learners get to learn knowledge, values, genres, and expectations. The L2 learners internalize specific rules of their communities and undergo individual shifts and development to maintain their identity (Larios et al., 2002; Naghdipour, 2016).

2.2 The Benchmarking Process
The process of benchmarking is used to make comparisons with non-competitive organizations. The comparison, made between different parts of same school, is assisted by the creation and validation of benchmarks (Jawaid, 2014). Therefore, a clear strategy is required by the benchmarking program for the identification of good practice. The benchmarking process is a trans-comparative process that addresses the complexity and challenges of L2 learning and teaching (Neilson, 2016; Nguyen, 2016). It develops a curriculum framework, which is codified and conceptualized for the L2 learners (Jawaid, 2014). For the better understanding of the benchmarking technique, the benchmarks have been arranged as Quality Standards (QSs) and Quality Characteristics (QCs).

The constant comparative analysis process of benchmarking develops a framework about the process of arriving at a decision by repeated rounds of analysis (Skinner et al., 2015). This process continuously collects, codes, and analyzes the good practices present in the literature and fieldwork (Peyton & Schaetzel, 2016). The identification process of benchmarking facilitates the identification of quality standards and quality characteristics (Jawaid, 2014; Poole, 2016).

2.3 The Process Modelling
The students can become competent in learning L2 writing by modelling and describing the strategies and processes about effective writing. The effective writing includes drafting, planning, generating, and revising ideas (Blanton et al., 2002; Hyland, 2002). Continuous feedback is provided to the L2 learners until they are capable enough to complete the assessment form flexibly and independently for achieving their goals (Qin & Uccelli, 2016). The students are able to engage with effective writing when they understand the process, which involves association among effective writing (Hyland, 2002).

A social–cognitive model has been involved to observe the performance of skills. This model is particularly involved in the students’ writing and self-regulatory skills (Blanton et al., 2002; Razi, 2016). Automaticity in any skill can be achieved through emulation of the skill and self-control. The development of self-regulation is helpful for the student to learn, adopt, and transfer the skill effectively (Barkaoui, 2007; Roberts, et al. 2017). The process modelling of L2 learners is acquired through 3 stages:

• Stage 1: Teachers respond to writing task by thinking aloud to the students to show them the coping models.
• Stage 2: When composing conference related to writing strategies and processes, the teachers request the students to express their thoughts.
• Stage 3: Teachers increase the awareness regarding writing strategies among the students and teach them model procedures for regulation of those strategies (Sawyer, et al. 2016).

The learning and performance of L2 learning is positively associated with the self-regulation strategies that include self-monitoring, goal setting, and self-evaluation (Barkaoui, 2007).

2.4 Introspection
Introspection is defined as observing the mental and emotional processes of an individual. Conscious attention is required when verbal reports are used as the data reflects the idea required for writing process (Hyland, 2016; Snow, Eslami & Park, 2016). Retrospective recalling is possible by talking aloud during writing. The individuals, writing in a normal way, are told to speak what they are doing at the moment, which is associated with Think Aloud Protocols (TAPs). It facilitates the recording of information including their perceptions and strategies while they are at work (Mackey & Gass, 2015; Staden & Purcell, 2016). But this practice sometimes draws an incomplete picture of the cognitive capabilities of the individuals and creates distorting effects.

Yang et al. (2014) confirms that speaking aloud while writing has a little impact on students’ writing skills in controlled environment. This procedure is widely used to divulge the strategies, used by the L2 learners while they are planning or revising (Wong, 2005; Tahtinen-Pacheco & Merchant, 2016). Lei (2008) displays the writing strategies of L2 learners by videotaping the writer while writing and discussing the thought processes of writers immediately after watching the video tape. This technique freely introspects and examines the learning and writing experiences (Lei, 2008).

2.5 Ethnography
A detailed interpretation and description of individuals’ performance at workplace or classroom is specified through ethnography. Eventually, the outcomes of these interactions are evaluated. It
provides a detailed explanation about the specificity of a certain group of individuals (Hesse-Biber&Leavy, 2010). The student behavior is understood by realizing their perspective through diverse methods, elicitation, and observation. It allows the utilization of simple methods and sustained engagement, which is time consuming and labor intensive (Hyland, 2016).

The process of ethnography facilitates detailed explanation about a specific group when the lack of generalizability is criticized. The anthropological ethnographies are explained as a language practice that is similar within a community as compared to far flung exotic locations. Language skills are assessed on the basis of their production and reception rather than simply as a text (Hyland, 2016). Textography is defined as learning writing that emphasizes on text analysis in combination with traditional ethnographic techniques (Starfield et al., 2014). Therefore, better understanding of institutional, cultural, and social values provides contextualized base for effective learning and writing (Wagner, 2016). It can be achieved mainly by focusing on the texts produced by the students learning L2. Paltridge (2008) has conducted the research on basis of text studying of the art and design students, who learnt L2 writing by interviewing the students, examiners, and supervisors.

2.6 The Text Modelling
The value of providing explicit instruction regarding the practice of target L2 texts is highlighted through the text-focused and socio-cultural orientations (Barkaoui, 2007). The main focus of former orientation is on the text forms that include organization, grammar, and vocabulary. Hyland (2003) and Yu & Lee (2016) advocate a broader approach to L2 writing that focuses on audiences, contexts, functions, and purposes of the texts.

2.7 Brainstorming
Basically, the technique of brainstorming utilizes the concept of radiant thinking. Moreover, this technique is widely used to figure out main concepts and ideas, reading books, sorting and planning compositions, and topic expansion (Sim et al., 2012). Therefore, the technique of brainstorming plays an important role in L2 process. It is associated with the learning of vocabulary and expansion of knowledge that represent different concepts. The procedure of brainstorming is performed in two ways. Firstly, the students are divided into different small groups. Each student is assigned a topic and told to write down their ideas in the given time limit. After completion of this activity the ideas of all the group students are collated.

The technique of brainstorming is also performed as a class activity for the students. In this type of activity, students shout out their ideas about a specific topic given to them and the teacher writes those ideas on the board. A study suggests that the teachers use brainstorming techniques for the identification of frequently occurring interest among the students (Kang, 2005). This technique is participative as it allows maximum number of students to take part in the journey of learning second language. Brainstorming is a natural process that is conducted with the help of a series of connection between different experiences and images. It helps in the interpretation of different areas of knowledge that is associated with natural form of logic and reasoning (Sim et al., 2012).

At times, brainstorming makes the students reluctant because they are reserved by nature, not familiar with the technique, or stressed about answering right (Sim et al., 2012). The
technique allows the students to conclude solution for a certain problem through random generation of ideas related to a specific topic (Willis & Miertschin, 2006). The basic advantage of this technique is that it encourages the L2 learners to think creatively, refresh the acquired knowledge, and stimulate the process of further learning without any restraints. It is also helpful in achieving a break from the traditional way of learning that is prevalent. Eventually, application of this technique results in generation of informal, original, and relaxed ideas.

A study reveals that the technique of brainstorming is more effective as compared to individual working of the learners for generating ideas (Sim et al., 2012). The idea of brainstorming is effective in development of greater understanding of ideas (Sharafi-Nejad et al., 2016). The greater understanding about L2 learners is developed through the setting of ideas visually and making connection accordingly.

2.8 Writing Fables
This technique requires a total of 1-2 hours of writing together with enjoyment. The students use narrative target language to produce a fable. The writing of fables makes use of verbs that explain the direct speech, use of adverbs providing detail information about the speaker, dramatic emphasis through inversion of subject, and use of verb patterns (VanPatten & Williams, 2014). The activity of fable writing involves ‘fable swap milling exercise’ that is helpful for the students in recalling their own fable around eight times. Repetition of these fables increases the confidence and fluency in L2 learners, and gives chance to the students for elaboration and connection.

2.9 Speed Writing
Speed writing tests the actual writing skills of each student individually. The students are given approximately 15 minutes to write a composition related to the topic. In this technique, the students are needed to concentrate on ideas, but not on the grammar, punctuation, and language. The students further need to write quickly during this time without crossing or correcting any mistakes. Moreover, this technique does not allow the students to work in groups (Cook, 2013).

2.10 Loop Writing
Loop writing is a way of writing that ensures the linking of paragraphs to form a coherent text. In this methodology, the L2 learners are given the task to write through cause and effect by developing coherence and cohesion. Loop writing is basically continuation of speed writing, as it requires structuring of the ideas generated during speed writing (Cook, 2013). Loop writing involves the structuring of ideas in a complete text. This procedure can be carried out either individually or in group. The students are requested to read whatever they have written and arrange all the sentences and paragraphs accordingly. This procedure is helpful to detect the understanding of students’ learning to write in L2.

2.11 Mini Saga
Mini saga is known as a piece of writing that is composed of fifty words that provide an excellent source for short writing lesson. It succeeds in teaching effective writing as it is easier to read and understand for the L2 learner. In this procedure, accuracy is mainly focused, and has the potential to motivate the learner (Garcia-Sanchez & Lujan-Garcia, 2015).
3. Material and Methods
The study has utilized a mixed method approach that includes qualitative and quantitative analysis. The qualitative and quantitative methods are mixed to get complete picture about the writing of second language learners (Hyland, 2016). Increased plausibility regarding the interpretation of results is achieved by using multiple sources of data or analytical methods. The validity of the findings is increased through adoption of effective tools that make the research pragmatic.

A total of 160 teachers and 400 students were involved from different primary and secondary schools in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. In the first stage the writing skills of students were tested through brainstorming, fable writing, loop writing, speed writing, and mini saga. An assessment form was designed to evaluate the writing skills of L2 learners. The assessment form was based on the writing skills of the students. The teachers were asked to fill the assessment form after evaluating the skills of the students. The analysis was based on these assessment forms. Moreover, the teachers were asked about the strategies that are required for better understanding of the students, related with writing in second language. The data was analyzed by applying cross-tabulation technique to the responses of the questionnaire. The obtained data was analyzed using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) 20.0 version. The data was collected through the questionnaire, which was based on the required skills by learners to have a better understanding of the class room strategies. The requirements of the children were evaluated through the assessment forms and the analysis has been done on the basis of the questionnaire structured for the teachers. It helped to obtain a clear perception of the student’s requirements. The student’s performances were evaluated through the assessment form, which was then examined on the basis of the writing skills of the learners and which presented the lack of strategies involved in teaching, which needed to be implemented. The teachers’ responses were obtained through a questionnaire regarding the student’s progress. The outcomes evaluated the writing skills of the students as observed by the teachers.

4. Results and Discussion
A questionnaire was designed based on the learning of second language among the students from different schools in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia). A total of 160 questionnaires were received from the teachers. The demographic profile of the students recruited in the study presented that majority of the students were females (65.3%); whereas, 34.8% of the students were males. The highest percentage of students (54.0%) was found between age group of 7-8 years. The level of interest was calculated to be 64.0% among the students, who were interested in learning writing in L2. Whereas, 10.3% of the students were not interested in learning L2 and 25.8% were highly interested in learning L2 (Table 2).

Table 2. Demographic Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>65.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>5-6 years</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7-8 years</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9-10 years</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data in Table 3 indicates the frequencies of different techniques that were applied on the students to assess their skills in learning L2. The data shows that majority of the teachers (38.1%) agree that the brainstorming technique created great interest among the students. Whereas, only 12.5% of the teachers disagree regarding the interest in the development of brainstorming technique among the students. Moreover, majority of the teachers (36.9% strongly agree, 43.1% agree) narrated that brainstorming helps to figure out main concepts about learning writing in L2. The technique of brainstorming demands confidence as students need to speak up their ideas and thoughts among their fellows. Therefore, majority of the teachers (75%) believe that the technique of brainstorming failed among the students who were reserved and reluctant (Table 3).

Regarding the technique of fable writing most of the teachers (84.4%) strongly agree that fable writing strengthens the thinking power of students. 52.5% respond neutral about speed writing to assess the writing skills of the students. Whereas, 49.4% disagree that students learn more while working in groups. Loop writing helps in structuring and understanding of second language and approximately 81.9% of the teachers strongly agreed with this. 84.4% of the teachers strongly agree that acquiring writing skills is the toughest task for the L2 learners. According to the teachers, majority (56.3%) of the students enjoyed learning L2 through the technique of brainstorming. The least enjoyable learning techniques among the students were fable writing (4.4%) and mini saga (3.8%) (Table 3).

Table 3. Frequencies indicating the prevalence of second language learning techniques among the students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brainstorming technique created great interest among the students</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>22 (13.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>61 (38.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>52 (32.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>20 (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>5 (3.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brainstorming techniques help to figure out main concepts</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>59 (36.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>69 (43.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>22 (13.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>7 (4.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3 (1.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technique of brainstorming failed among the students who were reserved</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>16 (10.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>120 (75.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>21 (13.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3 (1.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>6 (3.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cross tabulation has been used to evaluate the association between brainstorming technique and narrating fables, speed writing, and loop writing. The results reveal that majority of the teachers agree that combined practice of brainstorming technique and narrating fables, speed writing, and loop writing have positive influence on the students in learning L2 (Table 4).
Table 4. Evaluation of Brainstorming with other techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Narrating fables increases confidence</th>
<th>Speed writing assesses writing skills</th>
<th>Loop writing evaluates understanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brainstorming creates great interest</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The regression analysis showed that brainstorming (p=0.000), narrating fables (p=0.002), and loop writing (0.000) were significant among students for learning L2, as compared to speed writing technique (Table 5 and 6).

Table 5. Evaluating significance level of brainstorming, narrating fables, speed writing, and loop writing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brainstorming creates great interest</td>
<td>0.686</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>0.642</td>
<td>11.680</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The teaching and learning of writing in a second language is regarded as a difficult task because various socio-cultural, linguistic, and cognitive factors are involved in the L2. Learning writing in second language is helpful in attaining proficiency to produce lengthy texts with appropriate meta-discourse features. It is regarded as an acquisition of successful writing strategies (Barkaoui, 2007). For effective learning of writing in second language, it is necessary for teachers to raise awareness about successful writing processes, linguistic and textual conventions of L2, and reader expectations about L2.

The L2 learners are believed to improve the accuracy and complexity of morphology along with syntax in their written texts (Cumming, 2001). The proficiency of these learners increases with the use of vocabulary in their writing. The developmental patterns among L2 learners are documented with respect to discourse features particular to texts types that include argumentation, autobiography, and narration. The capability of learners increases in the tasks where their reading and writing skills are closely integrated. They eventually develop individually or in contrast to less skilled counterparts. It makes them capable enough to represent their ideas, phrases, and conventions in a better way (Cumming & Riazi, 2000). It has been observed that as students learn to write in L2, their writings display a greater range of specificity and vocabulary. Moreover, learning to write in L2 also improves the command of students over conventional rhetorical forms. Some of the students are seen to interpret L2 in the same way as they do in their mother tongues, but it totally depends on the mental abilities of the students (Cumming & Riazi, 2000). Various types of methods have been used in understanding of complex and multifaceted nature of L2 learning.

The brainstorming technique is extensively used in teaching writing to L2 learners in the language classroom context. A study reveals that brainstorming is responsible for the generation of different ideas within the specified time frame given in the classroom (Unin, 2016). Therefore, the technique of brainstorming can be used to encourage the students for sharing their thoughts and ideas with each other. In some situations, students feel reluctant to communicate in L2; therefore, acquiring writing skills in L2 requires active involvement and participation from the students (Soraya, 2010).

The results have been evaluated on the basis of participation, motivation, and confidence among the students with regard to learning L2. It was found that students were more involved...
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and motivated during brainstorming sessions when they were given an opportunity to speak and express their ideas (Unin, 2016). The students really enjoyed when they were given a picture and asked to complete the story. Moreover, the students were motivated during group discussions; and majority of the students desired to participate in such discussions. According to the teachers, the procedure of brainstorming was positively associated with effective learning of L2 among the students (Unin, 2014).

The benchmarking strategies in classroom have shown that brainstorming is easily demonstrated by using word lists, word mapping, or a picture. It provides the opportunity to the students to use their own ideas and experiences for learning L2. A study reveals that students are more enthusiastic to express their thoughts and ideas when brainstorming is performed among small groups of students (Hamzah et al., 2010). Fable stories are termed as short stories as they offer good way to include literature in the classroom with universally applicable morals. It has been suggested through the output of global measures of proficiency that the increase in fluency of L2 is the least controversial claim for output. The repeated deployment of knowledge eventually leads to consolidation and automation of knowledge (DeKeyser, 2014). It has been known that learning writing takes longer time as compared to learning speaking in L2. Therefore, the longer time required for learning writing in L2 has been accepted as an artifact of the modality.

4. Conclusion

The world has become a globalized place, where individuals are indulged in multiple cultures each day. In today’s era an individual has access to a variety of information across the world at the touch of a button. As a result, the demand for learning second language has increased drastically. Teaching second language to the students empowers them to take their places in the global community and become active participants in the global world. Knowing a second language opens a window into a new world. It brings wealth of conversation, understanding, and information, which otherwise would not have been possible for the students who seek to learn a new language. Therefore, learning L2 gives the students basic tools to succeed in their life.

Learning writing has been regarded as a complex activity to teach L2 to the students using a single approach. This is because acquiring writing skills is the toughest task for the L2 learners. The students should be offered a key element for instructional activities to get involved in writing program. This paper has described the development of classroom language benchmark assessments with an emphasis on the theoretical rationale for their design. This study presents the first step towards a complete and practical assessment of L2 learning skills among the students. There is need to evaluate the effectiveness of learning L2 among the students that ensure their future development. The construction of teacher language proficiency and every scale descriptor needs to be emphasized. This study has utilized 5 techniques to evaluate the learning of L2, among which brainstorming technique was found to be the most significant for learning L2 among the students.

The complexity of learning L2 has been depicted through recent attempts for modelling the writing process in L2. There are different conditions for the learning of L2 that may be applied to a writing context. These conditions are used to produce generalized and useful applications about learning to write. It is regarded as a good way to establish a large set of terms and conditions about L2 writing that needs to be accounted. Learning of L2 is positively
associated with the students’ previous educational experiences and the present practices while learning to write in L2. However, the writing skills of students do not represent a consistent profile of proficiencies and may vary on basis of the capabilities of each student. The results show that when students are given proper instructions, it positively affects the quality of their writing in L2. The balance of a student’s overall profile can be changed effectively through focused teaching activities on the aspects of writing in L2.

Acknowledgment
The author is very thankful to all the associated personnel in any reference that contributed in/for the purpose of this research. Further, this research holds no conflict of interest and is not funded through any source.

About the Author:
Dr. Syed Sarwar Hussain has been teaching English for the past thirty-six years. He is currently teaching as an Assistant Professor at the Department of Linguistics and Translation Studies, College of Languages and Translation, King Saud University. He has published six books that include 'Ideology and the Poetry of Stephen Spender' (1988), 'Despairing Voices' (2011), 'Ashes in the Fire' (2012), and 'The Eastern Brew' (2013), and 'Nameless Lanes' (2016). 'Scattered Leaves', his latest anthology of translated short stories, is waiting publication. Dr. Hussain’s anthology of his own short stories, ‘The Blue-Bleak Embers’, and a collection of his poetry, ‘The Meandering Muse’ are next in the pipeline.

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placement into writing courses. Assessing Writing, 29, 1-14. DOI: 10.1016/j.asw.2016.05.001


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### Appendix A
#### Demographic Questionnaire

1. **Gender**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Age**

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>11-12</td>
<td>13-14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **Class/Grade**

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. **Level of Interest to learn second language**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Interested</td>
<td>Interested</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Appendix B
#### Questionnaire

1. Brainstorming technique created great interest among the students about learning second language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2. Brainstorming techniques helps to figure out main concepts regarding learning second language among the students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

3. The technique of brainstorming failed among the students who were reserved and reluctant about sharing their views.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4. Narrating the fables/stories written by students themselves increases the confidence and fluency of second language among the students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5. Fable Writing strengthens the thinking power of students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
6. Speed writing helps to assess the writing skills of students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

7. Students learn more when working in groups as compared to working individually.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

8. Loop writing helps to evaluate the structuring and understanding of second language among the second language learners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

9. Which procedure was thoroughly enjoyed by the second language learners?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brainstorming</th>
<th>Speed Writing</th>
<th>Loop Writing</th>
<th>Fables Writing</th>
<th>Mini Saga</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

10. Acquiring writing skills is the toughest task for second language learners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
The Effect of E-mail and WhatsApp on Jordanian EFL Students' Reading Skill

Kafa Mohammad Bani Khalaf
Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Faculty of Education
Yarmouk University, Jordan

Abstract
This study aims to examine the potential effect of an e-mail and WhatsApp based instructional program on Jordanian EFL tenth-grade students' skimming and scanning skills of reading. To collect the data, two instruments were utilized: a pre-test and a post-test. The study used a quasi-experimental design. The participants of the study were 60 Jordanian tenth-grade female students from four sections who were purposefully chosen from Bahraini Basic School for Girls in Jordan. 15 students comprised the control group and 45 comprised three experimental groups of 15 students each. The findings reveal significant differences (at 0.05) in the students' mean scores on the post-test, in favour of the students in the WhatsApp group, the e-mail and WhatsApp combination group and the e-mail group respectively. The findings also reveal a significantly high effect of the instructional program on scanning than on skimming. A number of implications and recommendations for future research are put forth.

Key words: EFL Jordanian students, e-mail, reading skill, scanning, skimming, WhatsApp

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DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol8no2.16
Introduction

The world witnesses a technological revolution which everything demands a dramatic change in all the life aspects. The technology and its applications, such as electronic mail (e-mail), instant chat, facebook, WhatsApp, and Dropbox have become the daily means by people to socialize, communicate, do business, and learn and teach English as a foreign language (FL). Furthermore, everybody should believe that pens, pencils and papers cannot exist in this digital world where everyone should depend on wireless tools for reading that make reading processes more interactive and collaborative (Bromley, 2010). Accordingly, EFL teachers should not ignore the importance of using the wireless tools in their classroom since most students are familiar with using the Internet and its applications, especially e-mail and WhatsApp, as they use them every day for social purposes (Bataineh & Baniabdelrahman, 2006; Sharadgah, 2013).

Reading is the process of understanding a text by internalizing the needed information efficiently for two reasons, reading for information and reading for fun. Reading sub skills are: skimming, scanning, editing, proof reading, note-taking and predicting. In light of the Communicative Language Learning approach (CLL), there are two major reading sub skills which are skimming and scanning. Skimming means reading for the gist while scanning means reading for specific information. Skimming and scanning are required to read quickly and efficiently (liu, 2010).

Biancarosa & Griffiths (2012) state several advantages of using technology-based tools to increase students' reading skills. Moreover, scholars, (e.g. Motteram, 2013; Taki & Ramazani, 2011) suggest that e-tools, such as e-mail and WhatsApp, develop students' reading skills since they provide them with authentic opportunities to communicate with different people all over the world by using English as a global language. Yunus & Chenzi (2012) state advantages of integrating social networking tools that students gain immediate feedback, real-life interaction and they also help the students to have positive learning attitudes and increase their confidence. Moreover, Nakamoto (2005) claim that WhatsApp is a learner-centered tool and face to face communication that increases the students' motivation to learn inside and outside classroom. Kymes (2005) also argue that students should be taught reading skills, such as skimming and scanning especially through the Internet and technology-based tools since they enhance these reading skills.

Moreover, it is e-mail that plays an important role in helping students to be motivated, enthusiastic and comfortable (Ndemanu, 2012). It also helps students to be independent (Harrison, 2006). Additionally, e-mail exchanging should be taken into consideration in order to reduce students' anxiety in reading (Greenfield, 2003).

Literature Review

Teaching skimming and scanning skills is important to help students to be skilled readers. Both skimming and scanning are quick basic reading skills for fully comprehending the given text. When skimming, students read the text quickly to get the general meaning. When scanning, students quickly look for a particular piece of information (Grellet, 1981).

Skimming and scanning skills may be easily enhanced through computer-mediated communications (CMC), such as e-mail, WhatsApp, wikis and blogs. The students can participate in collaborative CMC-based reading tasks and benefit from immediate feedback.
CMC also plays a key role in modeling reading skills, proofreading, editing, skimming and scanning. (Davis & Thiede, 2000; Godwin-Jones, 2008).

There is no a perfect strategy or method that can solve all EFL students’ problems. However, it is WhatsApp that plays an important role in motivating students by interacting and using English meaningfully beyond the traditional classroom. WhatsApp also helps students develop their language skills, reading, writing, speaking and listing, collaboratively and interestingly (Almeida d’Eca, 2003).

E-mail may help students improve their reading skills as it has several advantages such as being enjoyable, comfortable and suitable learning tool, and time, money and effort saving that make e-mail an important factor that plays a great role in improving reading comprehension (Motallebzadeh, 2011).

Mahmoud (2014) also report that using e-mail and WhatsApp inside the classroom breaks the daily routine. The students have a good chance to communicate with the teacher or with each other electronically, and the value of receiving the immediate feedback away from embarrassment of getting their papers filled with red pen-corrections. Furthermore, using e-mail and WhatsApp help anxious students participate and give an attractive opportunity for the poor students who feel that English learning is something needs abnormal ability.

**Purpose and questions of the study**

In Jordan, English is taught as a foreign language in both basic and secondary stages over four to five lessons per a week. The main focus is on developing the four language skills, reading, writing, listening and speaking, to enable the students to communicate meaningfully with others. However, the students’ achievement is limited and weak (Bataineh & Bani Hani, 2010). Most Jordanian students are anxious when reading English texts, the main reasons for such anxiety are, lack of motivation and enthusiasm, shyness of making errors and discomfort of reading effects (Al–Shboul, Ahmad, Nordin & Abdul Rahman, 2013). Notwithstanding the marked efforts of the Jordanian Ministry of Education in reforming EFL curricula, training EFL teachers and availing schools of state-of-the-art equipment, students continue to lag behind in their proficiency. In the researchers’ quest for a solution, an e-mail and WhatsApp-based instructional program is used to improve students’ skimming and scanning skills. Thus, the study aims to answer the following question:

1. To what extent, if any, do e-mail and WhatsApp develop Jordanian EFL learners’ skimming and scanning skills?

**Significance of the study**

To the researcher’s best knowledge; few studies have been conducted to investigate the effect of e-mail and WhatsApp on skimming and scanning of English language learners in the field of foreign language learning. Various stakeholders are hoped to benefit from the findings of this research. In addition to the more obvious students and teachers, EFL textbook writers and curriculum designers may find practical implications for reading comprehension materials and instruction. Moreover, the findings may also be beneficial to the Jordanian Ministry of Education in its continuous quest for reform and innovation.
Sampling, instrumentation and data collection and analysis

To achieve the purpose of the research, a sample of four tenth-grade sections was purposefully drawn from Bahraini Basic School for Girls, Irbid, Jordan. They were surveyed if they had smartphones or not and if they had e-mail, WhatsApp or both applications at their smartphones. Based on the survey, 15 students comprised the control group and 45 comprised three experimental groups of 15 students each. The control group was taught by the conventional method as outlined in the Ministry-prescribed Teacher Book, *Action Pack 10* whereas the experimental groups were taught through the instructional program based on e-mail, WhatsApp and a combination of both. The four groups were pre-and post-tested on reading comprehension. Between the pre-and post-test, the instructional program, which comprises nine reading comprehension passages with different skimming and scanning activities was implemented over an eight-week interim, with four 40-minute sessions a week.

The instructional program is concerned only with improving students’ skimming and scanning skills and raising their awareness of the benefits of using e-mail and WhatsApp for the academic purposes, especially for the skills under study.

To answer the research questions, means, standard deviations, adjusted means, ANCOVA, MANCOVA and Bonferroni’s Equation of multiple comparisons were used to determine any potentially significant differences in the students’ achievement in skimming and scanning skills which can be attributed to the treatment.

Validity and reliability of the instrument

In order to judge the validity of the reading pre-test, post-test and the instructional program, a jury of nine professors from Yarmouk University were asked to provide their feedback concerning their suitability to the purposes of the study; they looked into their language and their content. Their suggestions (e.g., clarifying the instructions of some activities) were taken into consideration in the final versions of the instruments.

In order to establish the reliability of the reading tests, they were applied to thirty students of a pilot study group. Reliability was measured by the test-retest formula using the Pearson reliability coefficient. The obtained values were (0.80) for skimming, (0.88) for scanning, and (0.88) for the overall test. All calculated values are considered acceptable to achieve the purpose of this study.

Findings of the study

To answer the research question concerning the effect of e-mail and WhatsApp on developing students’ skimming and scanning skills, means and standard deviations of the students’ scores on the skimming and scanning skills pre-and post-tests were calculated per the teaching method, as shown in Table1.

**Table 1**: Means and standard deviations of the students’ skimming and scanning scores on the pre-and post-tests per the teaching method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Skills</th>
<th>Teaching Method</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Reading Pre-test (Covariate)</th>
<th>Reading Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Dev.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skimming</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WhatsApp</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 shows that there are observed differences among the means of the students’ scores on the skimming and scanning per the teaching methods. To investigate whether the differences are statistically significant, MANCOVA was used for the students’ scores on the skimming and scanning skills post-test per the teaching method after excluding the students’ scores on the pre-test, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: MANCOVA of the students’ skimming and scanning skills scores on the post-test per the teaching method**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Type of MANCOVA</th>
<th>Value of MANCOVA</th>
<th>Whole F value</th>
<th>Hypothesis df</th>
<th>Error df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial η²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skimming Pre-test (Covariate)</td>
<td>Wilks' Lambda</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>3.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scanning Pre-test (Covariate)</td>
<td>Wilks' Lambda</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>126.2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>82.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Method</td>
<td>Wilks' Lambda</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>19.99</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>53.08%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows that there are significant effects (at $\alpha=0.05$) per the teaching method in the students’ scores on the post-tests of skimming and scanning together. To find out which skill of post-test was affected by the teaching method, ANCOVA was used for the students’ scores on the post-test of skimming skill per the teaching method after excluding the students’ scores on the pre-tests, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: ANCOVA of students’ skimming skill scores on the post-test per the teaching method**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variance</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial η²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skimming Pre-test (Covariate)</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>3.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scanning Pre-test (Covariate)</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>1.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Method</td>
<td>99.03</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.01</td>
<td>20.89</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>53.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>85.35</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>190.58</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that there are significant differences (at $\alpha=0.05$) among the means of the students’ scores on the skimming per the teaching method. To investigate in favor of which group the significant differences are for, adjusted means of the students' skimming skill post-test and standard errors were calculated per the teaching method, as shown in Table 4.
Table 4: Adjusted means and standard errors of the students’ skimming skill post-tests per the teaching method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Method</th>
<th>Adj. Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>6.62</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WhatsApp</td>
<td>7.88</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail and WhatsApp</td>
<td>7.34</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows that there are observed differences among the means of the students’ skimming skill of the post-test per the teaching method in favor of the students in the experimental groups.

Bonferroni’s Equation of multiple comparisons was calculated to investigate the significant differences among the adjusted means of the students’ skimming skill post-test per the teaching method, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Bonferroni’s equation of multiple comparisons of the students’ skimming skill post-test per the teaching method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Method</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
<th>E-mail and WhatsApp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bonferroni Adj. Mean</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>6.62</td>
<td>7.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>6.62</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail and WhatsApp</td>
<td>7.34</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WhatsApp</td>
<td>7.88</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 shows that there are significant differences of skimming in favor of the WhatsApp group compared to the control group. Then, the observed difference is in favor of the e-mail and WhatsApp combination group compared to the control group. Finally, the observed difference is in favor of the e-mail group compared to the control group.

The practical significance of the teaching strategy was 53.71 on skimming skill which means that there is a moderate affect per the teaching method on the skimming skill post-test.

To find out which skill of post-test was affected by the teaching method, ANCOVA was used for the students’ scores on the post-test of scanning skill per the teaching method after excluding the students’ scores on the pre-test, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: ANCOVA of students’ scanning skill scores on the post-test per the teaching method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variance</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial η²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skimming Pre-test (Covariate)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scanning Pre-test (Covariate)</td>
<td>181.44</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>181.44</td>
<td>254.05</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>82.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Method</td>
<td>66.78</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22.26</td>
<td>31.17</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>63.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>38.57</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>318.00</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 shows that there are significant differences (at α=0.05) among the means of the students’ scores on the scanning skill per the teaching method. To investigate in favor of which
group the significant differences are for, the adjusted means of the students’ scanning skill post-test and standard errors were calculated per the teaching method, as shown in Table 7.

**Table 7: Adjusted means and standard errors of the students’ scanning skill post-test per the teaching method**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Method</th>
<th>Adj. Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>9.86</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>10.18</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WhatsApp</td>
<td>12.52</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail and WhatsApp</td>
<td>11.45</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 shows that there are observed differences among the means of the students' scanning skill of the post-tests per the teaching method in favor of the students in the experimental groups.

Bonferroni’s Equation of multiple comparisons was used to investigate the significant differences among the adjusted means of the students’ scanning skill post-tests per the teaching method, as shown in Table 8.

**Table 8: Bonferroni’s equation of multiple comparisons of the students’ scanning skill post-test per the teaching method**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Method</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
<th>E-mail and WhatsApp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bonferroni</td>
<td>Adj. Mean</td>
<td>9.86</td>
<td>10.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>10.18</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail and WhatsApp</td>
<td>11.45</td>
<td><strong>1.59</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.27</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WhatsApp</td>
<td>12.52</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>2.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 shows that there are significant differences of scanning skill in favor of the WhatsApp group compared to the control group, the e-mail group then to the e-mail and WhatsApp combination group respectively. Then, the observed difference is in favor of the e-mail and WhatsApp combination group compared to the control group then to the e-mail group.

The practical significance of the teaching strategy was 63.39 on scanning skill which means that there is a high affect per the teaching method on the scanning skill post-test.

**Discussion of the findings**

The findings of the study demonstrate statistically significant differences in the skimming and scanning in favor of the participants in the WhatsApp group, the e-mail and WhatsApp combination group, and the e-mail group respectively. This confirms the effectiveness of e-mail and WhatsApp as catalysts for skimming and scanning. Yet, these differences are higher on scanning than they are on skimming.

The positive effect of WhatsApp on skimming and scanning could have been resulted from two reasons. Firstly, WhatsApp creates a unique interactive environment. For example, during the program, students directly benefited from different types of interaction: student-with-student interaction, student-with-teacher interaction, student-with-online interaction, and within the group interaction as all members of the group collaborated with each other and teacher monitored and helped when needed.

Secondly, WhatsApp facilitates student-centered learning and non-limited learning environment which enable students to stay collaboratively on-task inside or outside the school.
WhatsApp also provides students with synchronous feedback from the teacher on one hand and from other members of the group on the other.

Similarly to the WhatsApp group, the e-mail and WhatsApp combination group benefited from the key feature of WhatsApp-based learning as being interactive learners all the time inside and outside the school. However, e-mail and WhatsApp combination group did not fully benefit from the features of WhatsApp as a learning tool. Over the teaching duration, four classes were given to the students of the e-mail and WhatsApp combination group each week, two classes were based on WhatsApp and two others were based on e-mail. In contrast to WhatsApp-based lessons, lack of interaction was the main character of e-mail-based lessons. Thus, the e-mail and WhatsApp combination group received intermittent interaction along two months of the treatment.

On the other hand, the e-mail group did not have any chance to receive neither continuous interaction nor intermittent interaction. In this way, the e-mail group seems similar to the control group but a possible contribution to its superiority to that group was the students' enthusiasm to learn and do assignments through technological tool inside-and outside the school.

Furthermore, not only the positive effect may have attributed to the e-mail and WhatsApp, but it may have also resulted from the explicit skimming and scanning activities that the students participated during the program. These activities provide students with the opportunity to grasp skimming and scanning skills as they read texts. Yet, the increase of the number of scanning activities rather than skimming activities is mainly affected the students' improvement at these skills.

Conclusions
The findings of the study warrant the following conclusions:
1- The treatment has brought about improvement in the students’ skimming and scanning skills which may signal a positive relationship between the students' awareness of the benefits of using e-mail and WhatsApp for academic purposes on one hand and the language skills especially for the skills under study on the other.
2- The instructional program improved the participant’s skimming and scanning skills.

Recommendations
Based on the findings of the study, the researcher presents the following recommendations:
1- EFL teachers are advised to give more focus on teaching skimming and scanning skills to improve their students’ reading skill.
2- Textbook writers and curriculum designers should take into consideration the advantages of incorporating e-mail and WhatsApp that may play in reading skill.
3- More research needs be carried out on the effect of e-mail and WhatsApp on reading comprehension. Future research might also involve a larger sample in other EFL contexts and other genres.
The Effect of E-mail and WhatsApp on Jordanian EFL

Khalaf

About the author:
Kafa Mohammad Bani Khalaf is a PhD student in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Faculty of Education, Yarmouk University-Jordan. Research Interests: TEFL, Teacher Development and Classroom Interaction

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Issues and Challenges of E-Portfolio in Micro Teaching Class: Students’ Perspectives

Sarlita Dewi Matra  
English Education Department  
Post Graduate Program, Semarang State University  
Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia

Dwi Rukmini  
English Education Department  
Post Graduate Program, Semarang State University  
Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia

Abstract  
Technology and innovation are forging ahead the demand of tomorrow’s teachers to use technology critically and reflectively. In the era of modern technology self-access learning can be done through online. This means internet has become a popular medium for online educational information retrieval (Hambali, 2016). The use of E-portfolio, specifically in micro teaching class therefore might be one of the solutions to prepare better English student teachers before they face the real world of teaching. This study examines the issues and challenges that have been revealed after the E-portfolio implementation. The E-portfolio was designed to ensure an assessment focus on student learning through intentional teaching practices and the systematic collection of teaching artifacts. The participants involved in this study were the English student teachers enrolling in microteaching class. The A and B classes are chosen purposively as only that class applies microteaching in the morning regular sessions. The number of English student teachers as the participants of this study is fifty-two. However, not all participants were included due to the research feasibility. Some Issues due to the quality of E-portfolio gave clear insights of what the English student teachers expect from the product and how it can be developed more to meet their needs as prospective teachers. The challenges found in its implementation are from the overload informations that can make the English student teachers easily overwhelmed with the excessive, disorganized information in the electronic form, moreover how to use the technology effectively is away challenging.

Keywords: assessment, e-portfolio, English student teachers, micro teaching, perspectives

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Issues and Challenges of E-Portfolio in Micro Teaching Class  
Matra & Rukmini

Introduction
Assessment in teacher education has been based on different models of the relationship among theory, knowledge and practice. The ultimate teaching performance’s assessment of the teaching competencies can be reflected through micro teaching course. In this course, the English student teachers must show their teaching ability in front of the peers. Unfortunately, the teaching assessment could not reflect the theory and knowledge which have been taught in one semester only. The quality of the assessment practices has been monitored and should be assured in increasingly explicit and regulated ways.

Costa & Kallick (2010) asserts that assessments policies at universities require criterion-based assessments and multiple forms of assessments, including formative feedback to students throughout the semester. Nonetheless, the separation of practice from theory and knowledge has been challenged as inadequate and alternative forms of integrated assessment have been proposed. These include authentic assessment tasks and extended placements at school sites where experiences in the classroom can be theorized and reflected upon and thereby inform future plans and actions.

In this study, E-portfolios were used as a form of formative and summative assessment for the micro teaching class. The English student teachers were required to collect and comment on how pieces of work reflected their achievement of particular competencies (Klenowski, 2000). The study sought to determine the effect of portfolios in developing teaching and reflective skills. This was a relatively new concept of assessment, particularly given the history of examination-based assessment in the previous micro teaching classes since 2011. The E-portfolio was designed to ensure an assessment focus on student learning through intentional teaching practices and the systematic collection of teaching artefacts. The design principles require that a teacher performance assessment should: maintain the complexity of teaching; Focus on content/pedagogy within disciplines embedded in the teacher preparation curriculum; Examine teaching practice in relationship to student learning; Provide analytic feedback and support; Be both adaptive and generalisable.

In the assessment literature on English student teacher education a number of specific assessment tasks have been proposed that enable more authentic assessment to be conducted. These tasks (Cases; Exhibitions; Portfolios; e-Portfolios; Inquiries and Teacher Research) require English student teachers to integrate knowledge across domains and to consider in a reflective and reflexive manner the nexus between theory, knowledge and practice. These tasks can be designed in various ways and are open to innovation.

Emphasis on English student teachers collecting and commenting on how pieces of work reflected their achievement of particular competencies. It is the facts that occur around the E-portfolio that appear to be crucial and this has effects both on the way the English student teachers plan and implement lessons and how the teacher educators provide guidance and clear expectations about what is required. E-portfolios which is described as a move in a new direction and approach to the assessment and validation of graduates’ achievement of the four teacher competencies: preofessional competences, pedagogical competences, social competences and personal competences are aimed at developing the reflective teacher. Moreover, Matra (2016) found in her research that e-portfolio assessment produces some positive effects on learning,
such as building a community of practice, facilitating peer learning, enhancing learning of content knowledge, promoting professional development, and cultivating critical thinking.

The Role of Teacher Education Program

Teacher education programs in Indonesia is also challenged to prepare graduates to teach a more diverse student population with increasing expectations from governments, educational systems, and the community. In this context, the quality of assessment practices in English education programs is under scrutiny, and trust in these practices needs to be ensured and communicated clearly to stakeholders.

In this context, Matra (2016) concerns about the quality and competence of graduating teachers and the adequacy of teacher education programs for the demands of the 21st century. Teaching as complex and committed practice in considering best practices in assessment we need to foreground that teaching is complex and accordingly assessment needs to be sophisticated to capture that complexity. At the core of the professional activity of teaching are processes of making judgements, interpreting information, and planning and implementing actions to promote the learning of students who vary greatly both in terms of their readiness to learn at school, and the support available to them from families and the community. The complex and situated nature of teaching increases the need to consider carefully how to design assessment practices that can capture such complexity in different schooling contexts.

Matra (2016) argues that teaching is also not simply an activity of enhancing learning in a technical sense. Rather the development of students as persons with physical, cognitive and emotional capacities and needs has to remain central to the professional activity of teaching. That is, teaching is a normative and ethical activity that requires consideration of the best interests of the students and community. The professional values endorsed and enacted by English student teachers are crucial when considering assessment. Thus, assessing what teachers “know and can do” in a technical sense is necessary but not sufficient because authentic assessment of English student teachers requires attention also to their values and professional commitment to ethical standards and practices. This requires wise and considered judgement by assessors across time.

Preparing English student teachers for this complex and ethical professional activity requires enabling them to draw upon a range of relevant teaching strategies that include ways to build connections between their students’ prior knowledge and interests and the knowledge and skills embedded in the 2013 curriculum. The capacity to engage in this sophisticated performance as a teacher is an on-going professional learning task that is a lifelong activity. It is in this context that we have reviewed the evidence regarding best practices in assessment of what English student teachers know and can do.

Technology and ELT in Indonesia

The education world nowadays is required produce individuals who excel in science and technology. Tokmak (2013) states that the growth of the internet, rapid development of technology, great demand for higher education, lifelong learning have meant that educational institutions are now must equipped with variety of information and communication technologies. In line with the statements, to be successful, individuals must keep abreast of new technologies and information.
The 21st century curriculum trend demands teachers to play their role as an agent of changes. Costa and Kallick (2010) argues that curriculum should offer learners three tenets: creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, and communication and collaborations. Costa and Kallick further assert that curriculum of for 21st century education should offer pedagogical implications that promote student-centered learning, process-based (and self-development) assessment, and life-skills. The Indonesian Qualification Framework, the so-called *Kerangka Kualifikasi Nasional Indonesia/KKNI* (PP No.8/2012) outlines the national qualification standard of implementing education to match education outputs with real workplace. The framework is referred to a process of realization of expected quality and nation identity. The Indonesian Government Law (UU RI No. 14/2005) for regulating the roles of teachers and higher education instructors or educators has outlined four competencies: personal, social, pedagogical, and professional academic competencies. The role of Teacher Education is then very important in training the pre-service teachers to get those required competencies.

Johnston et al. (2005) suggest the study of developing professionalism in teaching be based on the consideration of sociopolitical and socio-cultural context accommodating teachers’ life stories, professional development, teacher beliefs and knowledge, and teacher identity.

The pre-service teachers are demanded to be competent in creating interactive classroom management that promotes student-centeredness. Richards (1990) recommends that the goal of teacher preparation be to impart strategies used in classroom interaction as “competencies to teachers-in-preparation”, which is referred to as competency- or performance-based teacher education.

**Assessment in Teacher Education**

Brown & Knight (1994) states that assessment in teacher education has been based on different models of the relationship between theory, knowledge and practice. The most common model has separated theory, knowledge and practice. Theory and knowledge have been taught and assessed on the university campus while practice has been enabled and assessed at school sites, and other educational settings. The quality of these assessment practices has been monitored and assured in increasingly explicit and regulated ways. Assessment policies at universities require criterion-based assessments and multiple forms of assessments, including formative feedback to students throughout the semester. Nonetheless, the separation of practice from theory and knowledge has been challenged as inadequate and alternative forms of integrated assessment have been proposed. These include authentic assessment tasks and extended placements at school sites where experiences in the classroom can be theorised and reflected upon, thereby informing future plans and actions.

Trustworthiness of assessment is enhanced when the assessment process and practices are based on the features of authentic assessment as outlined in the following key points according to Brown & Knight (1994):

1) Authentic assessment samples the actual knowledge, skills and dispositions required of teachers as they are used in teaching and learning contexts.
2) The assessments require the integration of multiple kinds of knowledge and skill as they are used in practice. For example, enhancing a child’s literacy development might rely
upon: (i) knowledge of research and theory about literacy development, processes of learning, curriculum design and assessment; (ii) instructional skill in the use of literacy strategies and diagnostic and formative assessment practices; (iii) expertise in the collection and analysis of data about children’s literacy learning; and, (iv) reflection upon the data collected, its meaning, and implications for instruction.

3) Multiple sources of evidence about the competence of English student teachers are collected over time and in diverse contexts; for example, written analyses, observation data (such as from a supervisor’s observation), and samples of student work from the English student teacher’s classroom. Performance in different contexts of teaching and different communities is assessed.

4) Assessment evidence is evaluated by teacher educators and experienced teachers using explicit criteria that align with agreed professional standards and the specific educational commitments of the teacher education program.

5) The assessment includes multiple opportunities for the English student teachers to learn and practice the desired outcomes, to receive feedback and coaching, and to be encouraged to reflect on and learn from experience.

We need to consider what we are assessing, how we are doing it but also why (Brown & Knight, 1994). Assessment in teacher education has the primary goal of developing English student teachers as self-monitoring and self-assessing professionals who are able to learn reflectively from their experiences and practices. In this context formative assessment and feedback is crucial in directing the learning of English student teachers. Formative assessment tasks can be designed as rich tasks that integrate learning across different units of study, and entail connecting learning in schools with knowledge acquisition and enquiry at the university site. Summative assessment tasks need to develop from these formative assessment tasks and offer the English student teachers the opportunity to demonstrate the improvements that they have achieved and the learning journey they have accomplished.

It captures the complexity of teaching is a professional activity that draws upon multiple sources of knowledge and requires the capacity to act flexibly and effectively in different contexts with diverse students. Teaching entails:

1) Integrating the various professional knowledge types (content, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners etc.) required in the act of teaching.
2) Teaching skillfully by drawing flexibly on a repertoire of practice relevant to different contexts and student needs.
3) Forming professional relationships with students, their carers and communities in order to respond to their needs and promote excellence in learning outcomes.
4) Enacting value commitments to equity and care in teaching.

It captures the multifaceted nature of teaching in a comprehensive manner Teaching has been divided into four interconnected stages by most researchers and practitioners: (i) Planning and preparation; (ii) Classroom instruction and implementation; (iii) Assessment and feedback;
(iv) Reflection and professional dialogue linked to future teaching episodes. Teaching extends beyond the classroom walls and the school gate, and this is clear particularly in considering the first (Planning and preparation) and last stages (Reflection and professional dialogue).

In elaborating components of the four stages the following multi-faceted aspects of teaching should be included in assessment tasks for English student teachers. The following is indicative of the key tasks involved at each of the four stages.

1) Planning involves: Knowing the importance of, and procedures for, researching the local community and the relationship of the school to the community; Knowing the importance of, and procedures for, diagnosing the funds of knowledge, interests and relevant learning history of students.

2) Preparation involves: Using knowledge of the community and students to select options offered in the curriculum; Planning curriculum units taking into account what students know and bring to the classroom.

3) Classroom instruction involves: Designing and implementing sequential episodes of teaching for diverse students; Adjusting teaching in responsive ways to evidence of student learning and engagement.

4) Assessing involves: Ongoing formative assessment and feedback designed to enhance student learning and promote engagement; Summative assessment designed to provide evidence of current attainments and to inform decisions about choices and future plans of students.

5) Reflection and professional dialogue involves: Sharing problems and issues with colleagues and consulting with them about different strategies; Reviewing the outcomes of teaching and considering ways to improve the learning of students; Considering what worked well or not and why.

E-portfolios

In many ways e-portfolios are similar to traditional portfolios of professional learning and development evidence. These similarities include the typical content of the portfolios (such as lesson plans, student work samples, assessment items) and the purposes that they serve (including English student teacher growth and development, demonstration of specified standards and as basis for certification/registration) (Wray, 2007). In general, e-portfolios can be observed as operating in two forms (Gibson & Barrett, 2003). The first form are commercially or systemically developed and administered products that provide an electronic framework with predetermined elements to be populated with relevant evidence by English student teachers (Wray, 2007). The second general form that e-portfolios can take is more student or participant driven where the standards (or prescribed learnings) are defined systemically, while students have greater autonomy over the way the evidence is collected and presented in electronic forms (Gatlin & Jacob, 2002). Since portfolios can have such different purposes and characteristics there is a need to define what kind of portfolio should be used before the implementation process is initiated (Granberg, 2010).

Granberg (2010) explains that there are several examples of initiatives at the national level that demand or encourage teacher education institutions to use e-portfolios to ensure quality standards and/or support student teachers in lifelong learning (Butler 2006; Strudler and Wetzel
2005; Wray 2007). In Europe, in particular, e-portfolios in teacher education programs have become widely used for a number of purposes, including to meet national professional standards for registration; as a requirement for accreditation of programs; and to improve the quality of the students’ learning (Butler 2006; Struld & Wetzel 2005; Woodward & Nanlohy 2004). In these European contexts, portfolios have been categorised into different types depending on their purpose. These purposes have categorised as: (i) process, reflective or learning portfolios for encouraging student teachers to reflect on their learning process supported by teacher educators’ formative assessment; (ii) credential or accountability portfolios for assessing student teachers summatively; and (iii) as marketing portfolios or showcases for showing student teachers’ accomplishments to future employers (Butler 2006; Zeichner & Wray 2001).

Granberg (2010) summarised studies that have shown that e-portfolios can enhance student teachers’ professional learning and their reflection on their work (Beck & Bear 2009; Hauge 2006; Pelliccione & Raisen 2009). E-portfolios may also serve summative assessment of student teachers, and different designs to carry out summative assessments of e-portfolios are presented in the literature (Strudler & Wetzel, 2005).

In summary, the numerous reported benefits of e-portfolios include: The promotion of English student teachers’ reflective engagement with valued content or professional expectations (Pelliccione & Raison, 2009), as well as enhanced integration of professional standards and evidence (Wray, 2007). For example, the electronic medium allows for English student teachers’ philosophical statements of practice to be instantiated by reproducible evidence through hyperlinks to repositories of such evidence.

The promotion of the English student teacher ownership of the evidence collected and the form of its presentation (Lin, 2008). Ease of evidence updating, as well as more efficient central storage and administration of English student teachers’ evidence of professional competence (Wray, 2007). Versatility in the development of portfolios, including enhanced distribution, access and review of materials, and central exemplification of the forms of evidence required of English student teachers.

E-portfolios allow for the collection and presentation of more rich and valid forms of evidence such as digital videos and audio files, photos, and digitally annotated samples of student work. Moreover, the electronic platform also allows for feedback avenues that are more rich and helpful to the professional learning and development of English student teachers (Buckley et al., 2009). This final benefit of e-portfolios is particularly significant in professional fields that are characterised by competencies situated within both psychomotor and cognitive learning domains. Recognising the necessity for collecting, presenting and reviewing evidence of practical skills in more authentic contexts of practice, health and medical educators in Australia and internationally have increasingly employed e-portfolios as a means of assessing and verifying readiness for professional practice (Buckley et al., 2009).

The reported value of e-portfolios in these professional learning and recognition contexts has included: Improvement in student understanding and knowledge, including better integration of theory with practice (Buckley et al., 2009). Enhanced student self-awareness and reflection, including increased tendency to and quality of reflection (Buckley et al., 2009; Rees, Shepherd &
Chamberlain, 2005). More authentic and valid measures of practical skills and communication competence (Epstein, 2007; Miller & Archer, 2010).

Enhanced confidence of instructors and administrators in the general competence of developing health and medical practitioners. While the evidence supporting the use of e-portfolios for the assessment of developing professionals in fields such as teaching is compelling, there are nevertheless some difficulties associated with their deployment. These difficulties have been identified across a range of professional learning contexts, including teacher education and health and medical education. Notably, the time and technological competence required to compile an electronic portfolio was considered a challenge (Buckley et al., 2009; Wray, 2007; Wilhelm et al., 2006). However, the impact of technological competence on eportfolio efficacy generally depended on the degree to which the pre-professional students were required to manipulate the medium through which evidence was presented (Lin, 2008). Access to necessary peripheral technologies (such as digital video cameras and audio recording equipment) and high-speed internet can also pose difficulties for the implementation of e-portfolios. In order to optimise their effectiveness, e-portfolios should utilise a simple, clearly presented user interface (Wray, 2007) that is based on a concerted and demonstrable alignment of the standards, expected forms of evidence and media for their display (Wilhelm et al., 2006). While this is most likely to require centralised development and administration, offering presentation flexibility can enhance pre- and in-service teacher ownership of the evidence and process and promote reflective practices.

Research Method
The study belongs to descriptive qualitative study, so that the data collected via questionnaires, observations, and document analysis. Since in Pekaongan the curriculum used both school based curriculum and 2013 curriculum, so the researcher divided the classes into several group based on the skills they got in micro teaching practices. The English student teacher who got the different skills as their roles in classroom. After the group skills are created, they must have focus group in the school leve to make it easier in performing the teaching learning process. So there were three big group consist of junior high school (SMP), senior high school (SMA) and vocational school (SMK).

Participants
The participants of this study were fifty English student teachers in Pekalongan University who enroll in micro teaching class. The A and B classes (52 students) were chosen purposively since they are the regular morning session that mostly inexperience in teaching. So they might be in the same level in showing their potential in micro teaching experiences rather than evening class (class C) who have already been teaching in schools or courses.

Data Presentation and Discussion
The English student teachers should open up the web adress http://e-portofolio.online to get E-portfolio online access. After they finished performing, they will be given one week time to upload the four different artefacts: the lesson plan, the teaching media, the teaching experiences video and the teaching reflections.
The students should write the lesson plan for 20 minutes teaching activities based on the skill and the grade they got randomly. In the lesson plan, they should upload the lesson plan written as the teaching scenarios of what they have done in delivering the materials from opening up to closing as presented in following screenshot. The lesson plan they upload has been revised previously by the micro teaching lecturer so that the students can share or exchange information with others.
In the teaching media, they need to give the viewer a brief showcase on what and how to make and use the medium in the teaching learning process in teaching experiences. As seen in the screenshot below:

Figure 3 Teaching media

Next, they must upload the teaching videos through the link like youtube, tumblr or facebook. The video can be shared and watched by all of people in the worlds from the link used.

Figure 4 The teaching Experiences
The data collected through survey about the issues and challenges in the prototype E-portfolio within eight questions. One last questions should be described by the English student teachers as a brief comments toward their recommendation of the E-portfolio improvements.

Questions 1 was asked to know the English students perceptions on the display of this E-portfolio design, 50 students think that the E-portfolio was good. Only two students think that the design was just average and none of the students thinks the E-portfolio was bad. It is a good starting point on how they reponse positively to the use of E-portfolio.

Question 2 intends to know the clarity of the E-portfolio instruction used. All of students agree that the instruction given are clear. The procedures in signing up and uploading the documents are simple, clear and user friendly.

Question 3 was given to know how they think about the content of this E-portfolio 40 students answered the content is so simple and accommodate the comprehensive artefacts needed by the English student teachers during micro teaching learning activities. 10 students think that the content was average, and two students think the content was complicated since they have to upload so many things from the lesson plan up to teaching reflections in the end of the semester within a week after they finished performing.

Question 4 concerned on their expectation towards the content of the portfolio, All of students say YES. Acting as a platform, E-portfolios paved a way for professional development, enabling prospective language teachers to transfer knowledge into practice and heighten the level of pedagogical reflection.

Questions 5 was about to get the students’ officially statement on their willingness to be participated in giving fully contribution during micro teaching class using this E-portfolio. Obviously, all the students respond this question positively.

Questions 6 wants to know what best describes the students feeling for having the E-portfolio assessment. Surprisingly, all the students feel excited. They are commited to give their best effort in collecting, analyzing, revising, uploading and actively engaged in discussion before they got their own teaching reflection as the outcome of their reflective practices.

Questions 7 examined whether the students would give any recommendation of this E-portfolio to be implemented in the next course or not. All of students recommend the same decisions to have the new assessments tool in which they can get a lot of benefits and experiences both offline and online way.

The last questions explores the students’ critiques in what ways this E-portfolio could be improved. Different arguments show that the students got different experiences to show that this E-portolio promotes their ownership or their authencity in creating their own showcase during micro teaching class. Most of the answers complain on the error connection when they want to upload their works. This is a big challenges for the institution to facilitate the platform in a greater access for the students.
Conclusion and Suggestion

The implementation of E-portfolio brings so many issues and challenges. The highly commitment from both students and lecturers becomes so crucial since E-portfolio needs a bunch of works to be viewed and reviewed. Due to time efficiency, the English student teachers must spend more time online and pay attention to the procedures in accessing the web. The challenges due to the overwhelming information should be well organized so that the documents can easily be accessed by the reader or the viewer. The comprehensive feedbacks from the peers and the micro teaching lecturers should be actively engaged in each posting. The last but not least the technology competencies must be prepared from the first semester to avoid the low ability in operating the computer and the internet at the same time.

About the authors:
Sarlita Dewi Matra is a Post-Graduate Student of English Education Department of Semarang State University, Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia. She has a great interest in English Language Teaching, Curriculum and Materials Development and English Language Teaching Media and Methodology. She has published some articles in journals in the area. He has also presented some of his research results in international seminar such as TEFLIN, ELTLT, and CELT.

Prof. Dr. Dwi Rukmini, M. Pd. is a professor in English Department of Semarang State University. She has special interest in Discourse Analysis, Multilingualism and EFL Curriculum and Materials Development. One of her important discoveries was the research towards 6 textbooks from 12 publishers recommended by Depdiknas. She discovered that there were many lexical error, grammatical error, even fatal text identification.

References


Appendix
Thank you for taking the time to complete the following evaluation. The information you provide will be used to help me improve the content and monitor the quality of the E-portfolio [online] prototype design:

1. What do you think of the display of this E-portfolio?
   - Good
   - Average
   - Bad

2. What do you think of the instruction of this E-portfolio?
   - Clear
   - Unclear

3. What do you think of the content of this E-portfolio?
   - Simple
   - Average
   - Complicated

4. Was the content of the E-portfolio in line with your expectations?
   - Yes
   - No
   - May be

5. Would you give the contribution during micro teaching class using this E-portfolio?
   - Yes
   - No

6. Which of the following best describes your feeling for having the E-portfolio assessment?
   - Excited
   - Normal
   - Bored

7. Would you recommend this E-portfolio to be implemented in the next course?
   - Yes
   - No

8. In what ways could this E-portfolio be improved? Please describe!
An Autosegmental Analysis of Arabic Passive Participle of Triliteral Verbs

Majd S. Abushunar
Language Centre, Hashemite University, Zarqa, Jordan

Radwan S. Mahadin
Department of English Language and Literature
Faculty of Foreign Languages, the University of Jordan
Amman, Jordan

Abstract
This study aims to analyze the passive participle in Standard Arabic within the framework of autosegmental phonology. It focuses on the pattern of non-derived, triliteral verbs /maCCu:C/. The sample of the study is collected from three sources Wehr (1994), Wright (1996), and Al-waSi:T Dictionary (2004). The study discusses strong, weak, geminated, and glottalized verbs using the X-skeleton of autosegmental phonology. It considers the imperfective stem as the basic form from which other forms are derived. The findings indicate that strong, geminated, and glottalized stems show regularity to the pattern /maCCu:C/. Nevertheless, irregularities from the general pattern are observed with weak verbs due to the unstable nature of glides in Standard Arabic. Also, the study shows that autosegmental phonology provides an adequate analysis for the passive participle.

Key words: Arabic passive participle, autosegmental, phonological analysis, X-skeleton
Introduction:
Participles are verbal adjectives which are derived from verbs and have many syntactic functions. For instance, the passive participle /masju:n/ “imprisoned” can be a noun, adjective, adverb, or verb substitute (Massey, 2008). In Standard Arabic, participles are classified based on the distinction of voice (active or passive): active participles denote the verb’s agent, whereas passive participles indicate the verb’s patient (Ryding, 2005). For example, the active participle /?aakil/ “eating” refers to who performs the action “eat”, whereas the passive participle /ma?ku:l/ “eaten” refers to what is acted upon. Present and passive participles are distinguishable in Standard Arabic, in which they have two forms: one for derived verbs and another for non-derived verbs (Schulz, 2008). For example, the passive participle /ma?mu:l/ corresponds to the basic verb /’amila/ while the passive participle /musta’mal/ corresponds to the derived verb /ista’mal/.

The aim of this study is to investigate passive participles of basic non-derived verbs (Form I) which usually have the form /maCCu:C/ and can only be derived from transitive verbs (Ryding, 2005). To achieve this goal, we provide phonological analysis of passive participle in the framework of linear generative phonology reflecting the work of Brame (1970), and Mahadin (1982, 1996). Then, we use X-skeleton, an autosegmental approach, and highlight its superiority and simplicity over linear approach.

Both Brame (1970) and Mahadin (1982, 1996) have provided phonological analysis for passive participle. They offer numerous phonological rules and suggest possible orderings for these rules to account for the different phonetic forms of passive participle within the framework of early generative phonology. Nevertheless, such analysis represents complicated derivational steps. Moreover, the same phonological patterns of passive participle can be examined using autosegmental phonology without such complicated derivations.

X-skeleton suggests that hierarchal syllabic representations are best represented when referring to the overall timing or quantity of a sound independently of its quality (Watson, 2002; Durand & Katamba, 2014). These different levels in such hierarchal representations are known as tiers. The timing units are referred as the timing (quantity) tiers (the x-tiers), whereas the quality units are known as the melody tiers (the segment tiers) (Spencer, 1996). The association between the skeletal and the segmental tiers is governed by two main principles:

(1) Adjacent identical segments are not permitted at the melodic level (Obligatory Contour Principle, OCP) (Mustafawi, 2011). As (1) shows, (a) is not acceptable in autosegmental phonology and should be replaced by (b).

1) Obligatory Contour Principle (OCP):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>X</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

is replaced by

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>X</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) Crossing association lines between the different tiers during the mapping process are unacceptable (Johnson & Roca, 1999). Thus, the representation in (2) is not permitted in phonological analysis.
2) Crossing association lines

X   X
\[ \text{t} \quad \text{v} \]

These principles of non-linear phonology solve the problem in the representation of long vowels and weak stems in Standard Arabic. Long vowels are represented as one segment associated with two X-tiers, whereas the difference between glides and vowels is determined by the position they occupy in the syllable structure: Glides are linked to the onset or the coda, whereas the vowels are linked to the nucleus of the syllable (Mahadin, 1998, 1994; Watson, 2002; van Oostendorp et al., 2011; Durand & Katamba, 2014). Therefore, the study attempts to apply these principles and generalizations in order to account for passive participles in Standard Arabic.

**Method**

The study collects a sample from three well-established resources of Standard Arabic: Wehr (1976), Wright (1996), and Al-waSi:T Dictionary (1998). Then, it classifies the collected passive participles into different categories based on their stem (i.e. strong, weak, glottalized, and geminated stems). Each category is analyzed individually using two frameworks (linear and autosegmental phonology) and an attempt is made to reveal the phonological processes associated with passive participle.

**Data analysis and interpretation**

This section provides the phonological processes required to derive passive participle from strong, weak, glottalized, and geminated verbs.

**The formation of passive participle**

The usual practice of linguists as well as traditional Arab grammarians when forming the passive participle of triliteral verbs is to place the root (e.g., /ktb/) on the pattern /maCCu:C/ to produce the word /maktu:b/. However, we agree with Mahadin (1982) who argues against taking the root as one morpheme and the vocalic pattern as another morpheme. This is because the root alone without its stem vowel does not provide the necessary information to derive the passive participle in Standard Arabic. For instance, it is possible to find two different verbs that have the same root but differ in their stem vowel which is responsible for making it possible to derive the passive participle. To take the verbs /jazara/ “to slaughter” and /jazira/ “to sink” as an example, the two verbs share the same root /jzr/, but it is /jazara/ not /jazira/ which has an equivalent in passive participle /majzu:r/. The reason for this is that /jazara/ is a transitive verb, and thus it may have a correspondence in passive participle. The verb /jazira/, on the other hand, is intransitive, and thus it doesn’t have an equivalent in passive participle. Moreover, a passive participle like /maHsu:b/ from the root /Hsb/ may correspond to the verb /Hasiba/ “to deem or consider” meaning “considered” or to the verb /Hasaba/ “to count” meaning “counted”. Therefore, as suggested by Mahadin (1982), the stem and not the root should be considered in phonological analysis because this analysis is more adequate and efficient for investigating the phonological and the semantic relationship between base and derived forms.

In the analysis of Standard Arabic, many linguists as Brame (1970) use the stem of the perfect /CaCVC-/ as the basic form from which other forms are derived, yet in this study we consider the stem of the imperfect /-CCVC-/ the starting point of derivation. Following Mahadin (1998, 1996, 1982), the stem of the imperfect is more economical and natural as it provides the minimum amount of information
required to derive the passive participle and other linguistic forms. For instance, both the passive participle /maGCCu:C/ and the imperfect /-CCVC-/ have no vowel between the first and the second radicals, while the stem of the perfect /CaCVC-/ has a vowel requiring a rule to delete it when deriving the passive participle. Moreover, both the passive participle and the imperfect are attached to prefixes unlike the stem of the perfect which cannot be prefixed. The passive participle starts with a participle prefix /ma/, while the imperfective form usually starts with a personal prefix having the underlying form /Ca/. Thus, a word like /mafhu:m/ is derived from the imperfect form /ya-fham/ “to understand” by replacing the personal prefix /ya/ with /ma/ and changing the stem vowel of the imperfect /a/ with the long vowel /u:/.

Nevertheless, Brame (1970) and Mahadin (1996) argue that the underlying representation of passive participle is /maCCuwC/ not /maCCu:C/. They provide strong evidence to show that long vowels in the surface form of passive participle as well as other grammatical forms do not exist in underlying representation. According to them, Arabic long vowels are a combination of a short vowel plus a glide which surface as a long vowel through the application of phonological processes. Thus, the long vowel /u:/ in the surface form of the passive participle is derived from /uw/ as a result of two phonological rules:

3) Syllabicity assimilation.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{y} & \rightarrow \{ i & \ i \} / C (\text{Brame, 1970:97}) \\
\text{w} & \rightarrow \{ u & \ u \} / \\
\end{align*}
\]

4) Vowel lengthening:

\[
V_iV_i \rightarrow V_i: (\text{Brame, 1970:42})
\]

By using the notations of autosegmental phonology, on the other hand, we can represent these two processes in one phonological rule reflecting the simplicity and the naturalness of non-linear phonology. The following rule shows that a nucleus or a coda which has the feature [-cons onantal] assimilates the preceding nucleus in the same syllable. This is known as syllabicity assimilation (Mahadin, 1994:85):

5) Syllabicity assimilation.

In this rule, assimilation is not a feature changing rule as suggested by Brame, above, but it is a spreading process by associating and delinking lines between segments or features. Syllabicity assimilation operates to satisfy the OPC at both tiers: the segmental and the feature tiers. The result of this phonological rule reveals identical segments or features as one segment or one feature associated with
two X-slots. Also, it is observed that there is no need to determine the feature of syllabicity in this rule. This is because in X-skeleton glides (e.g., /y/ and /w/) differ from vowels in their position in the syllable structure: the glides [-syllabic] are linked to the onset or the coda, whereas the vowels [+syllabic] are linked to the nucleus.

**Strong verbs**

Strong verbs (or sound verbs) are ones which do not have the glides /y/ or /w/, the glottal stop /ʔ/, and geminated consonants (Wright, 1996). Strong verbs are usually stable and do not deviate from the pattern /maCCu:C/. In linear phonology, the rules needed to derive passive participle from strong stems are syllabicity assimilation and vowel lengthening as shown in Table (1):

Table 1. *The Passive Participle of Triliteral Strong Verbs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The stem</th>
<th>/ya-ktub+u/ to write</th>
<th>/ya-fham+u/ to understand</th>
<th>/ya-l’ab+u/ to play</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Underlying representation</td>
<td>/maktuwb+un/</td>
<td>/mafhuwm+un/</td>
<td>/mal’uwb+un/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllabicity assimilation</td>
<td>/maktuub+un/</td>
<td>/mafhuum+un/</td>
<td>/mal’uub+un/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vowel lengthening</td>
<td>/maktu:b+un/ written</td>
<td>/mafhu:m+un/ understood</td>
<td>/mal’u:b+un/ played</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In autosegmental approach, on the other hand, the derivation of passive participle of strong verbs is represented more economically and explicitly by one rule (Syllabicity Assimilation):

6) [maktu:b] “written” from the verb [ya-ktub] “to write”

As the rule shows, syllabicity assimilation applies on the sequence /uw/ to derive the long vowel /u:/ since adjacent identical segments are prohibited at the melodic level as indicated by OCP.
Weak verbs

Weak verbs are those which have at least one glide (e.g., ‘y’ or ‘w’) in their stem. They are usually divided into three types depending on the position of the glide in the stem: initially (assimilated verbs), medially (hollow verbs), and finally weak verbs (defective verbs). Also, if the verb contains more than one glide in more than one position, it is then called doubly weak verb (Wright, 1996).

Initially weak verbs

The passive participle of initially weak verbs is derived in much the same way as the passive participle of strong verbs:

Table 2. The Passive Participle of Triliteral Initially Weak Verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The stem</th>
<th>Underlying representation</th>
<th>Syllabicity assimilation</th>
<th>Lengthening</th>
<th>Surface form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/ya+wajad+u/</td>
<td>/mawjuwd+un/</td>
<td>/mawjuud+un/</td>
<td>/mawju:d+un/</td>
<td>/mawju:d+un/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to find</td>
<td>/may?uws+un/</td>
<td>/may?uus+un/</td>
<td>/may?u:s+un/</td>
<td>found</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ya+yʔas+u/</td>
<td>/may?uws+un/</td>
<td>/mawquwf+un/</td>
<td>/may?u:s+un/</td>
<td>hopeless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to despair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ya+wqif+u/</td>
<td>/mawquwf+un/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>stopped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to stop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the fact that glides in initially weak stems are deleted in some phonological environments as that of the imperfect verb /yajid/ “to find”, and /yaqif/ “to stop”, they are not deleted in passive participles. This is because the phonological environment in (7) which causes glide deletion in imperfect weak verbs does not exist in passive participles:

7) Deletion of the glide /w/:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{w} & \quad \rightarrow \quad \emptyset \quad \text{yV}^\# \quad \text{C}_2 \text{iC}_3 \quad \text{yV=personal prefix} \\
\text{#} & \quad = \quad \text{morpheme boundary} \quad \text{(Mahadin, 1982: 269)}
\end{align*}
\]

According to (7), /w/ is deleted but not /y/. Also, /w/ is deleted only when it is prefixed by /yV/ and there is /h/ between the second and the third radical. These conditions, however, are not met in the passive participle. Thus, the glide is not deleted in the passive participle and it has the same derivation of strong verbs:
8) [mawju:d] “found” from the verb [yajid] “to find”

![Diagram]

Another reason why the initial glide is not deleted is that there is no violation of OCP. The nucleus /a/ is not identical to the glide in the coda in the first syllable. Generally, the diphthongs /aw/ and /ay/ are stable in Standard Arabic and appear in surface representations (Mahadin, 1996).

**Medially weak verbs**

According to the general phonological rules of the passive participles, the surface forms of the stems /ya-byi/ “to sell” and /ya-qawal/ “to say” are predicted to be */mabyu:/ “sold” and /maqu:l/ “said” in passive participle. Nevertheless, the passive participles of these stems surface as /mabi:/ and /maqu:l/, respectively. Brame (1970) has suggested that these forms are a result of successive phonological processes that apply before syllabicity assimilation. They are:

9) Metathesis:

$$\begin{align*}
\begin{bmatrix} V_i \\ C \end{bmatrix} & \xrightarrow{G \ V_j} \begin{bmatrix} V_i \hat{O} \ V_j \ G \\ C \end{bmatrix}, \text{If } j = [+lo], \text{ then } i = [+lo], \text{(Brame, 1970: 302)}
\end{align*}$$

10) Consonant Deletion:

$$\begin{align*}
C & \xrightarrow{\hat{O} / C} C \quad \text{(Brame, 1970: 410)}
\end{align*}$$

11) Vocalic Assimilation:

$$\begin{align*}
\begin{bmatrix} i \\ u \end{bmatrix} & \xrightarrow{i / u / y / w} \begin{bmatrix} y \\ w \end{bmatrix} C \quad \text{(Brame, 1970: 409)}
\end{align*}$$

12) Syllabic Assimilation:

$$\begin{align*}
[-\text{cons}] & \xrightarrow{[+voc]} V \xrightarrow{[+\text{high}]} \begin{bmatrix} \# \\ C \end{bmatrix} \quad \text{(Brame, 1970: 454)}
\end{align*}$$
According to Brame (1970), we first apply glide metathesis which alters the position of the glide (the second radical) and the vowel /u/. Therefore, /mabyuw/ and /maqwuwl/ becomes /mabuyw/ and /maquwwl/ respectively. Then, the metathesis rule produces a sequence of three consonants which motivates consonant deletion rule. After deleting the second consonant of the three-consonant cluster, we are left with /mabuy/ and /maquwl/ to which we apply vocalic assimilation, syllabic assimilation, and vowel lengthening respectively.

Table 3. The Passive Participle of Triliteral Medially Weak Verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The stem</th>
<th>/ya-byi'/ to sell</th>
<th>/ya-qwul'/ to say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Underlying form</td>
<td>/mabyuw'+un</td>
<td>/maqwuwl+un/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G metathesis</td>
<td>/mabuyw'+un/</td>
<td>/maquwwl+un/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consonant deletion</td>
<td>/mabuy'+un/</td>
<td>/maquwl+un/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocalic Assimilation</td>
<td>/mabiy'+un/</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllabic assimilation</td>
<td>/mabii'+un/</td>
<td>/maquul+un/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vowel lengthening</td>
<td>/mabi:'+un/</td>
<td>/maqu:1+un/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface form</td>
<td>/mabi:'+un/</td>
<td>sold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>/maqu:l+un/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Glide metathesis is a very natural rule and deeply-rooted in the phonology of Standard Arabic. It is used to explain many phonological phenomena not just the passive participle of medially-weak verbs (Brame, 1970; Mahadin, 1982). However, the metathesis rule can be explicitly and naturally explained using the notations of X-skeleton as the derivation below shows:

13) [mabi:] “bought” from the verb [yabi:] “to buy”
As we can see from the above analysis, the sequence resulted from the metathesis rule triggers consonant deletion and vocalic assimilation. Interestingly, vocalic assimilation occurs at the feature tier, whereas glide-metathesis and syllabicity assimilation occur at the segmental tier. Moreover, vocalic assimilation stimulates syllabicity assimilation since the outcome of vocalic assimilation gives a sequence of two identical segments in the melodic tier. Consequently, syllabicity assimilation operates to link one segment in two X-slots to satisfy OPC. Finally, the shift of the glide from the onset to the coda triggers resyllabification because Arabic syllables must have an onset (Mahadin, 1996).

**Finally weak verbs**

The passive participle of finally weak verbs differs from that of strong verbs. It is /maCCuww+un/ when stems end with /w/, and /maCCiyy+un/ when stems end with /y/. Accordingly, the phonetic representations of /ya-nsiy/ “to forget” and /ya-d’uw/ “to invite” are /mansiy+un/ ‘forgotten’ and /mad’uww+un/ ‘invited’, respectively. Such differences between the passive participle of strong
stems and that of finally weak stems can be explained by adopting two assimilation processes proposed by Brame (1970):

14) W-fronting: \( w \rightarrow y/ \rightarrow y \) (Brame, 1970: 405)

15) Vocalic assimilation: \( \left\{ \begin{array}{c} u \rightarrow i \\ i \rightarrow u \end{array} \right\} \rightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \left\lfloor y \right\rfloor \\ \left\lfloor w \right\rfloor \end{array} \right\} \) (Brame, 1970: 409)

Table 4. The Passive Participle of Triliteral Finally Weak Verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The stem</th>
<th>/ya-nsay+u/ to forget</th>
<th>/ya-d’uw+u/ to invite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Underlying form</td>
<td>/mansuwy+un/</td>
<td>/mad’uww+un/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-fronting</td>
<td>/mansuuy+un/</td>
<td>...................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocalic assimilation</td>
<td>/mansiyy+un/</td>
<td>...................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface form</td>
<td>/mansiyy+un/ forgotten</td>
<td>/mad’uww+un/ invited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The glide /y/ of finally weak stem is deleted in the imperfect verb /yansa:/, whereas it is present in the passive participle /mansiyy+un/. This is because the phonological environments of the two forms are different: The sequence /aGV/ in the imperfect verb triggers glide elision and then vowel lengthening (Mahadin, 1982:235), whereas the sequence /wy/ in the passive participle triggers w-fronting and vocalic assimilation.

The above linear rules are best explained using the notations of autosegmental approach. For example, the derivation of [mansiyyun] “forgotten” can be represented as:

16) [mansiyyun] “forgotten” from the verb [yansa:] “to forget”

\[ \sigma \]
\[ \begin{array}{c} X \\ X \\ X \\ X \\ X \\ X \end{array} \]
\[ \begin{array}{c} m \\ a \\ n \\ s \\ u \\ n \end{array} \]
\[ \rightarrow \]
\[ \begin{array}{c} \sigma \rightarrow \sigma \rightarrow \sigma \end{array} \]
\[ \begin{array}{c} X \\ X \\ X \\ X \\ X \\ X \end{array} \]
\[ \begin{array}{c} m \\ a \\ n \\ s \\ u \\ i \end{array} \\
\begin{array}{c} u \\ n \end{array} \]
As we can see here, syllabic assimilation is not implemented in the second syllable and hence the diphthong /iy/ surfaces in the phonetic representation. This can be related to the outcome of w-fronting which is true geminate. According to Spencer (1996), true geminates are two segments having one melody tier linked to two timing slots in accordance of OCP. Therefore, /iy/ cannot assimilate with /u/ in the nucleus of the second syllable. Mahadin (1998:11) supports this by stating that the diphthongs /iy/ and /uw/ are retained when the glide is doubled and cannot be split by some phonological rule such as epenthesis.

**Doubly weak verbs**

The pattern of the passive participle of doubly weak stems is /maCwiyy+un/. For instance, the phonetic representations of /yašwi:/ “to roast” and /yalwi:/ “to twist” are /mašwiyy+un/ ‘roasted’ and /malwiyy+un/, respectively. As Table (5) shows, the derivation of doubly weak verbs is similar to that of finally weak verbs:

Table 5. The Passive Participle of Triliteral Doubly Weak Verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The stem</th>
<th>/ya-šwiyy+u/ to roast</th>
<th>/ya-lwiyy+u/ to twist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Underlying form</td>
<td>/mašwuwy+un/</td>
<td>/malwuwy+un/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-fronting</td>
<td>/mašwuyy+un/</td>
<td>/malwuyy+un/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocalic assimilation</td>
<td>/mašwiyy+un/</td>
<td>/malwiyy+un/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface form</td>
<td>/mašwiyy+un/ roasted</td>
<td>/malwiyy+un/ twisted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In autosegmental approach, the derivation of [malwiyyun] “twisted” can be represented as:

17) [malwiyyun] “twisted” from the verb [yalwi:] “to twist”

The same analysis which we provide for finally weak verbs applies to doubly weak verbs. The outcome of w-fronting (doubled glides) prevents syllabic assimilation in the second syllable. In addition, the doubled glides /yy/ prevent G-metathesis which has been suggested by Brame (1970: 453).

**Glottalized verbs**

Glottalized verbs (mahmuːz verbs) refer to verbs that have the glottal stop (hamza) among their radicals such as /yaʔ-muru/ ‘to order’, /yaʔ-salu/ ‘to ask’, and /yaʔraʔu/ ‘to read’ (Wight, 1996). The passive participle of trilateral, glottalized verbs is usually derived in the same way as that of strong verbs.
Table 6. The Passive Participle of Triliteral Glottalized Verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initially glottalized stem</th>
<th>The stem</th>
<th>The passive part</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/ya+ʔmür+u/</td>
<td>‘to order’</td>
<td>/maʔmu:r+un/</td>
<td>/maCCu:C/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initially glottalized stem</td>
<td>/ya+ʔðán+u/</td>
<td>‘to permit’</td>
<td>/maʔðu:n+un/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medially glottalized stem</td>
<td>/ya+sʔal+u/</td>
<td>‘to ask’</td>
<td>/masʔu:l+un/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medially glottalized stem</td>
<td>/ya+yʔis+u/</td>
<td>‘to despair’</td>
<td>/mayʔu:s+un/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finally glottalized stem</td>
<td>/ya+qraʔ+u/</td>
<td>‘to read’</td>
<td>/maqruʔ+un/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finally glottalized stem</td>
<td>/ya+ljaʔ+u/</td>
<td>‘to refuge’</td>
<td>/maljuʔ+un/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows no deviation from the general pattern of passive participle /maCCu:C/ despite the fact that the glottal stop /ʔ/ is deleted in some phonological environments: According to (18), the glottal stop in initially glottalized verbs is deleted and compensated by vowel lengthening when preceded by the prefix /ʔV-/ and followed by a consonant. For example, the verb /ʔaʔmaʔu “to believe” is pronounced as /ʔaʔmaʔu as it has the glottal stop /ʔ/ between the prefix /ʔaʔ/ and the consonant /m/. In (19), however, the glottal stop is assimilated to a preceding vowel /i/ or /u/, and thus a word as /biʔʔ / “well” becomes /biʔʔ/. Nevertheless, the resulting sequence /i/ becomes /i:/ (i.e., /biʔʔ/) because of syllabicity assimilation.


However, since the conditions of compensatory lengthening and assimilation are not met in the pattern of passive participle, no phonological change can occur to the glottal stop in passive participle.

As for autosegmental approach, the derivation of the passive participle [masʔu:luʔ “asked” can be represented as the following:
20) \([\text{mas?u:lun}] \) “asked” from the verb \([\text{yas?alu}] \) “to ask”

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\sigma \\
\begin{array}{cccccccc}
X & X & X & X & X & X & X & X \\
 m & a & s & ? & u & u & l & u & n
\end{array}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\sigma \\
\begin{array}{c}
X \\
? \\
u
\end{array}
\end{array}
\]

\textit{Geminated verbs}

Geminated or doubled verbs are those which have two identical sounds in their stem. As strong verbs, the passive participle of glottalized verbs is derived by applying syllabicity assimilation and vowel lengthening.

Table 7. \textit{The Passive Participle of Triliteral Geminated Verbs}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The stem</th>
<th>/ya+’dud+u/ to count</th>
<th>/ya+mdud/ to stretch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Underlying representation</td>
<td>/ma’duwd+un/</td>
<td>/mamduwd+un/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllabicity assimilation</td>
<td>/ma’duud+un/</td>
<td>/mamduud+un/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vowel lengthening</td>
<td>/ma’du:d+un/</td>
<td>/mamdu:d+un/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface form</td>
<td>/ma’du:d+un/ written</td>
<td>/mamdu:d+un/ stretched</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In autosegmental approach, on the other hand, the derivation of [ma’du:du:] “counted” can be represented in one phonological rule:
21) [ma’du:dun] “counted” from the verb [ya’uddu] “to count”

The above derivation of the passive participle /ma’du:dun/ shows that we cannot geminate the second and the third radicals because crossing association lines is prohibited in the mapping process as it can be seen below:

Conclusion

The above discussion provides phonological analysis of the passive participle of triliteral, non-derived verbs in Standard Arabic. The analysis indicates that Arabic passive participle should be derived from the stem of the imperfect not that of the perfect. Also, it accounts for the phonological behavior of strong, weak, geminated, and glottalized stems and reveals that strong, geminated, and glottalized stems exhibit the regular pattern /maCCu:C/. However, this is not true with medially, finally, and doubly weak verbs which deviate from the regular pattern. As for the best framework to examine passive participle, the study highlights the superiority of autosegmental approach over the traditional linear approach. Finally, the study recommends investigating the passive participle of derived forms in order to have a complete phonological analysis of the passive participle in Standard Arabic.
About the authors

Radwan Salim Mahadin is a Professor of linguistics at the University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan. He received his BA in English Language and Literature from the University of Jordan in 1976 and his PhD in Linguistics from the University of Pennsylvania in 1982.

Majd Saleem Abushunar is a PhD student in linguistics at the University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan. She received her BA in English Language and Literature from the Hashemite University in 2010 and her MA in Linguistics from Yarmouk University in 2012.

References


The Impact of Wait Time Instruction and Teaching Experience on Teachers’ Feedback in Moroccan Speaking Classes

Sana SAKALE

CPGE Kénitra
Faculty of Sciences of Education
Mohammed V University-Souissi, Rabat, Morocco

Abstract
Instruction plays a major role in the development of speaking skills for second language learners. Different approaches and methods have emerged throughout the history of language learning/teaching based on the influence of different theories of language, psychology, and related domains such as psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics and cultural studies. Two major trends in language teaching emerged under the influence of these mentioned language theories, namely, accuracy based versus fluency based approaches. This article gives a historical sketch up to these trends in an attempt to provide a historical background and to empirically bring evidence that wait time instruction and teaching experience can impact classroom feedback in Moroccan classes. Relevant questions related to the role of teachers’ experience in leading different types of feedback, the effect of the number of teaching years as well as the correlation between wait time instruction and the corresponding teaching experience are closely investigated. This article adheres to a mixed design or what has been identified in research methodology as ex-post facto (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2007). Therefore, it is both a qualitative and a descriptive one. For the type of instructions used, the results obtained show the insignificance of the impact of experience on this variable. On the other hand, results retained that wait-time instruction in comparison to other items recorded a higher significance of the impact of experience. Therefore, current article brings empirical evidence on how wait-time instruction plays a crucial role in spoken activity for second language learners.

Key words: impact of wait-time instruction, impact of teaching experience, speaking classes, teachers’ instructions and feedback

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1- Instructional Approaches to Speaking Skills: A Historical Background

The accuracy based language teaching approaches

Accuracy in language teaching is the outcome of viewing language learning as an acquired behavior based on drilling and error avoidance. Early linguists were hired to teach oral skills in laboratories where students were trained to utter new items mainly through repetition. In her article on language teaching approaches, Celce-Murcia (1991:6) mentions nine language teaching approaches that have characterized instruction in the twentieth century most of which focus on accuracy as a basic tenet in language teaching. In describing the grammar-translation approach to language teaching, for example, she states that the focus is on grammar or the inflection of words. The direct method also initiates learners to native-like speaking and the teachers should necessarily be native speakers with presumably native-like pronunciation.

Research in the area of language has shown how at first the reading approach prevailed, and reading comprehension was the only language skill taught the goal of which was to enable students to read the target language. This Reading Method lasted until the Second World War when the U.S government found it necessary to make people speak and understand foreign languages (Murcia, 1991:5). Hence, linguists were hired to this end, and from there on was the birth of a new language method “Audiolingualism”. The next part will be devoted to this important method because of the great impact it has on teaching oral skills.

Audiolingualism

Founded essentially on structural linguistics, especially Bloomfield (1933) and behavioral psychology (Skinner, 1957), audiolingualism is one of the most important approaches to language teaching which advocates the primacy of speech in the language classroom. Among its major tenets “Language is speaking not writing”, “Language is set of habits”, and “Language is verbal behavior”. In this regard, Skinner (1957) states: “What happens when a man speaks or responds to speech is clearly a question of human behavior and hence a question to be answered with the concepts and techniques of psychology as an experimental science of behavior” (p.5)

Skinner thus advocated that, like all other behaviors, language is learned through repetition and reinforcement (positive or negative) adhering to notions such as stimulus-response and operant conditioning. Brown (1994) considers this to highlight the ‘immediately perceptible aspects of linguistic behavior, the publicly observable responses and the relationships or associations between those responses and events in the world surrounding them’. (p.17)

The idea that has characterized behaviorism- that observable behavior is perpetuated if reinforced- has affected language classroom. Therefore, teachers used to rely on reinforcement or positive feedback presumably used as a result of the ultimate success on the part of the learners having showed total grasp of a certain pattern.

In this regard, Williams and Burden (1997:10) in explaining how behaviourism has largely influenced language teachers, noted that within the audiolingual approach framework, much analysis had been done to consider the role of the learners who should be positive respondents to teachers’ stimuli using such mechanisms as repetition and substitution. Blair (1991), on the other hand, clarifies how from an audiolingual perspective, language was considered as: “a definable set of structures with lexical exponents, which could be learned inductively, pattern by
pattern, by means of a rigorously planned and carefully executed program of instruction based on the laws of conditioning and reinforcement”. (p.24)

Thus, audioliinguists advocate a considerable control over learners’ oral production. A great effort is deployed to manipulate learners’ errors in such a way that structural or grammatical correctness is the ultimate motive during the learning process. Thus, learning how to speak a language is seen as acquiring a set of mechanical habits or as Gass (2008) puts it “learning a language involved imitation as the primary mechanism, the language that surrounded learners was of crucial importance as the source for imitation”.(p.49)

**Cognitive code learning approach**

Based on both Chomsky’s -transformational-generative grammar (TGG) (Kyle, 2004) and Gestalt theory (Green, 2000), the cognitive-code approach was critical of both Grammar Translation Method (GMT) and Audio Lingual Method (ALM). This criticism is due on the one hand to the neglect of the spoken skill and the other hand to excessive emphasis on behavioral techniques such as repetition, drilling and memorization. Therefore, cognitive-code approach, proposed mainly between 1960s and 1970s by Caroll (1966) and Chastain (1970), advocated that language learning involved active mental processes, and that it was not just a process of habit formation (as assumed by the ALM).

Thus language classes were still concerned with grammatical structures, but teaching/learning was based on understanding the meaning, hence the importance of meaningful practice. Lessons consisted in presenting examples of the target structures to make students understand the grammatical rule before practicing it in meaningful contexts. Teachers elicited dialogues which contained examples of the target structure, encouraging thus students’ speaking through the elicited dialogues.

To sum up, while the ALM advocated the primacy of speech over writing, the Cognitive Code Learning (CCL) approach used both written and oral skills. However both were more concerned about accuracy at the expense of fluency in student’s language production. This trend will start to change towards a fluency-based trend to language learning/teaching with the introduction of language as a system of communication. This shift is due to the impact of new fields such as sociolinguistics / pragmatics (e.g. Hymes, Searle, and Austin) and functional linguistics. This shift has been beneficial to the position of speaking in the language classroom.

**The fluency based language teaching approaches**

Under the influence of research in the above mentioned fields, and with the introduction of communicative language teaching/learning approach, basic perceptions about speaking started to swift towards message comprehension, interaction and communication. The rise of this new awareness marks the turning point or the start of a revolution in research on oral skills in general. Indeed, the move towards a fluency-based theory becomes the major advocacy of researchers. Focus on how research defines fluency and the major significance it holds for speaking is discussed henceforth.

As cited in Al-Sibai’s research (2004) on promoting oral fluency of second language learners, Richards et al. (1985) characterize fluency as ‘the features which give speech the qualities of being natural and normal, including native-like use of pausing, rhythm, intonation, stress, rate of
speaking, and use of interjections and interruptions’. As for Murcia (2008:732), fluency is simply defined as ‘interacting according to target language conventions and speaking comprehensibly at an average rate without long pauses or undue hesitation’. On the other hand, Folse (2006:30) judges fluency to be ‘the amount of language produced in a task.’

Fluency-based language teaching basically aims at meaning comprehension while accounting for the ease or the non-hesitant flow of the spoken utterances during the message transmission and the correlating interaction between the speakers. In describing communicative fluency activities for language teaching, Klippel (1994:3-11) points to the importance of a message-oriented communication which, as he states, has its origins in the German language ‘mitteilungsbezogenekommunikation’ and which was coined by Black and Butzkamm (1977) while referring to ‘those rare and precious moments in foreign language teaching when the target language is actually used as a means of communication’ (p.120).

In this regard, Proficiency guidelines of the American standardized test American Council for Teaching English as a Foreign Language (ACTFL) base fluency on speech criteria including (1) the total number of words spoken in a fixed time, (2) the number of silent pauses for thinking, (3) the number of repetition of words, phrases or clauses, (4) the number of repair or reformulation for correction, and (5) the mean length of utterance (MLU) as cited in Breiner-Sanders et al. (2000). As will be shown below, communicative language teaching approach has played a major role in promoting the status of the spoken skills in language classes stressing message comprehension and interaction.

**The Communicative approach to Language Teaching (CLT)**

A number of factors led to the emergence of the communicative approach to language teaching. Such factors include: first, developments in the fields of sociolinguistics, pragmatics, philosophy of language and communication theory (Hymes, 1972; Austin, 1961, 1962; Searle, 1969, 1979). Second, the work of applied linguists around the eighties, both British and American who were unsatisfied with the theories and methods of teaching, which prevailed in language classrooms before the advent of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), to name but a few linguists: Wilkins (1974), Halliday (1976), Littlewood (1981) and Savignon (1972,1983,2008). Third, there are also historical factors that occurred similarly for example the Council of Europe was interested in promoting new language teaching approaches that could help European citizens learn the main languages of the European community more effectively. Under these different influences, awareness was raised that language, above all, functions as a system of communication among social groups, and therefore, language teaching /learning should focus on the communicative functions of language.

With the introduction of this new perception, the teaching of spoken skills in L2 classes gained a new status; the focus was now on training learners in speaking for communicative purposes targeting fluency rather than accuracy. A major concept that underlined CLT and triggered much research in language pedagogy for communicative purposes is Hymes’ communicative competence. Other trends that have also contributed to the shift from accuracy to fluency based language teaching / learning include task-based language learning as briefly discussed below.
Task based Learning and Wait time instruction

In the recent years, research has shed light on task-based learning. In Nunan’s (2009) view, for instance, real world tasks that do not involve the use of language at all and are non-linguistic are different from pedagogical tasks that imply necessarily the use of language and have to do with the transformation of life-like situations into the classroom and become pedagogical. He provides this definition to the notion of a classroom task:

A pedagogical task is a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form.(p.4)

The focus in this instance is at the same time on message comprehension, manipulation, interaction and production during a definite time. From a pedagogical perspective, research has identified some of the basic principles for task-based language teaching/learning (Nunan, 2009) that are applicable in class for productive skills. Such pedagogical stands have tremendously helped in marking the move towards fluency based learning. But for the application of such principles in the classroom, and for the importance it occupies in establishing the link between accuracy and fluency, teachers’ feedback to students plays a major role.

Feedback

With the introduction of Swain’s concept of ‘comprehensible output’, the idea of ‘being pushed up’ implied in comprehensible output has paved the way for more research on the area of teacher-student feedback. Swain (2008:471-484) reports Mackey’s (2002) experiment which showed that students’ perception of being pushed is highest when the feedback comes from the teacher.

Reporting Mackey’s findings in that area, Swain registers that the fact that learners received teachers’ feedback or what she identifies as ‘being pushed up’ made the students establish modifications to suit their interlocutors with varying degrees according to setting, type of interaction and whether they interact with native speakers or nonnative speakers. Taking into account these findings, Swain concludes that “the students’ perception of being pushed is highest when the feedback comes from the teacher and that it is least when it comes from a non native speaking peer”.

2- Research Questions

These empirical findings show the importance of teachers’ feedback in the classroom in pushing students to make more repair or modification in their speaking which results in fluency and density of negotiation. A relevant question to raise here is: “What is the role of teachers’ experience in leading this type of feedback?” and “does the number of teaching years affect the type of feedback teachers provide? The present article attempts to respond to these questions through empirical findings.

In the same vein, Williams (2008:684-691) points out that the main virtue of negotiation is focus on both form and meaning or the establishment of form-meaning connection. She refers to the distinction set by Lyster (1998) between the negotiation of meaning and the negotiation of
form. The latter is usually initiated by the teacher and in which case, message comprehensibility is not the problem, rather it is the different forms of feedback on error in message form.

Obviously, literature lends support to the crucial role of feedback for instruction in the learning process of language skills including speaking. The FonF theory, for instance, evokes the importance of input in noticing which Williams defines as ‘the registration of a form or word that has not been attended to before’. She also puts forward that ‘what gets noticed’ is influenced by a number of factors like frequency, salience, situational factors, and time pressure. Williams explains how for a new form to be recognized or noticed, these factors should be manipulated during an activity.

Besides, research makes it evident that instruction is tied to feedback in that feedback is what makes noticing possible. As a matter of fact, research about speaking identifies negotiation and feedback as criteria of judging good instruction where noticing takes place.

To conclude, interaction enhancement and negotiation density do indeed establish the interconnection between accuracy and fluency. Many speech strategists and specialists have demonstrated how instruction and the way teachers provide feedback do play a major role in learners’ speaking skills including the need for negative evidence. Empirical research in the present research tries to provide basic similarities or discrepancies in these theoretical bases and empirical findings with the Moroccan context. In this respect, the present research assumes that teachers’ experience does impact their instructional methods and feedback. Results of the empirical study conducted provide important correlating answers as will be shown hereof.

3. Sampling
A total number of forty teachers have contributed to this research throughout the whole process. Twenty teachers have received the researcher as an observer in their classes. This served for the filling in of the checklists while twenty other teachers have been individually interviewed. All these groups are included in the total of forty teachers who have accepted to report their experience through the teachers’ questionnaires. Under teachers’ request and for ethical considerations, the teachers’ names and place of work remained confidential. As to their gender, twenty three female teachers and seventeen male ones have taken part in this study among which eight males and twelve female teachers have also been visited in their classes. As to teachers’ teaching experience and for the importance it holds as an independent variable, it is described in detail in this table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than ten years</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than ten years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than fifteen years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than twenty years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that nearly half of the teachers’ sample have an experience of more than ten years with a total corresponding percentage of 47.5% (17.5 plus 5.0 plus 25.0) including a significant proportion of
Teachers 25% who have a considerably long experience as EFL teachers (more than 20 years) while 52.5% have an experience of less than ten years.

**Teachers’ interview**

An unstructured diagnosis interview has been issued in this research whose aim is to detect teachers’ perceptions, practices and problems while teaching speaking in secondary schools. The choice of an unstructured interview is based on the belief that it allows more freedom to teachers to pinpoint any remaining aspects that might serve research aims and which the closed-from questionnaire has not revealed.

The interview comes in two parts: the personal information part and the part related to questions. Part one helps to find out whether teachers’ experience as an independent variable does indeed interfere with their teaching performance and the feedback they provide during the teaching/learning process of the speaking skill. A ten-year-period teaching scale is ascribed. The derived answers are based on teachers’ responses in part one of the interview.

Part two of the interview aims at having teachers articulate their perceptions of this skill; talk about the difficulties they face while teaching it; the type of activities they teach; and the way they give instructions and feedback to the students when they carry out a speaking activity in their classes.

**Teachers’ questionnaire**

A closed-form questionnaire (Ary, Cheser & Razavieh, 1990: 175) was also issued to complement the interview. The choice of a closed-form questionnaire is based on the belief that it can provide ample opportunities to direct teachers more towards the researcher’s aims, and also to consolidate and clarify the data extracted from the interviews. Practically, teachers’ questionnaire came to consolidate and provide more data after the first interviews conducted. Therefore, to prevent over generalised and unfocused data, the closed-form questionnaire is issued to complement the unstructured interviews and orient the investigation towards the research objectives. Involving two instruments serves, thus, to reinforce the validity of the data collected.

4. **The effect of experience on teachers’ instructional methods and feedback**

In this section, the focus will be on juxtaposing different types of teachers’ instructional methods and feedback with teaching experience in a linear by linear association to reveal whether there is any effect of the latter on the instruction and feedback provided to students. This will, thus, answer this research question: “Does experience have an influence on teachers’ instructional methods and feedback while teaching speaking skills?”

**Impact of experience on instruction and feedback**

Table 2 shows the procedure teachers use while giving instructions to their students with detailed frequencies and percentages. The p and q values sorted out reveal whether or not experience does affect the type of instructions used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do you give instructions to students in class?</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>q</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-You give instructions</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9.230</td>
<td>.416</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Impact of Wait Time Instruction and Teaching Experience

SAKALE

According to the chi-square tests obtained, items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 show the insignificance of the impact of experience on the type of instructions based on the corresponding q and p values registered (q = 9.230; 9.336; 12.242; 10.738; 27.455; 7.361; 5.047 respectively) and p = [.416; .674; .426; .551; .007; .833; .830 respectively]. From a look at the significance columns, a recognizable deviation of p level which is > .05 captures this insignificance. However, though item 5 in the chi-square test reveals the insignificance of experience for the type of instructions used, the corresponding values registered (q= 27.455 and p=.007) testify that waiting time instruction in comparison to the other values is a more significant one as the p level is just slightly beyond .005. For this specific item, the following chi-square test and crosstab have been included as an example:

Table 3 Chi sq/test corresponding to wait-time instruction crosstab (4) below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>27,455a</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>18,856</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>5,527</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 18 cells (90.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.

**Wait Time Instruction Crosstab**

Table 4 juxtaposition of teaching experience and wait time instruction Crosstab (4)
The above crosstab shows the juxtaposition of the time allowed for students to answer a question with teachers’ experience. The frequencies registered show that novice teachers allow students enough time after asking them questions (F= 16 totaling 9 always and 7 usually) more often than the more experienced teachers (F= 5 who report that they usually do so). The corresponding chi-square has been sorted out in parallel using a linear by linear association:

After this brief presentation to the results pertaining to teachers’ instructional tasks, the following section will shed light on implication of above results for research.

**The effect of teachers’ experience on their instructional methods and feedback: implication for research**

The research question findings were concerned with testing the hypothetical effect of teachers’ experience on their instructional methods and feedback while teaching the speaking skill. Generally speaking, the results obtained show the insignificance of the impact of experience on the type of instructional method teachers use based on the corresponding values and tests registered.

However, the values do show that wait-time instruction in comparison to other items records a higher significance as the juxtaposition of the time allowed for students to answer a question with teachers’ experience registers a higher deviation. In addition, results show that novice teachers allow students enough time after asking them questions more often than the more experienced teachers do. For this specific item, previous empirical research has investigated how wait-time instruction may indeed be linked to learners’ achievement especially during verbal interaction (Tobin, 1987; Duell, 1994). It could be stated according to research findings that wait-time instruction might be determinant in letting learners more time to prepare their speaking and modify or add on new things which may lead to improvements in their oral production.

**Conclusion**

This research has traced the position and the route of the speaking skill as been historically recorded basing on various theoretical trends which have impacted its apprehension including the linguistic theories, the psychological and the sociolinguistic ones. It has also dwelt on the various pedagogical perspectives on speaking and demonstrated the impact of such interrelated areas as fluency and accuracy in language teaching. It has, thus, tackled the instructional approaches to the speaking skill according to these correlative approaches in an attempt to empirically measure the impactful significance of teaching experience and wait time instruction on teachers’ feedback in Moroccan classes. The research findings reveal how wait time instruction is indeed crucial in letting learners make more improvement in their oral production.
The Impact of Wait Time Instruction and Teaching Experience

SAKALE

SANA SAKALE is an instructor at ‘les Classes Préparatoires aux Grandes Ecoles’ in Kénitra. She has worked as EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teacher for the last fifteen years. In 2013, she worked with ACE (African Community Education) as ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher in Worcester, Boston, Mass. She holds an M.A in Feminism from the Faculty of Humanities and a Doctorate Degree from the Faculty of Sciences of Education situated both in Rabat.

References


The Relationship between Learner Motivation and Vocabulary Size: The Case of Iraqi EFL Classrooms

Mohammed Khaleel Khudhur ALBODAKH
English Language Teaching Department
Education Faculty, Gaziantep University
Gaziantep, Turkey

Emrah Cinkara
English Language Teaching Department
Education Faculty, Gaziantep University
Gaziantep, Turkey

Abstract
This study investigates the relationship between learner motivation and vocabulary size in English as foreign language (EFL) classrooms at Duhok University. The participants included 100 students (55 male, 45 female). All participants were pursuing their third years of study in an English department. Two instruments were employed: questionnaires regarding Motivation for Foreign Language Learning (MFLL) and Vocabulary Size Test (VST). The primary goal of this study is to determine which factors of motivation profoundly affect the foreign language learning processes of Iraqi EFL students and to what extent they should develop their depth and breadth English vocabularies in order to sufficiently acquire the language and elaborate the importance of both components in language acquisition. Findings showed that female students experienced both types of motivation, with the mean score of extrinsic motivation being 29.91, and that for intrinsic motivation being 31.20, while the mean score of male students was 27.10 for extrinsic motivation and 28.00 for intrinsic motivation. The VST ranged from 1,000 to 14,000 word-families, and the vocabulary size of both groups was over 6,000 word-families. Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between learner motivation and vocabulary size. For both groups, the results indicated no relationship between these two aspects of students' foreign language leaning. To investigate the difference between MFLL and VST, an independent samples t-test was utilized and no difference was found to exist between the vocabularies of both groups.

Keywords: foreign language learning, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, vocabulary size

Introduction
Horwitz (1990) defines motivation as the feelings of the learner toward a particular target language and its culture as well as learner's pragmatic reasons for acquiring a foreign language more broadly. There are two types of motivation: Extrinsic and intrinsic have been defined respectively by (Schmidt, Borale, & Kassabgy, 1996) as the motivation for external reward and motivation to obtain sufficient reward from the activity itself. Regarding vocabulary Richard and Renandya (2002) have stated that vocabulary is the main component of any language proficiency since it enables the learner to use four primary language skills reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This study will focus primarily on the extrinsic and intrinsic motivations for foreign language learning as well as vocabulary size among learners in Iraqi EFL classrooms. To the best of our observations, most Iraqi learners think that acquiring foreign language knowledge and fluency is unfruitful because they lack sufficient motivation for doing so. Though these learners devote several hours and even years in attempting foreign language acquisition for communicative purposes, the fact remains that students may are unable to inject themselves into simple conversation in English language. They suffer from boredom in their EFL classrooms and constantly fear speaking with their teachers in the target language. In addition to these difficulties among Iraqi learners, some teachers suffer in terms of EFL pedagogy, perceiving their individual attention to learners as a waste of time within the limited time-frame of classes. Moreover, they lack knowledge of specific learner profiles and needs, thus remaining unable to encourage students whether intrinsically or extrinsically in order to build their ambition and self-confidence in learning a foreign language.

Over the past fifteen years, vocabulary has been considered as playing a prominent role in both L1 and L2 languages learning because limited vocabulary size can hold up successful communication. Acquiring vocabulary is pivotal for successful second language use and plays an important role in the formation of complete spoken and written texts and holistic mastery of vocabulary can control the language four skills and without adequate knowledge of words, understanding texts is impossible (Nation, 2011; Bernhardt, 2005; Wang, 2009). Cortazzi and Jin (1996) find that EFL students place particular emphasis on vocabulary acquisition in comparison with other elements of language learning. Similarly, Krashen and Terrel (1983) state that vocabulary is the main factor of interpersonal communication with other people. Vocabulary acquisition is crucial to foreign language learning, but it is also one of the most difficult endeavors. Difficulty in developing and expanding learner vocabulary might arise from the lack of specific attention given to vocabulary-building in the EFL classrooms in our context, most teachers, and consequently students think that focusing on grammar is adequate for acquiring target language and communicating with others. Nevertheless, these students devote several years to the study of English grammar without ever reaching sufficient levels of proficiency and fluency. Though one cannot deny the importance of grammar within foreign language learning, the lack of vocabulary necessary for reaping the benefits of grammatical organization means that expression itself is limited. Thus, this situation poses a dilemma for Iraqi EFL learners. This study will elaborate the importance of vocabulary acquisition and attempt to determine learner motivation for acquiring English as a foreign language in the first place.

Regarding learner motivation, this study aims to determine its effects on foreign language learning as well as compare its intrinsic and extrinsic motivations among language learners.
Pertaining to vocabulary size, this study will investigate the breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge among Iraqi EFL learners' and the significance of vocabulary size for foreign language learning. The following research questions are investigated:

1. Is there a statistically significant difference between Iraqi EFL male and female learners' extrinsic and intrinsic motivation to learn a foreign language?
2. Is there a statistically significant difference between Iraqi EFL male and female learners' vocabulary size?
3. Is there a statistically significant correlation between motivation and vocabulary size among Iraqi EFL learners?
4. Is there a statistically significant difference between Iraqi EFL male and female learners in terms of motivation and vocabulary size?

**Literature review**

**Motivation for foreign language learning**

Motivation is a fundamental factor in the success of foreign language learners and has occupied a significant position in psychological and educational studies for several decades (Dörnyei, 2001). The investigation of motivation in foreign language learning dates back to the 1950s with frequently cited Canadian scholars Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert. Two theories regarding learner motivation for second-language acquisition were developed: Gardner's motivation theory (1972) and Deci and Ryan’s self-determination theory (1985-1995). Gardner (1985) defines motivation as the single effective factor of foreign language learning, while Dörnyei and Otto (1998) describe motivation as a state of excitement which identifies learners' wishes and desires. According to them, motivation can both negatively and positively affect the learning process; thus, it is an essential factor of foreign language learning. Williams and Burden (1997) believe motivation as a state of cognitive and passionate vigilance that assists learners in consciously acting and presents the determination to achieve certain goals. Keller (1983) states that motivation refers to learners' choices regarding the selection or aversion of experiences and goals, while Crookes and Schmidt (1991) explains the term as learners' orientation to foreign language learning.

**Gardner's Motivation Theory**

Gardner's Motivation Theory is considered one of the most influential theories of foreign language learning. For Gardner (2001), motivation includes three parts: effort, desire, and positive effect toward learning the language. Gardner and Lambert (1972) propose two types of orientation in motivation: instrumental and integrative motivational orientations. Instrumental orientation means that learners desire to acquire a foreign language in order to achieve practical results, e.g. to earn a promotion in career, to gain employment, or to obtain a salary increment. Integrative orientation means that learners desire to acquire a second language via integration with members of the target language in order to learn more about others of different cultures or specifically to knowledge of the target-language culture.

**Self-determination theory**

Initially developed by Deci and Ryan (1995), this theory identifies the essential aspects of motivated behavior in an effort to support learners' external and internal tendencies toward
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learning a foreign language and is one of the main pillars of second language learning motivation. It is claimed that this theory differs from motivational theories in its concentration on the behaviors and reasons that encourage an individual to act in order to achieve a goal (Deci et al., 1991). The aim of this theory is to distinguish between motivational and intentional behaviors as well as the two main types of intentional behavior (self-determined and controlled). Self-determined behaviors are result from personal desire and preference while controlled behaviors are always influenced by external factors. Moreover, this theory stated that motivation should be considered from multiple perspectives. Thus, three kinds of motivation were elaborated: intrinsic, extrinsic, and amotivation. These types of motivation reveal the degree to which an individual engages in any act for personal purposes (Noels, 2001).

Intrinsic motivation
This type of motivation relates to an individual’s performance of an activity because of innate desire and satisfaction rather than for any divisible outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2000). When a person is intrinsically motivated, it means that he/she will perform an action just for amusement or challenge rather than external rewards. In other words, if a learner is intrinsically motivated, he/she perform the action voluntarily and without any external factor.

Extrinsic motivation
In contrast to intrinsic motivation, this type of motivation concerns an individual’s obtaining of rewards and his/her relative lack of autonomy owing to external influence. Extrinsic motivation is viewed as a multidimensional structure in which a person participates in performing an activity for internal and external consequences (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Moreover, when a person is extrinsically motivated, he/she will demonstrate high levels of ingenuity; involve him/herself in several experiments and experience risks (Shin & Zhou, 2003).

Amotivation
This type of motivation is similar to the notion of learned weaknesses in which learners either lack the performance of an act or act negatively (Abramson, Seligman & Teasdale, 1978). Based on self-determination theory, the term "amotivation" refers to the absence state between one's actions and results. The individual in this type of motivation does not pretend to engage in any activity and is neither extrinsically nor intrinsically motivated.

Vocabulary knowledge
In the domain of language learning, a variety of research has been conducted to illustrate what it means to know a word. It is widely known that vocabulary is an imperative part of foreign language learning, without which an individual remains unable to communicate with others. Accordingly, most of the learners view vocabulary as an essential element in their foreign learning (Nation, 1990). Thus, learners feel that most of their difficulties in terms of foreign language learning stem from a lack of vocabulary knowledge. Despite the significance of vocabulary, nevertheless several scholars as (Allen, 1983; Carter & McCarthy, 1988; Hedge, 2000; Long & Richards, 1997; Maley, 1986; Richards, 1985; Zimmerman, 1997) have noted that vocabulary acquisition has been overlooked by foreign language educators. Several other scholars also emphasize the close relationship between vocabulary size and foreign language learning Laufer and Nation (1999), Maximo (2000), Read (2000), Gu (2003), Nation (2004), and
Nation (2011) these scholars have recognized that vocabulary learning is fundamental to success in acquiring a foreign language and that it plays a prominent role in written and spoken communication. Nation (2004) stated that language and vocabulary knowledge are intrinsically linked to each other; in other words, vocabulary enables the learner to acquire a language and using the language can increase vocabulary size. Moreover, according Nunan (1991), the learning of sufficient vocabulary items is essential to foreign language acquisition because limited vocabulary size means that learners are unable to use the rules and structures gleaned from understandable communication.

**Dimension of vocabulary knowledge**

Several scholars have studied vocabulary breadth and depth because these two dimensions play an imperative role in foreign language learning. While breadth refers to quantity, depth refers to thorough rather than superficial knowledge of terms (Nation, 1990; Richards, 1976).

**Breadth of vocabulary knowledge**

Breadth of vocabulary knowledge refers to the number of words that an individual comprehends. It considered as an essential dimension of the lexical capability of language learners, and the importance of acquiring a sufficient number has been confirmed by several studies including that of Meara (1996), who explained that when a learner acquired a good amount of vocabulary, he/she will be more flexible in language use and comprehension than will a learner with a small vocabulary size. In addition, breath of vocabulary influences a learner's performance of the four language skills: reading (Laufer, 1992; Qian & Schedl, 2004), writing (Laufer & Nation, 1995; Yu, 2010), speaking (Daller, van Hout & Treffers-Daller, 2003; Hilton, 2008), and listening (Stæhr, 2009).

The testing of this dimension has received much attention by researchers. One of the most common vocabulary tests is the Vocabulary Size Test developed by Nation and Beglar (2007). It was designed to measure vocabulary proficiency rather than particular diagnostic of vocabulary levels at which learners have insufficient vocabulary knowledge. The words that used in the test are derived from British National Corpus (BNC), and the test consists of 14 levels, each one having 10 items, and each item is representing knowledge of 100-word families.

**Depth of vocabulary knowledge**

This dimension is defined as how well a learner knows a word. In other words, it considered as the quality of knowing a word in a deep way (Read, 1993). Meara (2009) stated that the depth of vocabulary knowledge involves the interaction between single words and that it is considered as a collection of words in mind with their deep meanings. Depth of vocabulary knowledge concentrates on the notion of high-frequency words that a learner needs to possess more than a superficial comprehension of meaning. According to Qian (1999), this dimension involves pronunciation, spelling, meaning, frequency, morphological, register, syntactic, and collocation properties. Learners who possess high vocabulary proficiency are more efficient and well-organized than those with low proficiency. There are two ways of measuring the depth of vocabulary knowledge, according to Read (1997): 1) a developmental approach and 2) a dimensional approach. The first method utilizes a scale known as a Vocabulary Knowledge Scale.
to determine the level of word acquisition, while the second approach involves knowledge of the level of competence of different components of word knowledge.

**Methodology**

This study employs a descriptive design adapted in the form of a questionnaire administered during analysis stages and data collection. It focuses on the relationship between the (extrinsic and intrinsic) motivations for foreign language learning and vocabulary size among Iraqi EFL learners enrolled in Duhok University's English Department.

**Participants**

100 Iraqi EFL learners (55 male, 45 female) who studied in college of Arts-English department of Duhok University participated in this study. Participants’ ages range from 21 to 26 with a mean of 22.04 years of age.

**Instruments**

Two types of instruments, namely Motivation for Foreign Language Learning (MFLL) and Vocabulary Size Test (VST), were utilized in this study. The MFLL was designed by Schmidt, Borale, and Kassabgy (1996) and involved 16-items used to measure intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among learners. For these items, students were asked to rate their agreement on a 5-point Likert scale (1 Strongly Agree to 5 Strongly Disagree). The 16-items were divided into two parts: eight pertaining to intrinsic motivation and eight are regarding extrinsic motivation. The second instrument, VST, was prepared by Paul Nation and David Beglar (2007) in light of the British National Corpus (BNC). It consists of 14 levels, each level representing knowledge of 1,000 word-families, beginning with the most frequent word families of the 1st level to the low frequency ones of the 14th level. A shortened version of the VST was utilized in this study because there was not enough time for students to answer the original version of the test. The shortened version includes 100 multiple-choice items, 10 at each level of 1,000 word-families. The reliability coefficient of MFLL questionnaire was 0.80, while that of the VST was 0.91.

**Data collection and analysis**

First legal permission for conducting this research was obtained from the Head of English Department of Duhok University. Two groups of third-year students in the English Department were designated to take part in this study and they were given a letter of consent to participate in this study. Students in each group were informed about the purpose of the study and accepted to participate in it, and understanding that their participation would not change or affect their grades and would remain anonymous. The researcher introduced himself and delivered a brief lesson about the research as well as instructions on how to take the VST and MFLL. The time of the test was limited, with 20 minutes allotted for the MFLL questionnaire and 40 minutes allotted for the VST.

Participant answers on the two instruments were analyzed through SPSS 22 statistical analysis program. To answer the first research question of this study, which attempts to determine the type of motivation of Iraqi EFL learners significantly affecting foreign language acquisition, descriptive statistics for the two groups were calculated. Then, an independent sample t-test was used to determine the mean differences between both groups. This enabled us
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Results of the data analysis is organized based on research question to better illustrate the findings of the study.

**RQ1:** Is there a statistically significant difference between Iraqi EFL male and female learners' extrinsic and intrinsic motivation to learn a foreign language?

To determine what type of motivation significantly affected the foreign language learners, a number of independent-samples t-tests were utilized to identify mean scores of each type of motivation. Table 1 below represents Iraqi students' motivation for learning a foreign language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Extrinsic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>271.091</td>
<td>526.580</td>
<td>-2.906</td>
<td>.005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>299.111</td>
<td>414.960</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intrinsic</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>280.000</td>
<td>660.527</td>
<td>-2.816</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>312.000</td>
<td>419.740</td>
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</table>

Table 1 gives the results of the independent samples t-test. According to the results of this test, there was a statistically significant difference in the mean of the scores for extrinsic motivation, between males (M=27.1091, SD= 5.26580) and females (M= 29.9111, SD= 4.14960), t (98) = -2.906, P= .005. While, for intrinsic motivation, no statistical significant difference was found between males (M= 28.0000, SD= 6.60527) and females (M= 31.2000, SD= 4.19740), t (98) = -2.816, P= .006.

To address the second research question of this study, the same steps of the statistical procedures regarding first research question were used to identify the vocabulary size of both sections.

**RQ2:** Is there a statistically significant difference between Iraqi EFL male and female learners' vocabulary size?

An independent-samples t-test (two-tailed) was used for testing the possible mean differences of both groups of the same class. As the Table 2 below presents the descriptive results and the results of the t-test for VST in both groups.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
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<tr>
<td>VST</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>6025.45</td>
<td>567.065</td>
<td>-.205</td>
<td>.838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6051.11</td>
<td>684.113</td>
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</table>

Table 2 gives the results of the independent samples t-test. According to the test results, there was not a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of both groups.
pertaining to the VST. Males (M = 6025.45, SD = 567.065) and females (M = 6051.11 SD = 684.113), t (98) = -.205, p = .838.

RQ3: Is there a statistically significant correlation between motivation and vocabulary size among Iraqi EFL learners?

Regarding the third research question of this study, a Pearson correlation test was employed to determine if there was strong relation between the motivation for foreign language learning and vocabulary size.

There was no statistically significant correlation between MFLL and VST, r = .080, n= 100, p= .431. Thus, there is not sufficient evidence state that a correlation exists in the population.

RQ4: Is there a statistically significant difference between Iraqi EFL male and female learners in terms of motivation and vocabulary size?

To answer the fourth research question of this study, independent samples t-test was used to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between learner motivation and vocabulary size in terms of gender.

The data given in Table 3 represent the motivation and vocabulary size of both male and female Iraqi EFL learners. For motivation, females scored higher than males and the mean was 61.11. While for vocabulary size, both males and females scored the same vocabulary size of 6,000 word-families.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
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<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MFLL</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>551.091</td>
<td>1.021.740</td>
<td>-3.365-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>611.111</td>
<td>687.625</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VST</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>60.254.545</td>
<td>56.706.463</td>
<td>-.205-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>60.511.111</td>
<td>68.411.264</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was statistical significant difference between motivation and both groups. The first group (M= 55, SD= 10.21740), and the second group (M= 45, SD= 6.87625), t (98) = -3.365-, P=.001. However, there was no statistically significant difference determined to exist between the vocabulary sizes of both groups. The first group (M= 55, SD=567.06463), and the second group (M= 45, SD= 684.11264), t (98) = -.205-, P=.838.

Discussion

This study aimed to determine which type of motivation significantly affects foreign language acquisition among Iraqi EFL learners at Duhok University as well as their vocabulary size and the relationship between the two. Thus, statistical analyses were conducted.
Motivation for foreign language learning

Regarding learner motivation this study revealed that Iraqi EFL learners were highly motivated to learn a foreign language for intrinsic and extrinsic reasons; however, Iraqi female students reported higher motivation than did males for learning a foreign language.

Iraqi male students were equally motivated to learn a foreign language for intrinsic reasons and female students were somewhat equally motivated to learn a foreign language for extrinsic reasons. The results of this study revealed that Iraqi male students are motivated to learn a foreign language because they want it for their future careers in terms of extrinsic reasons. Moreover, they realize the importance of foreign language acquisition in terms of intrinsic benefits. Female students were determined to be more they reported being highly motivated than males in terms of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Regarding extrinsic motivations, female students stated that learning a foreign language would someday be useful in obtaining a job. Pertaining to intrinsic motivations, they reported that they are excited and highly motivated to learn many foreign languages.

The second outstanding finding of this study relates to differences in motivation among Iraqi EFL learners. Although the analyses indicated that Iraqi female students were motivated to learn a foreign language due to extrinsic and intrinsic, the results of the independent samples t-test reported a significant mean difference between the motivation of both groups (male and female) for extrinsic motivation, both groups reported, and for intrinsic motivation, both groups reported. As mentioned above and according the results, Iraqi female students were highly motivated to learn a foreign language for extrinsic and extrinsic reasons. Similarly, a study conducted by Zubairi and Sarudin (2009) in Malaysia revealed that both groups were highly motivated to learn a foreign language in terms of extrinsic and intrinsic factors, but the first group was highly motivated extrinsically and the second was highly motivated intrinsically.

Vocabulary size

The second research question in this study concerned the English vocabulary size of Iraqi EFL learners at Duhok University. The Vocabulary Size Test was conducted to measure the total vocabulary size of participants in their third year of study in the English department. Test scores showed that the vocabulary size of both student groups (male and female) was over 6,000 vocabulary terms. Similarly, a study conducted by Alsalamah (2011) in Saudi Arabia among university female students divided into two groups indicated that both groups possessed the same vocabulary size as the participants of this study. Similar studies also have revealed that undergraduate non-native speakers of English departments usually possess a vocabulary size of 5,000 to 6,000 terms, and others have indicated that that the doctoral non-native speakers of English departments have 9,000 word-families (Beglar& Nation, 2007). This means that learners must be aware of their vocabulary size before reading any text. In addition, readers must comprehend nearly 98% or 8,000 words in the text to understand the text thoroughly as proposed by Hu and Nation (2000).

Measuring vocabulary size is an initial step for identifying the amount of vocabulary needing for successfully performing tasks at the university level such as reading stories and books, watching movies, and listening to conversations in the English language. For example,
several studies have determined that if a student wants to thoroughly comprehend a given text, he/she should know 8,000 words-families (Beglar & Nation, 2007).

There are two primary factors which may have influenced participant performance in the vocabulary size test of this study. The first factor is the presence of some culture-related words, meaning those words which frequently recur in the target language but are unfamiliar with the source language. For instance, the word nun refers to a woman who works in church and follows a strict religious ritual. The term nun is more viable in other religious sects but not in Islam. Even though this term is one of the 5,000 most frequently used words, 36% of the participants did not know the definition because it is a culture-related word. It is also important to note that the test starts with most frequently used words and ends with the least frequently used one. In other words, it began with easier words and finished with more difficult ones. Thus, so it is surprising to see that 36% of students could not define the term nun since it occurs at the beginning of the test.

The second factor that may have affected learners' vocabulary performance is that some words in the test tend to have the same meaning and pronunciation in the Kurdish language. The percentage of correct answers for such words was high. For example, the word demography means the study of population. This word has the same meaning and pronunciation in the Kurdish language. The Kurdish word for demography is ديموگرافى and 89% of the participants selected the correct answer. Even though the word demography is in the seventh 1,000-word level, still the percentage of selection for this word was high because it has the same meaning in the source language.

The relationship between learner motivation and vocabulary size

The third research question in this study concerned the relationship between motivation for foreign language learning and vocabulary size. In this study, it was expected that motivation would have a positive relationship with vocabulary size. However, there was not sufficient evidence of such relationship. In other words, there was no relationship between motivation for foreign language learning and vocabulary size and these might be due to two reasons.

The first reason is that the VST was arranged in terms of increased difficulty at each level, which might have negatively impacted students' scores because as the test increasing difficulty, students felt bored and tried to answer the final levels of the test correctly.

The second reason is that there was a different amount of time allotted for each instrument in the study. For the first instrument, MFL, 20 minutes were given, and for the second instrument, VST, 40 minutes were given to answer the questions in the test. Likewise, a study regarding motivation and vocabulary size conducted by Fontecha (2014) in Spain supports the findings of this study. Participants included 283 students selected from two grades, 2nd and 5th grade. The VST was used to find the total vocabulary size of the participants of each grade based on Version 2 of the 2,000-word level. Additionally, for measuring motivation, MFL was used. Results showed that there was correlation between motivation and vocabulary size among participants because no conclusive evidence was found.
It is worth mentioning that the findings of some studies contradict the findings of the present study. For example, a significant correlation between motivation and vocabulary size was not found to exist among 180 Spanish EFL learners in a study conducted by Fontecha and Gallego (2012).

The difference between learner motivation and vocabulary size
There was a statistically significant difference between the motivation for foreign language learning and vocabulary size. In the present study, a statistically significant difference was found to exist between motivation and vocabulary size, and the reasons for this difference could be that extrinsically motivated learners are better in learning languages. The finding of the current study parallel those of Kirova, Petkovska and Koceva (2012) and Najafi and Behjat (2013), who found that motivation positively effects students’ language proficiency and anxiety in learning a foreign language.

Conclusion
The present study investigated the relationship between foreign language learning motivation and vocabulary size among Iraqi EFL learners at Duhok University. In order to define the type of relationship between the two variables, several tests were conducted. The MFLL in this study was a questionnaire of motivation which was used to determine whether students are extrinsically or intrinsically motivated regarding foreign language acquisition. The results indicated that female students were highly motivated for both extrinsic and intrinsic reasons. In view of comprehending that intrinsic motivation is very fundamental to increase success in foreign language learning, it is essential that students whose reason to learn a foreign language is extrinsic in nature, will permanently encouraged to love the foreign language learning process. The findings also suggest that foreign language learning requirements, method in the classroom, the content of the courses and different policies may have enhanced extrinsic motivation to learn a foreign language. The second instrument was a VST which was used to measure the total vocabulary size of students. The findings showed that the vocabulary size of both groups was over 6,000 word-families. After obtaining necessary data, correlation analysis was performed to determine whether a relationship existed between learner motivation and vocabulary size findings indicated that there was no relationship between the two variables. Finally, looking for differences between the two variables, the results showed that there was statistically significant difference between them.

Note: *This study is part of a thesis completed by the first author under supervision of the second author.

About the Authors:
Mohammed KhaleelKhudhurALBODAKH is an MA student at Gaziantep University English Language Teacher Education department. His thesis research is related with Iraqi EFL learners’ vocabulary learning and motivation.

Dr. EmrahCinkara received his BA and MA degrees in ELT and currently teaching courses in English Language Teacher Education Department at Gaziantep University. His research interests include but not limited to psychological aspect of language learning, language assessment and
EFL teacher training. He has been the director of the School of Foreign Languages at of the same institution.

References

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How Do Indonesian Professional English Teachers Develop Their Pedagogical Competence in Teaching Implementation?

Dini Kurnia Irmawati
English Language Teaching
Universitas Negeri Malang, East Java, Indonesia and
English Program, Vocational Education Program
Universitas Brawijaya, East Java, Indonesia

Utami Widiati
English Language Teaching, Faculty of Letters
Universitas Negeri Malang, East Java, Indonesia

Bambang Yudi Cahyono
English Language Teaching, Faculty of Letters
Universitas Negeri Malang, East Java, Indonesia

Abstract
This article aims to investigate what kinds of Professional Development (PD) activities done by Indonesian professional English teachers in developing their pedagogical competence dealing with teaching implementation as well as to identify how those activities contribute to their competence development. This qualitative study was done in two stages namely subjects selection and investigation on the subjects’ professional development for their pedagogical competence in teaching implementation. The criteria of subjects selection have reflected the four competences that professional teachers need to possess which include personal, social, pedagogical and professional competences. The data collection was done by using questionnaire, interview guide, observation sheet. This study involves four selected professional English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers from Malang city, Malang Regency, and Batu town. The results show that PD activities done by the subjects include having discussion with colleagues, joining teacher association forum, attending seminars and workshops, taking courses, doing research, reading relevant sources, surfing the net, and doing team teaching. The ways how the subjects learn cover doing reflection, taking and giving feedback, discussing, broadening knowledge, researching, and problem solving. Referring to the limitation of this study, future researchers are recommended to do further study involving other aspects of pedagogical competence development, particularly the ones dealing with teaching preparation and evaluation on students learning.

Keywords: professional development, professional English teachers, pedagogical competence, teaching implementation

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Introduction

Nowadays, the importance of professional development for English teachers is extremely undeniable. This is supported by various studies which have been done related to the exemplary profile of professional English teachers and their experiences in developing their professionalism (Garet et al., 2001; Kolo, 2006; Anugrahwati, 2009; Vo & Nguyen, 2010; Fisher et al., 2010; Mustafa, 2011; Carlisle & Berebitsky, 2011; Amin, 2013; Husein, 2013; Priajana, 2015). In Indonesian context, the notion of teachers’ professionalism has also been given much attention. This can be seen through the issuance of the law concerning the position of teachers and lecturers which is known as The Teachers and Lecturers Act No.14/2005 (DEPDIKNAS, 2005). The act explains the systems of teacher education, teacher recruitment and teacher career development which requires teachers to continuously develop their professionalism in relation to their teaching profession. Furthermore, as what is stated in The Teachers and Lecturers Act No. 14/2005, Chapter IV about Teachers’ Academic Qualification, Competence, and Certification, in Article 10, teachers’ competences cover four components: pedagogical, personal, social and professional competences (DEPDIKNAS, 2005). Pedagogical competence deals with teaching skills including teaching techniques, curriculum development and assessment; personality competence is related to individual’s personalities which can support teachers’ jobs positively; social competence deals with the ability to socialize and communicate well with others; and professional competence deals with the mastery of English as a subject-matter and professional development as teachers.

Based on our review of previous studies concerning profile of exemplary English teachers as well as trajectory study with an eye on their experiences in developing their professionalism, some limitations of the previous studies are identified. This refers to the ways how professional EFL teachers are selected, the different level of education where the research subjects do their teaching practice, and the scope of EFL teachers’ competence being investigated. Thus, further studies related to how professional EFL teachers deal with their professional development are needed to contribute more to the body of knowledge related to English Language Teaching (ELT).

Literature Review

Among the competences that EFL teachers need to possess, pedagogical competence has become one of crucial aspects to be investigated because it deals directly with how the teachers run the teaching and learning process which aims to help students learn the target in achieving the learning objectives. Pedagogical competence is the ability of English teachers in teaching English as a foreign language in their teaching practice that covers their ability in relation to designing lesson plans, preparing teaching materials and media, implementing teaching strategies to promote students’ learning, evaluating students’ learning as well as doing teaching reflection.

The rationale of investigating pedagogical competence of professional English teachers further rather than their other three competences (personal, social, professional) is that because mastering knowledge about English itself would be meaningless for English teachers if they cannot help learners learn the target language.

Considering the place of English as a foreign language in Indonesia where learners do not use the target language for their daily communication, school context then becomes an important
place for them in learning the target language. This is in line with Richards (2010) who says that a language teacher needs to have language-specific competencies which include providing good models, maintaining the use of target language in the classroom, as well as conducting meaningful teaching and learning activities. He further states that learning how to carry out aspects in teaching the target language is an important dimension of teacher-learning for those whose mother tongue is not English. Furthermore, a study by Abad (2013) about English teachers’ professional development in Colombia has found out that teachers’ attitudes toward the language they teach play a key role in defining what goes on in the classroom. He further states that teachers’ strategies that promote language learning can help learners learn the target language better.

The importance of pedagogical competence of English teachers in relation to the subject matter they teach has encouraged the researchers to investigate how professional English teachers develop their pedagogical competence in teaching English in their day-to-day teaching practice. More importantly, there have not many studies done concerning specifically on how EFL teachers develop their pedagogical competence dealing with teaching implementation which refers to the teaching techniques that promote students learning.

In the context of English teachers, the term professional development can be used to refer to the process in which the teachers can increase their knowledge on both declarative and procedural (Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan et al., 2001:14). They further explain that declarative knowledge deals with all of the things about English. Meanwhile, procedural knowledge refers to skills that are related to processes, procedures and strategies that help teachers perform certain tasks in their teaching practice. For instance, skills that are related to how to teach particular material in a way that is fun and understandable to EFL students, how to manage group work, how to motivate students, how to deal with discipline matters and so on.

**Research Questions**

With regard to the importance of teacher professional development and the limitations of the previous studies, the present study aims to investigate how professional EFL teachers at Junior High School Level develop their pedagogical competence in teaching implementation. The research questions of the present study are then formulated as follows: (1) what kinds of PD activities are undertaken by Indonesian professional EFL teachers in developing their pedagogical competence in teaching implementation? and (2) how are the PD activities done by Indonesian professional EFL teachers help them develop their pedagogical competence in teaching implementation?

**Method**

Since the activities of EFL teachers to be professional and how those activities help them develop their professionalism are such a process that takes time, descriptive data are collected to answer the research problems. The main source of data is research subjects that are professional EFL teachers who teach English at the secondary schools. In addition to support information from the research subjects, other sources of data such as certificates or others’ supporting documents need to be used. Since this study seeks the process of professional EFL teachers’ professional development in developing pedagogical competence which aims to create a theory
based on the investigated phenomenon as the final product, grounded theory design is employed in this study.

**Data Collection and Instruments**

The study involves four selected professional EFL teachers in Malang city, Malang Regency and Batu town to be called as Professional Teacher (PT 1, PT 2, PT 3, and PT 4). This qualitative study was done in two stages, namely selecting the professional EFL teachers to be the research subjects and tracing back what they have done to develop their competence in teaching implementation. The data collection was done through questionnaire distribution, observation and in-depth interviews. Supporting and relevant documents were also used to gather data. The documents are those which can be used as the proof of what has been said by professional EFL teachers regarding their activities for professional development, such as curriculum vitae, certificates, portfolio, etc.

The ways in interpreting the result of steps in selection process are adapted from Amin’s (2013) study. The ways are described as follows: the result of observation sheet is calculated by adding up the scores each teacher gets in all four components of observation (teaching preparation, teaching implementation, evaluation of students’ progress and teaching reflection). The total score of those components in each teacher’s observed teaching sessions will be his or her final score. This final score is then used as one of criteria to determine whether the research subject candidate is categorized as professional. The research subject candidates that are categorized as professional EFL teachers are those whose scores are $\geq 89$. The rationale of deciding 60 as the minimum standard for EFL teachers’ professionalism is that because the score 89 shows that the teacher has mostly performed sufficient number of aspects that are listed in the teacher’s competence observation sheet. Table 1 shows the calculation of the score for each component in observation sheet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>The number of points to be observed</th>
<th>The minimum number of observed points</th>
<th>Obtained score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Preparation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Implementation</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of students’ learning</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Reflection</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total minimum obtained score</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>89</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After analyzing the result of teachers’ performance checklist, the researchers then also took account the result of students’ questionnaire. The calculation of the questionnaire was done by the following ways: since the range of the questionnaire is 1 up to 5 and there are totally 20
statements being asked, the range of the score will be 20 up to 100. The teacher with a minimum score of 80 was considered as professional. The research subjects, which are professional EFL teachers, are those who are considered professional based on both teachers’ performance checklist as well as questionnaire distributed to the students.

**Source of Data**

In order to answer the research question related to kinds of activities of professional development done by professional EFL teachers, the data were obtained from in-depth interview session with the research subjects. The questions asked in the interview guide cover kinds of activities completed with detailed description of each activity done by the teachers in relation to how they develop their pedagogical competence, such as kinds of activities, when they did those activities, what materials they learnt, etc. Furthermore, memos written by the researchers during the interview were also used to collect the data related to activities done by professional EFL teachers in developing their pedagogical competence in teaching implementation. Moreover, documentation was also done in order to support and triangulate the teachers’ answers.

Then, the data related to how the activities have helped professional EFL teachers develop their professional competence were obtained from interview session with the questions focused on how those activities help them improve their competences. For this purpose, follow-up questions were asked after the teachers mention about each activity done during the professional development process.

**Data Analysis**

The analysis of data in this study was done qualitatively by transcribing the results of the interview. The interview was recorded by using recorder. Then transcribing was conducted based on the record as soon as the interview has been conducted. Thus, the researchers were able to get meaningful information from the research subjects more comprehensively. Also, memo-writing was done in order to write additional information obtained during the interview. The transcript of the interview was given to the interviewees in order to make sure that what has been stated and explained by them is the same as what is written in the transcript. The researchers, then, could also revise, add, or delete the points as the interviewees checked the transcript. After validating the transcript with the interviewees, the researchers then did coding in order to analyze the data to answer the research questions.

**Results**

**Kinds of Professional Development (PD) Activities done by Indonesian Professional EFL Teachers in Teaching Implementation**

Kinds of PD activities in teaching implementation are presented based on the frequency and the category whether the activities belong to independent or institutionalized ones. Table 2 presents kinds of PD activities done by Professional Teacher (PT) in relation to the teaching implementation.
As what can be seen in Table 2, there are four kinds of activities which are mostly done by all the research subjects as the most frequent PD activity related to teaching implementation: (1) having discussion with colleagues at the same school, (2) joining Teacher association forum, (3) joining workshops and seminars, and (4) surfing the net.

All of the research subjects agree to say that having discussion with colleagues at the same school help them a lot in solving problems in their day to day teaching activities related to how to teach particular materials effectively. They often share tips related to the ways how to teach the materials well without making the students get too many difficulties in achieving the set learning objectives. Also, how to create a non-threatening atmosphere in class is the frequent topic to discuss with the colleagues at the same school. Then in relation to the activity of joining Teacher association forum as well as joining seminars and workshops, all the research subjects are also in line to say that they have done a lot of discussion with both the other participants and the invited experts in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) dealing with teaching techniques to teach materials more effectively and new insight of kinds of teaching technique to create interesting classroom atmosphere. Next, surfing the net is frequently done by all the research subjects when they are in need of looking for sources about what teaching techniques and teaching procedure that can be used to teach particular materials. They do this frequently since this can be done anywhere and anytime using their Smartphone or internet connection at their school. Even though PT 2 and PT 1 say that the internet connection at their schools is not that good, they still keep doing this frequently through their Smartphone.

In addition, the second most frequent activities which are done by three of the research subjects include joining short courses, reading relevant sources, and doing research. In relation to joining short courses, PT 1 and PT 3 have been selected as the representatives of professional teachers to be sent to Singapore to have training done by RELC. They have learnt a lot of things dealing with various teaching techniques in teaching language skills for junior high school students, how to understand students’ characteristics which are expected to help teachers to teach better or better results, as well as how to deal with the assessment. Also, PT 4 says that she once joined English courses done by British Council at UMM about teaching techniques and media. Next, in terms of reading relevant sources, PT 1 says that she prefers reading relevant books or internet sources to articles in the journals because the journals are too hard for her to understand. Different from PT 1, PT 3 and PT 2 state that they like reading not only relevant books but also

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>PT 1</th>
<th>PT 2</th>
<th>PT 3</th>
<th>PT 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Having discussion with colleagues at the same school</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Joining Teacher association forum</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Joining workshop and seminar</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Joining short course</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Reading relevant sources (books, journals)</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Surfing the net</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Doing research</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Having teamwork with colleagues (team teaching)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TEFL journals. They get a lot of information dealing with the implementation of teaching techniques by reading the journal. PT 3 further states that this has been done frequently since he was continuing his study in Master degree at TELF. Next, in relation to the activity of doing research, PT 2, PT 3, and PT 4 explain that they have done a number of classroom action research to see the effectiveness of the implementation of particular teaching techniques in their teaching context. Even though they have done the research, not all of the research reports have been published at the seminars or journals. They sometimes just keep the report for themselves for their archive because the report is usually written not in the complete part of a research. This means that they usually just implement the technique and see whether it works or no by using some criteria of success. The official report of the research is rarely written completely.

Next, the least frequent PD activity in teaching implementation which can be seen from its implementation by one of the research subjects is having teamwork with colleagues in doing team teaching. This is done by PT 4 who still thinks that having team teaching is essential. She further explains that the idea of team teaching is defined as having collaboration with the colleagues in designing lesson plans as well as implementing the lesson plans in their teaching context. They take turn to be the teacher (to be observed) and the observer (to observe), then discussing the result of the teaching together to find the weakness and the strength. This is similar to a lesson study. However, this does not mean that the other research subjects think that team teaching is unnecessary. The other research subjects still have teamwork with their colleagues, yet they are not really involved in team teaching activity. They just get involved in the informal discussion about the teaching techniques to be used in class.

Having presented a number of various PD activities in teaching implementation based on the frequency, the following content will then present how those activities are presented on the basis of the category whether the activities are done because of the research subjects’ own initiatives (independent PD activities) or because their institutions ask them to do so (institutionalized PD activities). Table 3 shows the activities based on the two categories of independent and institutionalized PD activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Institutionalized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Having discussion with colleagues at the same school</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Joining Teacher association forum</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Joining workshop and seminar</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Joining short course</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Reading relevant sources (books, journals)</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Surfing the net</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Doing research</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Having teamwork with colleagues (team teaching)</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that there are four kinds of activities which are classified into independent activities because the research subjects have their own initiatives to do those activities, such as having discussion with other colleagues at the same school, reading relevant sources, surfing the net, and doing team teaching. There are also two activities that are classified into
institutionalized ones because the research subjects’ schools ask them to do so which include joining Teacher association forum and joining short course. Also, there are the other two activities which are classified into both independent and institutionalized PD Activities in teaching implementation because the research subjects sometimes do those activities based on their own desire and some other times their institutions ask them to do so, such as joining workshops and seminars as well as doing research. Figure 1 shows the percentage of PD Activities in teaching implementation based on the category of independent and institutionalized activities.

![Figure 1](image)

*Figure 1* The percentage of PD activities in teaching implementation based on the category of independent and institutionalized activities

**How Professional Development Activities Help Indonesian Professional EFL Teachers Develop Their Competence in Teaching Implementation**

This part presents findings related how the various PD activities which have been undertaken by the research subjects help them develop their pedagogical competence in teaching implementation. The PD activities which are done by all of the research subjects include having informal discussion with colleagues at the same school, joining Teacher association forum, joining seminars and workshops, and making use of the internet. Meanwhile, the PD activities which are done by three of the research subjects are joining short course, reading relevant sources (books or journals), and doing research. Next, there is another PD activity which is undertaken by one of the research subjects, that is doing team teaching.

In relation to the activity dealing with having informal discussion with colleagues at the same school, all of the research subjects explain that this activity has helped them develop their competence in conducting teaching and learning activities in the following ways. First, they are able to get suggestions or learn from the colleagues related to which teaching technique(s) that is best applied to teach particular materials in order to help students learn more maximally based on their colleagues’ experience. Second, having received suggestions from their colleagues, they usually do not directly apply what their colleagues suggest them to do. They would analyze whether the suggestions are applicable to be applied in their teaching context by considering the students’ proficiency level and the practicality as well. Through this process, the research subjects have got the chance to improve their analysis skill regarding the practicality of the teaching...
technique. Next, having implemented the suggested teaching technique(s), the research subjects usually do the reflection and share it to their colleagues. In this process, the research subjects and the colleagues are then able to develop their analysis skill regarding the strength and the weakness of the applied teaching techniques. Thus, the information is going to be very useful for both of them to broaden their knowledge related to the practicality and effectiveness of particular teaching techniques.

Furthermore, joining Teacher association forum has also helped the research subjects develop their competence related to teaching implementation. They have got insights dealing with various teaching techniques which can be implemented for their teaching practices from the other MGMP members in the discussion session and from the invited speakers or trainers in the workshop session. Besides getting more knowledge, the research subjects are also able to get proposed solutions from other MGMP members related to their teaching problems. Also, peer teaching activities that they have done have given them chances to apply what they have known about teaching techniques and procedure as well as to get helpful feedback from other MGMP members and invited trainers.

In addition, the research subjects have also developed their competence in teaching implementation by joining seminars and workshops. They have got a lot of insight dealing with various interesting teaching techniques in teaching the target language. Also, they have got experience how to apply the presented teaching techniques in the simulation process during the workshops. Thus, they are able to get useful comments both from the trainers and the other participants related to whether they have implemented the technique well. Moreover, through the Q and A (Question and Answer) session, they get the chances to share their problems and difficulties in the teaching process in hope that they get proposed-solutions from the trainers to be applied in their teaching practices.

Next, making use of the internet is undeniable to be considered as another PD activity which has helped the research subjects in teaching implementation. They have got information dealing with the ways how to teach particular materials on the internet. However, they still need to select or adapt the techniques regarding their students’ proficiency level and the practicality. In other words, they do not directly adopt what they have found on the net to be implemented in their teaching practices. Also, they have obtained a number kinds of English games which can be applied in their teaching practices to make the students more interested in learning the target language. Through this process of selecting, adapting or modifying, implementing and reflecting what they have found on the net dealing with teaching techniques or procedure, the research subjects have developed their competence in teaching implementation.

Besides the four kinds of PD activities done by all of the four research subjects, there are also some of PD activities which are done by most of the research subjects. One of them is joining relevant courses. The present PD activity has been done by PT 1, PT 3, and PT 4. PT 1 and PT 3 who have joined the same ELT courses explain that they have learnt a lot through the process of material presentation about teaching techniques and classroom management by the speakers or trainers, Q and A sessions related to their problems in their teaching practices as well as the clarity of the presented materials, and peer teaching activity related to the implementation of the presented teaching techniques in which the research subjects get meaningful feedback.
about their performance. Additionally, PT 4 has also learnt how to implement particular teaching techniques and do simulation for the presented teaching techniques in the short course she has joined.

Furthermore, reading relevant sources (books or journals) has been also done by PT 1, PT 2, PT 3 in developing their competence related to their teaching implementation. By reading relevant sources, those three research subjects are able to broaden their knowledge related to kinds of communicative teaching techniques which can be applied in their teaching practices. Thus, they can select or adapt which teaching techniques that are best applied in their teaching context considering their students’ proficiency level and the number of the students. Also, they are able to get insight related to up-to-date teaching techniques which are considered effective to teach particular materials to the students in EFL context from the articles they have read. However, those three research subjects need to analyze whether the updated teaching techniques they have found in the articles are applicable in their teaching context or not.

Next, doing classroom action research has also help PT 2, PT 3 and PT 4 in sharpening their competence related to their teaching implementation. Through the stages they have gone through in a research, they are able to solve the existing problems in their teaching by implementing appropriate teaching techniques. More specifically, through the process of planning an action in which they have to prepare materials and decide which teaching technique to be implemented to solve the identified problems, they are able to sharpen their analysis skill in selecting which teaching technique to be used based on relevant consideration. Next, through the process of implementing the action, they have got the chance to implement what they plan in order to help the students solve their learning problems. Also, in the process of observation and reflection, they are able to observe the result of the implemented action and see whether the result has met the criteria of success. In the reflection process, they are also engaged in analysis the strength and the weakness of the implemented action in relation to the solving process of the identified problems. Having gone those process in the research, the three research subjects think that they have been able to develop their competence in teaching implementation.

Lastly, the PD activity dealing with team teaching has been done by PT 4 in helping her to develop her competence in teaching implementation. Since she is working with her teammate from designing the lesson plans, preparing materials and media as well as implementing what they have prepared in the teaching implementation, PT 4 states that she has learnt how to take and give suggestions a lot during those processes. Sharing what teaching techniques to be implemented to help students achieve the learning objectives or to solve the existing problems in the classroom context as well as getting meaningful feedback related to her performance in implementing the teaching procedure have helped PT 4 develop her competence in teaching implementation.

Discussion
With regards to the models of professional development of the research subjects in the present study in developing their pedagogical competence in teaching implementation, the overall findings have strengthened the previous studies regarding kinds of models which are commonly done by English teachers to develop their competence in relation to their teaching profession. Out of a number of kinds of PD activities undertaken by the subjects to develop the
their competence in teaching implementation, there are four PD activities which have been confirmed to be the trend as the most common PD activities done by all of the subjects. Those are joining teacher association forum, having informal discussion with colleagues at the same school, attending seminars and workshops, and making use of the internet.

The models of PD activities done by the research subjects involving teacher community such as joining teacher association forum (Teacher association forum) and having discussion with colleagues at the same school are similar to what is stated by Garet, Porter, Desimone et al. (2001), Datnow et al. (2002), Lay (2010) and Hismanoglu (2010) who say that having such kind of study group for teachers (either formally or informally done) is exceedingly helpful for them because this type of PD activity can be more responsive and have practical influence for teachers’ teaching practice. Moreover, the discussion part which has given the subjects chances to take and give meaningful suggestions to other MGMP members and their colleagues at the same school has confirmed the idea that involving colleagues as one of the sources in providing meaningful feedback related to the classroom practices is also one of contributive elements to the teachers’ professional development (Vo & Nguyen, 2010).

Then the PD activity dealing with attending seminars and workshops has also supported the previous studies concerning the importance of seminars and workshops for teachers’ professional development process. The aspect of the seminars and workshops which involves the invited experts to be the speakers or trainers as one of the contributive elements in the way how teachers learn is in line with what is stated by Carlisle and Berebitsky (2011) who explain that the presence of experts can help teachers to broaden their knowledge related to their problem-solving activity in the teaching practice. Still in line with this, a number of studies done by Garet, Porter, Desimone et al. (2001), Richards & Farrel (2005), Madya (2007), Smith & Gillespie (2007), Munera et.al. (2011), and Priajana (2015) have shown that such kind of training program or workshop is still often done and needed by teachers to help them improve their teaching competence even though there is a notion that it is the common type of professional development activity that is most critized in the literature in terms of its duration, content and activities (Garet, Porter, Desimone et al., 2001). In addition, the finding shows that all of the research subjects have made use of the internet as one of their PD activities is also in the same vein with Macia & Garcia (2016) who explicitly say that learning has become open through the use of portable devices and the availability of the internet has offered opportunities to enhance the teachers’ professional growth.

According to the research finding dealing with the ways how the PD activities help the research subjects develop their pedagogical competence in teaching implementation, it can be interpreted that there are three main kinds of learning types that contribute to the subjects’ competence development (individual learning, colleague-related learning, expert-related learning). The revealed conceptual framework of the learning process of the subjects in the present study can be seen in Figure 2.
Figure 2 The framework of how professional EFL teachers learn through their PD activities in developing their pedagogical competence in teaching implementation

As what can be seen in Figure 2, the three main kinds of learning process include individual learning, colleague-related learning as well as expert-related learning. Individual learning accommodates kinds of PD activities done individually by the subjects, colleague-related learning is addressed to kinds of PD activities involving colleagues or teacher community, and expert-related learning refers to kinds of PD activities involving the presence of experts or trainers. Those three kinds of learning types have contributed each other which means that what the subjects do individually for their learning can be also related to what they learn from their colleagues or experts. In other words, even though the subjects do kinds of PD activities which belong to each type of learning differently in terms of the frequency, all those three learning types have positively built upon their pedagogical competence.

Referring to the framework in Figure 2, it is then important to relate this with social learning theory as proposed by Wenger (1998) as well as situated learning theory by Lave (2009). The notion that the subjects have done a number of PD activities which are classified into colleague-related learning type has supported the social learning theory as proposed by Wenger (1998). This can be seen from the activities which emphasizes on collaborative experiences. Moreover, the subjects have been also engaged in practices with their colleagues...
and getting involved in the community. Furthermore, the problem-solving experience collaboratively with colleagues and doing team teaching in their teaching context have become the aspects of learning which are in line with the concept of social learning theory. Besides, the finding presenting the subjects’ activities in doing reflection for their day-to-day teaching practices and having context-specific learning through the discussion either with colleagues or experts is in line with the situated learning theory proposed by Lave (2009).

Conclusion

This study has revealed the ways Indonesian English teachers develop their pedagogical competence. Those Professional Development (PD) activities include joining teacher association forum, attending seminars and workshops, making use of the internet, having informal discussion with colleagues at the same school, joining ELT courses, reading relevant sources, doing research and team teaching. The ways how those PD activities contribute to the professional EFL teachers’ competence development in teaching implementation cover problem-solving, taking and giving feedback, broadening knowledge, getting insight from the experts, doing reflection, and researching.

Nonetheless, some limitations of the present study are noted. First, this study focuses on one of the aspects in pedagogical competence, that is teaching implementation. The other aspects of pedagogical competence dealing with teaching preparation and evaluation on students learning are still needed to be investigated further to contribute more to the body of knowledge related to EFL teachers professional development. Second, the length of teaching experience is not included in the criteria to select professional EFL teachers. Thus, future researchers can investigate further how professional EFL teachers from different category of the length of their teaching experience develop their professional development.

About the authors:
Dini Kurnia Irmawati is an English lecturer at Universitas Brawijaya. Right now, she is a student of doctorate program majoring in English Language Teaching at Universitas Negeri Malang. Her research interest includes the teaching of writing, speaking skills, and professional development.

Utami Widiati is an English lecturer at Universitas Negeri Malang. She has successfully written a lot of articles published not only in reputable national journals but also international ones related to reading skill, the teaching of writing, professional development, the teaching of grammar, etc.

Bambang Yudi Cahyono is an English lecturer at Universitas Negeri Malang. His research interest include the teaching of writing, applied linguistics, etc.

References


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Effective Solutions for Reducing Saudi Learners’ Speaking Anxiety in EFL classrooms

Suzan Hammad Rafada  
English Language Institute  
King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Abeer Ahmed Madini  
English Language Institute  
King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Abstract

Foreign language anxiety plays an essential role in language learning and negatively impacts on the whole learning process. This research aims to explore the Saudi learners’ perceptions of speaking anxiety in language classrooms and provide some effective and helpful solutions for reducing it. The sample of this study involved 10 Saudi female students, studying their foundation year at the English Language Institute (ELI), King Abdulaziz University. Their ages range between 18 to 20 years old. To reach a richer insight and better understanding of the research phenomenon, a qualitative approach was conducted. For gathering data, ten semi-structured interviews with ten Saudi female students from levels 102, 103, and 104 were used and then thematically analyzed using Nvivo 10 software. The qualitative data found that Saudi female students do feel worried and anxious in foreign language classrooms when speaking the foreign language. However, they showed a positive attitude and a willingness to improve their English speaking proficiency level as a way of reducing anxiety by watching English movies, using English internet sites, traveling abroad and talking to native speakers, doing more presentations, practice reading English books and joining English institutes during summer vacation.

Keywords: foreign language anxiety, reducing speaking anxiety, Saudi EFL learners, speaking anxiety

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1. Introduction

A considerable number of previous studies have proven that speaking is the most anxiety-provoking skill among the four main English language skills (Young, 1992). The ability to fluently speak a new language is perceived by English as a foreign language (EFL) learners as a complex task. In terms of practicing and participating in oral tasks, it is noticed that EFL learners are reluctant to speak and show an unwillingness to share in language classrooms’ discussions. Previous research on language anxiety has shed light on the most important and prominent causes that raise anxiety among EFL learners. For example, Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986) claim that there are three components of anxiety which are: communication apprehension; students’ fear of negative evaluation; and test-anxiety. In Saudi Arabia, the context of the current study, there is a quantitative study conducted by Alrabai (2015) in order to investigate the level and main sources of Saudi learners’ anxiety by using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) through a period of three years. His research findings reveal that the main cause of anxiety among participants is their communication apprehension due to lack of preparation before the English class. A recent study conducted by Rafada & Madini (2017), investigate the main causes of Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA) among female university students in Saudi Arabia. The qualitative part of the research finds that the main causes of speaking anxiety among the Saudi female students are due to their lack of vocabulary, teachers’ role in raising or reducing anxiety, peer anxiety, test anxiety and the weak educational system in the Saudi schools. Whereas, the quantitative data shows that the main causes of speaking anxiety are categorized into three main domains: causes related to the EFL teachers, causes related to the classroom atmosphere, and others related to the test. Therefore, this paper aims to further investigate Saudi students’ perceptions on speaking anxiety and provide some effective solutions in order to overcome this problem.

2. Literature review

2.1 Characteristics of anxious learners

Research has identified many features of anxious learners in foreign language classrooms. As an example, Burden (2004) claims that anxious students are often worried about the impressions of their peers. When confronted with a learning situation, anxious students feel uncomfortable, and sometimes they choose to withdraw from the whole activity. According to Burden (2004), some anxious learners strongly believe that they cannot perform well in the English subject, and therefore they form negative expectations, which lead to avoid any opportunities that may help them to enhance their communication abilities. In addition to their negative expectations in the language classroom, anxious foreign language students are generally less willing to participate in learning activities and perform worse than non-anxious students (Aida, 1994).

Moreover, Price (1991) describes learners who feel anxious in language classrooms as those having manifestations including panic, indecision, anger, and a sense of diminished personality. Oxford (2005) also describes other symptoms for anxiety such as general avoidance behaviors, for example, skipping classes or arriving late, physical actions or movements, like fidgeting or facing difficulties in producing the sounds of the target language, or physical ailments such as feeling tension or having a headache (as cited in Al-Šaraj, 2014).
MacIntyre & Gardner (1991) further describe the anxious learner as "an individual who perceives the L2 as an uncomfortable experience, who withdraws from voluntary participation, who feels social pressures not to make mistakes and who is less willing to try uncertain or novel linguistic forms " (p.112). Some students who suffer from a high level of anxiety may have a mental block against learning a foreign language (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986).

Moreover, Worde (2003) claims that anxious students may have some physical symptoms which include "headaches"; "clammy hands, cold fingers"; "shaking"; "sweating", "pounding heart"; "tears"; "foot tapping, desk drumming" (p. 8). She further states that avoidance is considered as one common manifestation of anxiety. One French student, in her study, reports that he often writes in his book or draws some pictures during the French class, which is a kind of avoidance.

Diagnosing the symptoms of anxious learners enables the teachers to understand the feelings of their students in order to support them and to provide them with a better learning environment. Moreover, identifying those manifestations will guide the teacher in differentiating between anxious and weak students. In order to investigate learners’ anxiety, identifying their characteristics and manifestations must be considered.

2.2 The impact of FLA on learners’ performance

Research has frequently revealed that anxiety can impede foreign language achievement and attainment (e.g. Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Krashen, 1985, MacIntyre & Gardener 1991; Price, 1991; Worde, 2003; Young, 1990). EFL learners often conceive the foreign language learning classroom as a stressful situation (Horwitz et al., 1986), and cite speaking as their "most anxiety-producing experience" (Young, 1990, p. 539). The cause of this feeling is due to their lack of ability to express themselves freely in the target language (MacIntyre & Gardener, 1991) and this feeling may lead to anxiety. Phillips (1991; 1992) claims that anxiety might have a negative psychological impact on learners’ performance when using the target language. Price (1991) also states that anxious students could believe that all other students are more proficient than they are, and this feeling may lead to more stress. When anxiety provokes, it can affect and disturb the cognitive foreign language learning process (MacIntyre & Gardener, 1994).

According to Krashen (1985), anxious students have an affective filter that hinders the learning process and make the learner unreceptive to language input, and thus, language acquisition does not progress. Crookall & Oxford (1991) further assert that language anxiety might negatively affect students' proficiency in language acquisition. Likewise, Horwitz (2001) notes that anxiety causes the potential problems for language learners as it stands in the way of the acquisition, retention, and production of the new language.

To sum up, foreign language anxiety is considered an essential phenomenon that needs to be investigated due to its negative impact on the learners' performance. Thus, this study seeks to tackle this issue that could impede students' learning progression.

2.3 Factors that help reduce foreign language speaking anxiety

2.3.1 The teacher’s role
EFL teachers can play a vital role in reducing their students’ speaking anxiety. Raising teachers’ awareness to avoid some inappropriate manners inside the classroom is viewed the first step for reducing students’ speaking anxiety. Ansari (2015), for example, indicates that teachers should avoid comparing students to each other, forcing them to talk, and humiliating and not respecting them. Ansari (2015) further adds that teachers should be creative in finding indirect ways for correcting their students’ errors.

An effective way to learn any foreign language is to use it actively by speaking. Unfortunately, speaking in the FL seems to provoke a great level of anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; Young, 1992). The role of the EFL teacher, then, is to support his/her students in order to master their target language by providing them with a variety of interesting EFL activities and practices that encourage them to speak up the language. However, students quite often do not consider articulating the language as a valuable chance for them to learn, they simply feel that such practices may increase their level of anxiety (Phillips, 1991). In other words, some students view language practicing, especially speaking, as an unfavorable situation that tests their abilities and associated with unnecessary emotions. An example of these activities is making presentations in front of the class. In fact, teachers should understand that language learning is a stressful situation for some students, and that they sometimes have a fear of negative evaluation from their teacher or peers. Kitano (2001) mentions that those students who have the sense of fear of negative evaluation are really in a great need of some positive reinforcement, such as positive comments. Ansari (2015) further suggests that teachers should make interventions in the classroom environment and create a supportive learning classroom atmosphere. This supportive atmosphere will help anxious students perceive it as uncompetitive. Moreover, pair and group work can also be incorporated (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009) which fosters a non-threateningly classroom atmosphere and gives a chance to anxious students to participate in the speaking tasks.

In addition, using technology is one of the 21st century aspects that most of the students like to maintain nowadays. So, it would be a great help for them if teachers would use such technology and integrate it into their teaching as a kind of coping mechanism with modernism as well as supporting EFL learners to get rid of their anxiety. As an illustration, an Iraqi case study has been conducted in order to assess how EFL students can take benefits of technology to learn English as a second language (Nomass, 2013). The results shows that most of the students preferred the use of technology, especially computers, in developing their second language learning. Thus, Nomass (2013) recommends that English language teachers should encourage their students to use technology in developing their language skills. Another study by Juana & Palak (2011) indicates that using the podcasting technology in a language classroom is very useful in supporting EFL students and improving their speaking skills. Therefore, it is the teachers' duty to stand by their students' side and try their best to release this fear and make those anxious students feel more relaxed.

2.3.2 Classroom activities' role

Research in the field of language anxiety seeks to prove that by providing interesting activities and utilizing new strategies, EFL students will be encouraged to communicate using the target language and therefore improve their speaking abilities. For instance, Alrabai (2014) has conducted an experimental study in Saudi Arabia, in which he investigates the effects of
anxiety-reducing strategies utilized by FL teachers on Saudi anxious learners. The researcher divides his study into two steps. In the first step, he investigates the main sources of FLA using the Foreign Language Anxiety Classroom Scale (FLACS). In the second step, 465 learners are divided into two almost equal groups, (experimental and control). A group of 12 teachers has been assigned to the study in order to practice some anxiety-reducing strategies with the experimental group. After 8 weeks of practice and observation, the results reveal that the intervention led to significantly decreased levels of FL anxiety for learners in the experimental group comparing to the control group. As a result, Alrabai’s study proves that classroom activities could play an important role in increasing the learners' motivation and progress.

Moreover, Ansari (2015) recommends some activities that help reducing students' anxiety such as role-plays. These kinds of activities were useful because students are given a "new persona with pseudo names" (p.43), which give them a chance of getting a new identity and protecting one's image. Therefore, the fear of negative evaluation is reduced by creating new and interesting activities in the language class, which in turn improves the learner’s speaking abilities and language proficiency as well.

2.4 Gap in the literature

Foreign language anxiety has a debilitating factor, which negatively affects a language learner. Research on language anxiety has related students' speaking anxiety to elements encircling communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation from the teacher or their peers, classroom anxiety and test anxiety. Few Saudi researchers have investigated the Saudi students’ perceptions of foreign language anxiety (FLA) and its effect on the learning process (Alrabai, 2015, Alsaraj 2014). The prime goal of this research is to examine Saudi learners’ perceptions of speaking anxiety in order to give them a chance to express their hidden feelings towards the unfavorable emotions that appear in language classes especially during speaking tasks. Then, providing them with valuable solutions to reduce their anxiety will be beneficial.

This study aims to answer the following two research questions:

1) What are the Saudi students' perceptions of foreign language speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms?
2) What strategies can be devised to help Saudi students reduce their foreign language speaking anxiety?

3. Methodology
3.1 Theoretical framework
3.1.1 Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis

In the past, foreign language researchers’ main concern was language itself, for example, the methods of teaching and language pedagogy. In the late 1970s, they started to investigate the affective variables that may affect the language learning process. Krashen (1985) argues that affective variables are one of the most important factors which may impede the learning process and that there is an "affective filter" or a "mental block" that is associated negatively with learning. When this block or filter is high, learning will be low and vice versa. Thus, learning can successfully happen when the degree of this affective filter is low. As a result, EFL teachers are
advised to lower this affective filter or block it. Otherwise, student’s learning will be affected or even impeded.

3.2 Research design

The qualitative design was applied in this research to gain an in-depth understanding of students' perceptions of speaking anxiety in EFL classes and to help on providing some effective solutions for overcoming this problem. In this study, ten Saudi female students were randomly selected from the elementary, pre-intermediate and intermediate levels (levels 102, 103, and 104 respectively) were interviewed. For validity and reliability purposes, the semi-structured interviews were conducted in Arabic to overcome the language barrier and then translated into English. The interviewees were allowed to speak broadly on the phenomenon and to develop ideas on the issues raised by the researcher during the interview (Denscombe, 2014). Therefore, utilizing semi-structured interviews enhanced the researchers' knowledge of the research problem and overcame their biases.

3.3 Data collection procedure

The researchers used semi-structured interviews with ten students studying their foundation year at the English Language Institute (ELI), King Abdulaziz University. Based on the themes generated from the interview and the literature review, the researchers were able to identify the Saudi female learners' perceptions of speaking anxiety inside the EFL classroom and elicit some of the effective solutions that could help the Saudi female students overcome this problem. The data were thematically analyzed using Nvivo 10 qualitative package.

3.4 Participants and Sampling

A total of (N= 10) participants were randomly sampled from different levels (102, 103, and 104) and from different campuses (Women's Main Campus and the Women's colleges) of the ELI, King Abdulaziz University. The ELI follows an integrated skills program of four modules, two in each academic semester. The program consists of four levels correlated to the Common European Framework References for Languages (CEFR). It is an international standard that describes language ability. All contributors in the study were Saudi female students who were native speakers of Arabic, aged from 18 up to 20 years old. They all placed at different proficiency levels at the ELI and were informed about the research topic and its aims before accepting to join the study.

4. Results

Analysis of the qualitative data was undertaken to explore students' perceptions of speaking anxiety in the Saudi EFL context. It also aimed to elicit some effective strategies suggested by the participants as possible solutions to overcome EFL speaking anxiety.

Ten face to face interviews were conducted with ten participants studying their foundation year at the ELI, King Abdulaziz University. Six of the interviewees were from level 102, one was from level 103, and the other three were from level 104. During the interviews, eight semi-structured interview questions were asked in order to investigate students' perceptions on speaking anxiety in EFL classes especially during their speaking sessions, and the aspects that should be present in the English teacher in order to reduce their speaking anxiety and what strategies do they use to reduce their speaking anxiety in the EFL classroom.
4.1 Research question 1 (What are the Saudi students' perceptions of foreign language speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms?)

To answer the first research question of the present study, the researchers asked the interviewees: What is the most difficult skill in English? Six participants confirmed that speaking is the most difficult skill in English. For instance, student A (level 102) said: "Speaking is the most difficult skill in English because I do not have enough words that can help me express myself clearly".

The following figure shows the interviewees' perceptions on the most difficult skill in English.

Figure 4.1 Speaking is the most difficult skill.

Figure 4.1 shows that Saudi learners view the speaking skill as the most difficult skill in English. Students A, D, and E were from level 102 and students H, I and J were from level 104.

The researchers then asked the participants: How do you feel when you speak English in front of the class and among your classmates? Six participants said that they feel embarrassed, and five expressed that they are not confident while speaking the target language. For example, student E (level 102) said: "I feel extremely embarrassed because my classmates might laugh at my language. In Saudi Arabia, we only speak in Arabic. It is a pure Arabic culture, so I feel myself strange when I talk in English". Student B also reported: "I feel embarrassed if I speak English in front of my classmates because if I make a mistake or mispronounce a word, they may laugh at me. Although I might know the answer, I prefer not to speak". In addition, student J (level 104) stated: "I feel embarrassed if I make a mistake in front of my classmates because they may laugh at my way of speaking".

The figure shows the number of participants who felt embarrassed while speaking the English language.
To conclude, it is apparent from figures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 that Saudi EFL learners view speaking English as a difficult and embarrassing situation inside the classroom. This negative thought has made them unconfident while speaking the target language in EFL classrooms, which consequently creates their speaking anxiety.

4.2 Research Question 2 (What strategies can be devised to help Saudi students reduce their foreign language speaking anxiety?)

The second concern in this study is recommending some useful strategies that may help Saudi students reduce their foreign language speaking anxiety in the classroom. Thus, participants' interview was also held in order to answer the second research question and to identify the coping strategies for speaking anxiety. The study data declared that the participants' coping strategies for speaking anxiety were associated with language improvement. That is, all participants mentioned their willingness to work on improving their vocabulary by watching
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English movies, using English internet sites, traveling abroad and talking to native speakers, doing more presentations, practice reading English books and joining English institutes during summer vacation to reduce experiencing speaking anxiety. These strategies are illustrated by the following participant comments:

"I will try to watch English movies a lot because I feel if I travel abroad I will not be able to communicate". (Watching English movies)
"I need to learn more vocabulary and see educational YouTube videos to improve my speaking skill". (Following educational websites)
"I think I should travel abroad to learn English better and to communicate with native speakers more because the culture here is not helping us to learn". (Traveling abroad)
"I need to practice speaking English more and do many presentations. I also need to talk to native speakers in order to improve myself". (Practicing the language by talking to native speakers)
"I need to practice reading English books more. I also need to use Instagram, Twitter or any English social media sites that could teach me English in order to improve my language". (Reading books, and exposing to English social media)
"I need to read a lot in order to increase my vocabulary". (Enhance reading skills)
"I need to study more and be prepared before any lesson". (Being prepared prior to the lecture)
"I need to help myself be better in English by joining English institutes in summer vacations and watching English movies". (Joining English institutes)
"I need to read a lot. I will also learn how to pronounce words correctly". (Pronouncing English words correctly)

4.3 Summary of interview findings data

To sum up, the interview findings of the 10 semi-structured interviews answered the two research questions of the current study. That is, it indicated that Saudi EFL learners do experience foreign language speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms. In addition to that, in order to cope with anxiety, participants themselves were encouraged to provide some solutions for their anxiety. For example, they recommended improving their vocabulary by watching English movies, using English internet sites, traveling abroad and talking to native speakers, doing more presentations, practice reading English books and joining English institutes during summer vacation to reduce experiencing speaking anxiety.

5. Discussion

This study aimed to examine students’ perceptions of foreign language classroom anxiety, with specific reference to speaking, among Saudi EFL learners. The following two research questions were tackled in this research:

1) What are the Saudi students' perceptions of foreign language speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms?
2) What strategies can be devised to help Saudi students reduce their foreign language speaking anxiety?

5.1 What are Saudi students' perceptions of foreign language speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms?
The first research question this study seeks to answer is the participants' perceptions of foreign language speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms. The semi-structured interview findings revealed that Saudi EFL learners studying at the ELI were anxious in their speaking classes.

The qualitative study indicated that six participants out of ten confirmed that speaking is the most difficult skill in English. In addition to that, the participants uncovered that they feel embarrassed and unconfident while speaking the target language. Consequently, this embarrassing situation leads them to be anxious in the EFL classroom. In fact, this is an expected finding due to the relationship between anxiety and second language learning. For instance, Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) provided a specified definition for language anxiety when they described it as "the apprehension experienced when a situation requires the use of a second language with which the individual is not fully proficient" (p. 5). Additionally, they pointed out that foreign language anxiety is different from other kinds of anxiety, and that there is a relationship between anxiety and learning proficiency. Moreover, within the context of language learning, (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986, p. 128) defined anxiety as "a distinctive complex of self-perception, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process". Therefore, in the case of the Saudi learners', who learn English as a foreign language, and whose mother tongue is Arabic, it is expected to feel anxious while speaking the target language because it is a unique experience that requires the learners to communicate using a language that they have not mastered perfectly.

5.2 What strategies can be devised to help Saudi students reduce their foreign language speaking anxiety?

One of the aims of conducting the 10 semi-structured interviews in this study was to answer the second research question and to identify the coping strategies for speaking anxiety. Since female Saudi learners feel anxious to participate in EFL classrooms, as this study found out, the researchers provided some recommendations for teachers, curriculum designers, and classroom practice to cope with foreign language speaking anxiety and to enhance the learning process in the ELI.

As mentioned before in the theoretical framework of the current thesis, Krashen (1985) claimed that the learning process might be impeded by some affective variables. He also argued that there is an "affective filter" or a "mental block" that is associated negatively with learning. If the affective filter is high, learning will be low and vice versa. Therefore, learning a foreign language can successfully happen when the degree of this affective filter is low. Hence, it is essential for teachers to take the first step to help students reduce their affective filter and cope with anxiety-provoking situations in the EFL classroom.

The study data indicated that participants' coping strategies for speaking anxiety were associated with language improvement. All interviewees reported that they are willing to work on reducing their speaking anxiety by watching English movies, using English internet sites, traveling abroad and talking to native speakers, doing more presentations, practice reading English books and joining English institutes over the summer vacation to reduce experiencing speaking anxiety.
A first step to restrict speaking anxiety is to highlight the role of the instructor in eliminating language anxiety among learners. EFL teachers should remind their students that speaking anxiety is not only common among Saudi learners but is a universal phenomenon among foreign language learners (Alrabai, 2014). Moreover, raising teachers’ awareness of the importance of establishing a good rapport with their students is very crucial. They should tolerate their students’ mistakes and create a supportive and positive classroom environment. This understanding and helpful atmosphere will help boost the students’ self-esteem and alleviate anxiety.

In order to enhance learners' opportunities to practice the target language, English clubs should be introduced to them. For example, students may share their daily routines with their classmates (Alrabai, 2014). In order to improve the Saudi students' proficiency level, it is essential to expose them to English culture. This goal is going to be attained, as the participants recommended, by utilizing the internet as a strong and effective source of practicing speaking inside the classroom. For instance, they should be encouraged to listen to the news in English and come to class the next day and retell it in the classroom discussion. This way the student can be more prepared before class and speak in class enthusiastically.

Another way to reduce students' anxiety in class is to choose some topics of their interest and suitable for their proficiency level. For example, they may discuss some topics related to their religion and culture. Encouraging them to discuss such interesting topics is likely to motivate them to talk freely without feeling worried about making any language mistakes. One of the most direct ways to mitigate anxiety is to “make the message so interesting that students forget that this is in another language” (Krashen as cited in Young, 1991, p. 433).

In terms of the difficulties that Saudi learners experience in understanding the teacher, Saudi students' mother tongue is Arabic, and they have a little background in English. Therefore, it is difficult for them to understand the teachers when they speak only in the target language. Thus, it is highly recommended by the researchers of the current study that the teacher should use her body language in order to give a chance to the learners to follow her instructions. Tai (2014), in his article, “The application of body language in English teaching”, encouraged all English teachers to use their body language in the English classrooms. He stressed the importance of the body language for keeping the interaction between the teacher and the student, enhancing teaching effectiveness and improving the reading, listening and speaking skills.

Instead of attending long hours in English classrooms, that lasts from three to four hours every day, practicing old teaching methods and focusing merely on the textbooks, one hour from this long lecture can be devoted to speaking practice in a lab. This solution will not only reduce the long boring hours of English instructions but also will give the students the opportunity to practice the language more. Concerning the limited time for speaking the target language inside the EFL classrooms, students must be given more chances to utilize the language by involving them more in the learning process through interesting and attractive activities.

With regard to the weak education Saudi learners acquire at schools, it is advised that they start teaching English intensively at schools from grade one. It is highly recommended to train students from an early age how to present a presentation in front of the class, encourage
them to share in class discussions, and involve them in the whole learning process. Abdan, 1991 (as cited in Al Harbi, 2015), emphasized the importance of starting teaching the English language from the first grade in Saudi Arabia. Krashen, Long, & Scarcella (1979) argued that learning the target language at an early age is conceived better than learning it when one becomes an adult because adult learners may fail to reach a native-like proficiency in the target language (as cited in Oyama, 1976). Moreover, Oyama claimed that adult learners could experience "fossilization" in which their progress stops at a certain level. Therefore, Saudi curriculum designers must put the aging factor into consideration when designing the Saudi curriculum. This is because the aging factor plays a crucial role in affecting the adult learners' propensity for speaking the target language fluently and naturally.

Implementing some new learning approaches that focus on helping the students to be the center of the learning process will be really effective, and students will be encouraged and motivated to learn. The flipped learning approach, for example, is considered one of the instructional strategies which boost the learner-centered approach in which the students are encouraged to be autonomous learners. In the flipped classroom, students can get benefited from class time "by spending it on practical application, not on inactive lecture" (Cole, 2009, as cited in Arnold, 2014). Herreid & Schiller (2013) asserted that the flipped classroom is attractive in terms of "the availability of internet resources including audio and video on virtually any subject". They added that this approach "seems to have singular appeal to students in this electronic age where videos, in particular, have found a special place in the heart of the awesome generation" (p. 62). They further recommended the flipped classroom as it gives the opportunity to the learner to listen to lectures or watch videos at home. Therefore, they come to class well prepared and ready for any discussion.

In the ELI, teachers have access to blackboard, a Learning Management System, which may help in implementing the flipped learning in their teaching. Students may watch some online lectures and videos sent by their teacher via blackboard. Consequently, they have the material prior to the lecture in order to prepare themselves for the class discussion with the guidance of the instructor. Therefore, more time can be spent in class on improving their language skills with the help of their teacher and peers. In one way or another, the teacher should work as a facilitator who responds to questions while students refer to the teacher for only guidance and providing feedback. The significance of using the flipped classroom is that it intentionally shifts instruction from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered model in which class time explores interesting topics that match students' needs in order to engage them in the content. Communicative approaches to teaching and learning are also encouraged which foster the interaction between the learner and the teacher. This is supported by Khan & Mahrooqi (2015) who recommended using the communicative approaches inside the class to reduce Omani tertiary students' anxiety. As a matter of fact, if these approaches are applied in language learning, the students will be highly motivated to learn, participate and evaluate their learning progress. Moreover, their speaking skill will improve, as they are prepared before class and ready to speak in class.

In order to curb students' peer anxiety, pair and group work activities are preferable, and it is also advised to avoid competitiveness among students. According to Tsiplakides & Keramida (2009), pair and group work can be incorporated in order to foster a non-threateningly classroom atmosphere and gives a chance to anxious students to participate in the speaking tasks. Another
research conducted by Ansari (2015), aims to provide EFL teachers with practical strategies for reducing foreign language speaking anxiety stemming from students’ fear of negative evaluation from their peers and perception of low ability. His study indicated that teachers should avoid comparing students to each other, forcing them to talk, and humiliating and not respecting them. It has been noticed in the current research that eight out of ten of the interviewees prefer to work in pair and group work during speaking tasks. Therefore, EFL teachers should help students feel comfortable and relaxed inside the classroom by joining them in pairs and group work tasks so that they get encouraged to participate.

5.3 Limitations of the study

The results of the current study are not generalizable to all Saudi EFL learners as they are restricted to specific levels in ELI, King Abdulaziz University. In addition, the study is focusing only on females, as the researchers could not have male participants due to certain social regulations in Saudi Arabia.

5.4 Recommendations for future study

In view of the findings and the limitations of this study, the following suggestions are provided for further research in the field of foreign language anxiety. Future studies may observe several classes to record EFL learners’ speaking anxiety. Additionally, this study encourages future studies to explore foreign language anxiety with the rest of the English skills, such as writing, reading, and listening. It was clear from the semi-structured interviews conducted in this study that Saudi students also view writing as one of the most difficult skills in English. Therefore, future studies that encompass the difficulties that Saudi students face in writing will be beneficial.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the current study further investigated foreign language speaking anxiety among Saudi female learners. It explored the perceptions of 10 Saudi female students who were studying their foundation year at the English Language Institute (ELI), King Abdulaziz University. By using a qualitative approach, data was gathered by means of 10 semi-structured interviews. The study findings uncovered that the majority of the Saudi female learners feel worried and anxious while speaking the target language. The main aim of conducting this study was to provide some solutions for teachers and curriculum designers in order to support students in coping with their foreign language speaking anxiety and thus improve their language learning proficiency.

About the authors

**Suzan Hammad Rafada** is currently a lecturer at the English language institute (ELI), King Abdulaziz University. She recently achieved her master degree in TESOL from King Abdulaziz University in (2017). She started teaching English since 2004 and had a comprehensive teaching experience to primary and high schools for both governmental and international schools in Saudi Arabia.

**Abeer Ahmad Madini** is an assistant professor of Applied Linguistics at the English Language Institute (ELI), King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Her current research projects focus on assessing the effectiveness of applying e-learning tools in the EFL classrooms.
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Examining the Relationship between E-Learning Styles and Achievement in English among Moroccan University Students

Azize EL Ghouati
Department of English Studies, School of Arts and Humanities
Ibn Tofail University of Kenitra, Morocco

Abstract
The aim of the study is fourfold: to examine the nature of relationship between visual learning style (VLS), auditory learning style (ALS), kinesthetic learning style (KLS), and read/write learning style (R/WLS) and students’ English achievement (EA) in technology-based learning environment among Moroccan university students. The present study adopts a quantitative research design. Therefore, the main instruments are questionnaires, and English achievement tests. Both the questionnaires and language tests are analyzed and interpreted quantitatively. The reliability of the questionnaire sections and scales as well as tests constructs matches the criterion for acceptable internal consistencies (α=70). The statistical tools used in order to help analyze and interpret data include descriptive and inferential statistics which make use of frequencies, percentage, and Correlation tests. Following what has been hypothesized; the test results do not support the four research hypotheses claiming there is no statistically significant relationship between the VLS, ALS, KLS, and R/WLS and students’ level of EA. The findings of the present study highlight some implications to improve students’ achievement in English with the help of e-learning style preference.

Keywords: computer-based learning, educational technology, English achievement, learning styles, sensory modality, VARK strategies

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1. Introduction

Technology has become a significant means for the uplifting of educational quality. It has expanded globally and rapidly over the years to the extent that millions of university students are using it (Colley & Matlby, 2008). In Morocco, like any other parts of the world, the government has been an enthusiastic supporter of educational technology (El-Mandjra, 2001). Researchers (Parson, 1998; Alexander & McKenzie, 1998) pinpoint that while implementing the new technology into the process of teaching and learning, educators stress the paramount importance of assessing how this new technology can influence learning. Patently, exploring students’ learning style preference, namely visual learning style (VLS), auditory learning style (ALS), kinesthetic learning style (KLS), and read/write learning style (R/WLS) in technology-based learning helps teachers understand how students learn in different ways. In such types of learning, information and communication technology (ICT) is considered as the glue that binds the learning achievement.

2. Related Review of Literature

It has been acknowledged that students have no single learning style, and there is no style more or less effective than the other. Therefore, if students are aware of their preferred learning styles, they would then be more able to acknowledge their learning strengths and weaknesses. According to researchers (e.g., Wynd & Bozman, 1996; Graf, Kinshuk., Chen & Yang, 2009; Lightner, Doggett & Whisler, 2010), the ultimate goal of identifying students’ learning styles is that a “one size fits all” learning style does not cater for learner’s unique differences in processing information. Admittedly, this may inhibit effectiveness in learning (Wynd & Bozman, 1996). Specifically, identifying students’ learning styles is advantageous process. Therefore, it (a) provides instructors with more information about their learners, particularly the ways in which they retain and process information, (b) helps teachers spot learners’ problems, and (c) enhances learners themselves to be aware of their strengths, and weaknesses in the learning (Graf et al., 2009).

Given the fact that ICT has increased rapidly in the field of education, learners are now gaining more knowledge employing other educational technology forms in their learning approach. Knowingly, learning styles have been evidenced to play an influential role in students’ reactions to ICT-based programs (Childress & Overbaugh, 2001). According to Battalio (2009), students’ learning styles are closely related to high academic achievement in ICT-based learning contexts. The results “have shown significant associations between students’ learning styles and success in distance education, and offer insight into the relationship between learning style and mode of delivery” (p. 83). In the same token, Lightner et al. (2010) also state that learners in ICT-enhanced learning must be capable of dealing with difficult learning situations because they are required to make immediate decisions. Hence, learning styles are significant for measuring, and predicting good achievement in such a context. For the same reasons, Topçu (2008) argues that, the teachers’ “awareness of their students’ learning styles and cultural context may be helpful to foster performance in web-based learning environments” (p. 916). Coole and Watts (2009) examined e-learning styles in computer-based learning, and propose the need for multiple learning styles modes for the purpose to cater for individuals’ preferred learning styles, and therefore gain more proficiency in English.
3. Research Methodology

The present study primarily has the purposes to explore students’ LS within a Moroccan institution of higher education, the Department of English Studies in Meknes. Inspired by the VARK learning style model (Fleming, 2006), the present study is designed to address the following hypotheses:

- **Research Hypothesis 1:** There is a significant relationship between VLS and students’ achievement in English in ICT-based learning environment.
- **Research Hypothesis 2:** There is a significant relationship between the type of ALS and achievement in English among the participants.
- **Research Hypothesis 3:** There is a significant relationship between the type of KLS and students’ achievement in English.
- **Research Hypothesis 4:** There is a significant relationship between EFL students’ existing types of R/WLS adopted and their achievement in English.

The subjects of the present investigation are non-randomly sampled 81 respondents of Moroccan university students within the Department of English Studies, Meknes. They are targeted just because they are easier to recruit, and aware of their computer skills and learning style preference. The main instruments incorporated are questionnaires, and English achievement tests. Based on Fleming & Baume’s (2007) model in the existing literature in the field of learning styles, the VARK learning style questionnaire is reported to be a sound, efficient and outstanding theoretical tool for examining e-learning style preferences among language learners. Therefore, the VARK learning style questionnaire (VARKLSQ) is used as a data collection tool to identify and assess students’ learning styles in computer-based environment. Precisely, this measure consists of four dimensions: (a) visual learning style, (b) auditory learning style, (c) Kinesthetic learning style, and (d) read/write learning style.

Basically, the adapted English tests are administered as part of the present study. They are meant to collect data on English achievement (EA). Four constructed achievement tests are used: (a) listening, (b) reading, (c) writing, and (d) speaking.

To achieve the research purposes in terms of interpretation of the data obtained, two different types of data analysis are used. As a case in point, both the questionnaire and achievement tests are analyzed quantitatively using different statistical methods with the help of the Statistical Package for the IBM statistics program (SPSS). First, *Cronbach Alpha Coefficient* (α) is calculated to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire and test constructs. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations are also calculated for all scales, statements and tests. Second, inferential statistics including *Correlation* tests are used to determine the strength of associations as well as the level of significance, the relationship between the two variables: Types of LS (IV) and EA dimensions (DV). For ordinal, and interval scales, *Spearman's rho Correlation* is commonly appropriate, and serves the purposes of the current research analysis. It ranges from -1 to +1, where the value r = 0 indicates an absence of correlation, the value r = 1 means a perfect positive correlation and the value r = -1 means a perfect negative correlation. In other words, the variables vary together in the same direction when there is a positive correlation. In a negative correlation, the
variables move in the opposite direction. A statistically significant correlation is shown by a probability $p$-value of less than 0.05.

4. Research Results

The Cronbach’s reliability test for the LS scale is assessed by 20 items. The results of the Cronbach alpha range from the highest $\alpha=.74$ to the lowest reliability $\alpha=.70$, with the read/write scale demonstrating the highest reliability $\alpha=74$, and the auditory scale representing the lowest. This is followed by both the visual and kinesthetic scales $\alpha=.71$. For the overall LS scale, the finding of the Cronbach alpha is $\alpha=.73$. Hence, the 20 items exhibit internally consistent measures of the four LS scales in this analysis. Worth noting is that the reliability evidence for all the four achievement test sections range from $\alpha=.69$ to $\alpha=.75$, with listening test section indicating the highest reliability $\alpha=.75$, and writing test section the lowest $\alpha=.69$. Reading, and speaking test sections have $\alpha=.71$ and $\alpha=.73$, respectively. The overall language test has an alpha coefficient of $\alpha=.67$ indicating, therefore, an acceptable internal consistency of the tests constructs.

4.1. The E-learning Style Questionnaire Section

The purpose of this section is to measure the e-learning style of 81 EFL students. The LS scale reflects students’ learning style preference in ICT-based learning environments. The respondents are invited to choose from 1 to 5 points on a scale which ranges from “strongly disagree”, one point, to “strongly agree”, five points. The results shown, Table 1.1, refer to the number of responses to each of the five options of every item in the Likert.

Table 1.1: Descriptive Statistics for each LS Scale: VLS, ALS, KLS, and R/WLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LS Scale</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual Learning Style</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>14.4568</td>
<td>2.85504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditory Learning Style</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>14.0370</td>
<td>2.93873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinesthetic Learning Style</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>13.1111</td>
<td>3.02903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read/Write Learning Style</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>12.3457</td>
<td>3.30968</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Number (N) of responses; N = 81; Scale Used: 1 = strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree.

As suggested by Table 1.1 the LS scale is designed to measure four LS dimensions: VLS, ALS, KLS, and R/WLS. The mean score of the VLS use among the participants is the highest with (M=14.45, SD=2.85). The mean score (M=14.03) which is scored by the same respondents concerning the use of ALS is rated the second with a spread of data around the mean (SD=2.93). However, the respondents' mean score on the KLS is (M=13.11, SD=3.02), followed by the lowest score for R/WLS (M=12.34, SD=3.30).

The choice of the two learning styles, VLS and ALS, indicated by the close mean scores is suggestive. That is, the participants prefer both “visual” and “auditory”. However, the “kinesthetic”, and “read/write” learning styles are used so often.

4.2. The English Achievement Tests

The total score of the English achievement tests in the present investigation is 40, ten out of ten for each of the four language skills: Listening, reading, writing, and speaking. As
suggested by Table 1.2, the achievement scores obtained through the English tests are grouped as the minimum (10.00), and maximum (32.50). The average mean scoring of the overall English achievement is identified as (M = 22.11) with (SD = 5.16). Specifically, the mean scores for the four language skills are reported in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Skills</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening (L)</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>5.9506</td>
<td>2.21304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading (R)</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>6.3210</td>
<td>2.15538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing (W)</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>4.9012</td>
<td>1.45220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking (S)</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>4.9444</td>
<td>1.22729</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean scores of the four language skills range from the lowest (M=4.90, SD=1.45) to the highest (M=6.32, SD=2.15). Overall, the highest mean score is reading (M=6.32, SD=2.15). This is followed by listening (M=5.95, SD=2.21), speaking (M=4.94, SD=1.22), and finally writing with (M=4.90, SD=1.45).

4.3. LS Relationship with EA

It has been hypothesized that there is a significant relationship between VLS score and EA score. However, the correlation analysis reveals that there is a weak, negative and non-significant correlation between VLS and both reading [rho (81) = -.049, p = .663] and speaking [rho (81) = -.140, p = .212]. In a dissimilar way, there is a weak positive correlation between VLS and both writing and listening which is statistically non-significant [rho (81) = .010, p = .932]; [rho (81) = .007; p = .953], respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations between VLS and EA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spearman's rho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaking</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contrary to what we have hypothesized, the correlation between the two variables is statistically non-significant at Sig. (2-tailed) value, which is higher than the significance value p=0.05. Thus, we accept the null hypothesis, and conclude that the data do not support the research hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between VLS and EA.
Exposing the Relationship between E-Learning Styles

For the Second research hypothesis, the Spearman’s rank-order Correlation analysis is conducted to examine the strength of association (rho), and level of significance (p-value) between ALS and EA. A further analysis of the Correlation test, Table 1.4, indicates that there is a negative, small non-significant correlation between ALS and both listening \[ \text{rho (81)} = -.119, p = .28 \], and speaking \[ \text{rho (81)} = -.114, p = .31 \]. However, the correlation is positive, small and statistically non-significant with reading \[ \text{rho (81)} = .153, p = .17 \]; and positive, weak and non-significant with writing \[ ((\text{rho (81)} = .045, p = .68) \].

Table 1.4: Correlations between ALS and EA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Auditory Learning Style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaking</strong></td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the p-value is larger than the theoretical value which is .05, the data do not give you any reason to conclude that the correlation is real. Therefore, we accept the null hypothesis, and conclude that the scores of students’ ALS and EA are not significantly correlated. Admittedly, we have no compelling evidence that the non-significant correlation is due to chance.

For further analysis on the type of relationship between LS and EA, the Spearman’s rank order Correlation test, Table 1.5, displays that there is a small, positive and non-significant correlation between KLS and reading score \[ \text{rho (81)} = .100, p = .37 \]. However, it is weak, positive and non-significant with both writing \[ \text{rho (81)} = .068, p = .54 \], and listening \[ \text{rho (81)} = .084, p = .45 \], and weak, negative, and non-significant correlation with speaking \[ \text{rho (81)} = -.072, p = .52 \].

Table 1.5: Correlations between KLS and EP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Kinesthetic Learning Style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Given the fact that the $p$-value is higher than the significance level ($p=0.05$), the correlation is not statistically significant and the two variables are not related. Therefore, we can accept the null hypothesis and conclude that the data do not support our research hypothesis.

To explore whether there is a significant relationship between R/WLS, and EA scores, a Spearman's Correlation test is run to address the fourth research hypothesis. The Spearman rank-order Correlation result, shown in Table 1.6, reveals that there is a weak, negative and non-significant correlation between 81 respondents’ R/WLS score, and reading score [$\rho (81)=-0.064, p=0.57$], a very weak, negative and non-significant relationship with listening score [$\rho (81)=-0.008, p=0.94$], and a small negative non-significant relationship between R/WLS and speaking [$\rho (81)=-0.205, p=0.06$]. However, the relationship between R/WLS and writing is very weak, positive and non-significant [$\rho (81)=0.014, p=0.90$].

Table 1.6: Correlations between R/WLS and EA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Correlation Coefficient</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>0.942</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>-0.064</td>
<td>0.571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>-0.205</td>
<td>0.066</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, these findings do not support the research hypothesis that respondents with higher R/WLS scores tend to have higher achievement scores. Otherwise, respondents with low scores in R/WLS would tend to have higher scores in their EA scores or the other way around. Hence, we accept the null hypothesis, and conclude that the two variables are not associated with each other.

5. Discussion of the Results

It has been discovered that the respondents within the Department of English Studies of Meknes prefer the visual and auditory learning style modes. As generally acknowledged, students have certain levels of preference in each type of learning style, and the majority of them have dominance in one or more styles of learning. This has been shown in the present study by
the mean scores of the visual and auditory learning styles indicating (M=14.45, SD= 2.85) and (M=14.03, SD=2.93), respectively. As a result, we can infer that most students possess multiple learning styles or a combination of learning styles. It is also suggestive when it comes to the general mean scores of the respondents’ use of kinesthetic and read/write learning styles with (M=13.11, SD=3.02), and (M=12.34, SD=3.30). The results are in line with Halsne and Gatta (2002) who claim that online learners are predominantly visual and auditory learners. Obviously, preference for such learning styles seems to suit the very nature of ICT-based activities requiring students to read, and hear. Nonetheless, the efficiency of visual style could be influenced by cultural experiences or contexts given the fact that learning styles grow over time as a result of exposure to culturally driven practices.

In investigating the nature of relationship between visual learning style (VLS), and English achievement (EA) among the respondents, the findings of the Correlation analysis reveals that there is a non-significant correlation between VLS and listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Undoubtedly, for the sample of Moroccan university students, VLS is not a strong predictor of foreign language achievement. Simply put, the findings are in contradiction with other research findings (Ehrman & Oxford, 1995), reporting that academic achievement is related to students’ learning styles. In their research, Kia, Alipour, and Ghaderi (2001) find that among their respondents, those with VLS have the greatest academic achievement. Possible explanations for these findings refer to the fact that students are taught in a way compatible with their learning style. Otherwise, the results are much related to the cultural context of the respondents.

The key findings that revolve around whether there exists any relationship between the types of auditory learning style (ALS) adopted and the respondents’ level of English achievement (EA) concern Research Hypothesis 2. To be more precise, Moroccan students learn best when information is presented aurally, and educational technology can serve this learner's style. Though most information is not presented aurally, students’ participation and collaboration are accomplished well in technology-based learning. However, the Correlation test value displays a non-significant relationship between ALS and listening, reading, writing, and speaking. This is further confirmed by a study of Asian international students whose general academic performance is not related to their learning style preference when the primary mode of instruction in their courses is auditory (Ladd & Ruby, 1999). On the other hand, Carbo (1983) explores the perceptual learning styles of readers, and concludes that high reading achievers prefer to learn through their auditory senses, while poor readers have a stronger preference for other learning styles. This could be explained by the fact that culture is a strong determining factor influencing students’ preferred learning styles.

Though the kinesthetic learner learns best by doing, it is quite difficult to sit still for long periods of time. Unlike the VLS and ALS, the respondents of the present study do not largely depend on processing information via kinesthetic mode as they study on their computers. The findings of the Spearman's rank order Correlation test also shows that there exists a non-significant correlation between the type of KLS and listening, reading, writing, and speaking scores. These findings are in contradiction with Carbo’s (1983) study which examines the learning styles of readers. The results of the study reveal that poor readers have a stronger preference for tactile and kinesthetic learning style. This could be explained by the fact that
preference for KLS seems to be culture-specific, and fits the very nature of web-based activities requiring students to practice hands-on tasks.

Different from VLS, and ALS, read/write learners do not depend extensively on reading e-materials, and written e-notes. Unfortunately, e-notes often do not capture the same information that a student is taught at class. The findings also reveal a non-significant relationship between R/WLS score and listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Differently, Rakap (2010) investigates the impact of learning style variable on learners’ achievement in a web-based education. The findings reveal that students with read/write learning preference exhibit the highest level of success in the test scores (M=55.133, SD=6.151).

6. Conclusion
The ultimate purposes of the present investigation are to examine the nature of relationship between the four independent variables: VLS, ALS, KLS, R/WLS and respondents’ level of EA in ICT-based environment. By addressing our research hypotheses, there is no statistically significant relationship between the four types of LS, and EA as reflected in the four-skill scores. The present study is an attempt to explain and make a better use of respondents’ existing types of LS preference and fix any flaws affecting their EA. Among its implications, top courseware designers and decision makers should devise courseware with considerable attention to students’ learning styles, and the language skills being taught. Therefore, one way to identify students’ e-learning style preference, and maximize their English attainment is through appropriate quantitative tools. Then, students should report and interpret their learning styles to fully understand what helps their learning so that they can learn with technology tools which best suit their learning style preference (Cutolo & Rochford, 2007). Finally, teachers/courseware designers should adopt a multiple teaching style approach to their pedagogy to foster positive learning outcome at different language levels among students (Smith & Dalton, 2005).

About the Author:
EL GHOUATI Azize is a teacher of English. He is also a Ph.D candidate in the Centre of Doctoral Studies, Ibn Tofail university of Kenitra. El Ghouati graduated from the School of Arts and Humanities with a BA in Linguistics, and MA in Language Acquisition and Research. His main research interests are in the areas of language learning, learning styles, and ICT.

References
Examining the Relationship between E-Learning Styles

EL Ghouati


Using Dictogloss Tasks: Attention to Form in a Collaborative Classroom Activity with Female Translation Students at King Saud University

Dina Mohamed Alsibai
Department of English Language and Translation
College of Languages and Translation
King Saud University

Abstract
This longitudinal study mainly attempted to investigate the effectiveness of one type of Focus on Form (FoF) language task (i.e. dictogloss) on female Translation university students’ grammatical competence. In general, since second language learners experience difficulties with grammatical tenses, these dictogloss tasks (which were developed by Wajnryb (1990) and preformed either with pairs or small groups) were utilized to find out whether their application lead to better performance on grammar tests, particularly in regard to verb tense accuracy. The objective of this study was to examine the effects of using the dictogloss task procedure on female Translation university students enrolled in Grammar (1) at the College of Languages and Translation (COLT), King Saud University (KSU), Riyadh. The study also aimed to survey participants’ attitudes and perceptions toward the application of dictogloss tasks. The researcher applied a quasi-experimental design model and survey research. The findings of the study demonstrated that in general, there was no significant statistical difference in verb-tense performance between the three groups’ weekly test scores that were immediately administered after presenting dictogloss tasks, but most students, in both experimental groups, expressed satisfaction with the dictogloss task as a whole. It is recommended that future researchers investigate whether and to what extent FoF tasks, such as the dictogloss, are effective for the different proficiency levels for which they are intended to appropriately generalize the findings to other contexts and/or language skills, and identify how instruction and reinforcement can be best designed to promote second language learning.

Key Words: dictogloss, focus on form, FoF, grammar, traditional exercises

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Introduction

Over the years, language instructors in the College of Languages and Translation (COLT) at King Saud University (KSU) have complained about students’ language problems, especially about their inability of using tenses correctly, even at the higher levels of the program. Such observations, unfortunately, are not limited to COLT’s context, as this appears to be a wide-scale issue faced by many second language instructors.

In accordance, educators are always seeking different approaches and techniques to teaching the language skills since it is of utmost importance to try to remedy these language weaknesses early on in their language studies before they reach monumental proportions which often become irreparable as more and more time passes. When performed appropriately, it has been found in previous literature that using various Focus on Form (FonF) activities – those that integrate both traditional methods of classroom instruction with communicative approaches – have helped in improving some of these language weaknesses.

Motivated by this realization, this study seeks to investigate the effectiveness of one such FonF language task on students’ grammatical competence, known in the field as the dictogloss task, in which learners interact with one another to produce a written reconstructed version of a text that has been read to them by the teacher. It is claimed that the dictogloss promotes negotiation of both meaning and form, giving learners a chance to reflect on their own output, in a fun communicative environment during pair and group work (Pica, 1997).

Purpose of the Study

This study attempts to investigate the effectiveness of dictogloss tasks in improving verb tense usage among female Translation university majors enrolled in Grammar (1) at COLT, KSU. Further, this study seeks to determine these students’ attitudes and level of satisfaction towards the dictogloss procedure.

Research Questions

This study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. Are traditional grammar exercises combined with dictogloss tasks (performed by female Translation students at KSU either in pairs or in small groups) more effective than, less effective than, or equally effective as traditional grammar exercises alone in the short-term learning acquisition of English verb tenses?

2. Are traditional grammar exercises combined with dictogloss tasks (performed by female Translation students at KSU either in pairs or in small groups) more effective than, less effective than, or equally effective as traditional grammar exercises alone in the longer-term acquisition of English verb tenses?

3. Will there be a significant improvement in subjects’ performance on the culminative verb tense posttest in the experimental groups? And if so, which group will have significantly improved the most?

4. Will students who received verb tense practice using dictogloss in pairs report different attitudes than those using dictogloss in small groups?
Significance of the Study

1. Language teachers might be encouraged to try out a variety of FonF collaborative activities, such as the dictogloss, when teaching any of the other language skills courses.

2. The results expand the theory about this type of collaborative work providing data about using the FonF approach in pair and group work among female university students.

3. More information about collaborative tasks among college students is useful to skills textbooks or syllabi designers who may try to include more integrative FonF tasks.

4. This study has hopefully contributed to the field of second language acquisition and Applied Linguistics in general; and more specifically, the study has shed some light on an area which was not explored in previous empirical studies focusing on dictogloss studies and that is of (a) comparing students’ test results of post-traditional exercises only vs. post-traditional exercises and dictogloss tasks, either done in pairs or in small groups, and (b) obtaining students’ feedback regarding their feelings and attitudes about doing the dictogloss tasks.

Limitations of the Study

The scope of this investigation involved the study of female level one Translation majors at COLT, KSU. It was also limited to their Grammar (1) course – specifically to only eight English verb tenses. Hence, researchers and practitioners are cautioned not to apply generalizations from this study to populations and contexts that differ from the sample.

Literature Review

Since the Focus on Form (FonF) approach constitutes a rich area of enquiry, the following literature review will shed light on its theoretical background, as well as the conceptualization and actual implementation of the dictogloss task in a classroom situation.

The Focus on Form (FonF) Approach in Grammar Pedagogy

After the rising popularity, then slow decline of the immersion communicative approach in the 1970s which advocated the exclusive use of meaning-focused activities in language classrooms with no focus on grammar (Nassaji & Fotos, 2004), it became clear that the this methodology was insufficient for the development of target-like proficiency (Mayo, 2002). It is true that learners in immersion programs are able to convey meaning in their second language but as Swain (2001) states, they normally do so with nontarget-like morphology and syntax in spite of years of exposure to second language (L2) input.

This realization has led to a revival of more focused grammar teaching (Ellis, 2016; Nassaji & Fotos, 2004; Pica, 1997; & Storch, 2002). According to Park (2004), this enthusiasm is the result of an effort to strike a balance between traditional approaches which emphasize accurate production of L2 forms, and the communicative approach which focuses on meaningful communication in real contexts. The culmination of this has come to be known as Focus on Form or (FonF) (Long, 1997). Long specifically contrasts this idea with traditional grammar instruction, which he calls Focus on Forms (FonFs), where “specific linguistic forms are taught directly and explicitly” (Ellis, 2016, p. 405).

In a discussion on how to implement FonF in the classroom, Ellis (2002), after reviewing 11 articles on FonF instruction, concluded that the FonF approach can contribute to the acquisition of implicit knowledge. Furthermore, he pointed to two factors that appear to influence its
success: (1) the choice of the target structure and (2) the extent of the instruction. Ellis maintains that a FonF approach which involves extensive instruction aimed at simple noticeable structures is more likely to succeed. In the same vein, more recently Arabgary and Izadpanh’s (2016) study found that their FonF group acquired the explicit plural -s but not the less salient copula be.

Armed with an understanding of the basic concept of FonF and a desire to put it into effect, the question now is, how should a teacher proceed? Murray (1994) states that classroom interaction in which learners work together in small groups has played a major role in communicative second language teaching for over fifteen years. Indeed, a number of studies have demonstrated the potential pedagogical advantages of small group work over whole class instruction.

According to Murray (1994), among these advantages are: “a greater quantity of learner practice opportunities, a more individualized pace of instruction, increased personal investment leading to higher motivation, and a positive affective climate” (p. 1). Further benefits of small group or pair work are discussed by (Mayo & Pica, 2000). They state that most learners tend to welcome the change of classroom format that interactive activities offer, causing learners' communicative competence to improve in terms of both fluency and communication strategies since such collaborations often resemble face-to-face interaction that naturally occurs outside the classroom.

Jacobs and Young (2004) also agree that collaborative learning offers opportunities for helping students work together more effectively, however, they are also careful to point out that collaborative learning is much more than just putting students together in groups and asking them to work together. Instead, there are several principles which educators need to be familiar with in order to be able to understand what is exactly involved in helping groups succeed, such as individual accountability which “is the feeling among group members that each has responsibility for the group’s success” (p. 118).

A Collaborative FonF Output Task: The Dictogloss Task

One way to create a collaborative situation in the L2 classroom context is through the use of dictogloss, a classroom procedure initially introduced by Wajnryb in her 1990 book Grammar Dictation. According to its author, during the small group interaction and co-reconstruction of passages, the students come to notice their grammatical strengths and weaknesses and then try to overcome these weaknesses when attempting to co-produce the text (Nassaji, 2000).

Sullivan and Caplan (2004) explain that dictogloss is an activity where the teacher reads out a short passage twice at normal speed to the class. The first reading is to get the students orientated to the topic without writing down anything. When the teacher reads the text for the second time, students take down key words and phrases. After that, the students are put in groups. Within a set time, the group members share their notes and reconstruct the passage, aiming at both grammatical accuracy and textual cohesion. The different groups then take turns to present their versions of the text to the whole class. These various reconstructed texts are analyzed and corrected by all the students with their teacher’s assistance.
According to Jacobs and Small (2003), the procedure is an integrated skills technique for L2 learning in which students are encouraged to focus some of their attention on form and that all four language skills are involved – listening (to both the teacher reading the text and to the groupmates discussing the reconstruction), speaking (to group mates during the reconstruction), reading (notes taken while listening to the teacher, the group’s reconstruction, and the original text), and writing (the reconstruction). Furthermore, Linden (1994) indicates that dictogloss, which involves writing from memory, is a powerful technique for learning the spelling, grammar, punctuation, and word patterns.

A useful tip is brought up by DeFilippo and Sadow (2006). They state that when the students’ texts are being compared to the original text, teachers should point out the differences and praise students for expressing themselves in a different way. More recently, Li, Zhu, and Ellis’s (2016) study in fact revealed that immediate – as opposed to delayed – post-dictogloss feedback resulted in learners increased and accurate usage of the targeted past passive tense. Indeed, dictogloss can further heighten students’ motivation to learn if teachers reward task competition with simple rewards which can be “in the form of materials such as grades, award certificates, sweets or simply a word of praise, a handshake or a round of applause or the right to choose a topic for the next dictogloss activity” (Sai, 2004, p. 7).

Storch (2002) calls attention to the fact that classrooms will no longer be monopolized by teachers in the classroom. According to the author, one of the best features of dictogloss tasks is that they can be used at different stages of any lesson across the curriculum. It is encouraged that teachers create dictogloss passages from local newspapers, the Internet, or any other source from which they can choose a timely topic and easily adapt it to the level of their students (DeFilippo& Sadow, 2006; & Ma, 2004).

To be sure, recently, studies have shown great feedback from learners who have participated in dictogloss tasks. HeeJeong (2015) reports: “DICT [dictogloss] task group students positively changed their perceptions and understanding as well as their attitudes towards the English instruction given” (p. 2288). Additionally, learners participating in dictogloss have noted how much they welcomed being given ample chance to practice the 4 language skills, and how “giving and receiving peer feedback” (p. 12) made them realize what they had learned and what they needed to improve on (Stewart, Rodríguez, & Torres, 2014).

**Empirical Studies Focusing on Dictogloss Tasks**

The effectiveness of dictogloss in promoting L2 grammar knowledge has been empirically examined in several studies; however, the most notable of these studies are those conducted by Merrill Swain and her colleagues (Kowal& Swain, 1994; LaPierre, 1994; Swain &Lapkin, 1998; and Lapkin, Swain, & Smith, 2002, as cited in Swain, 2001), primarily carried out in French immersion program contexts in Canada.

Swain (2001) reports that results from two decades of research suggests that though immersion students are able to understand much of what they hear and read in the L2 language, most research has clearly demonstrated that students did not develop native-like proficiency in French. As a result of this study, and numerous others as well, Swain and others have examined
the effect of using activities, such as the dictogloss task, which encourage students to simultaneously focus on meaning and language form.

These investigations have looked at a variety of subject populations and included tests of various kinds. For example, in one study, Kowal and Swain (1994, as cited in Swain, 2001) tried using dictogloss tasks in grade 7 and 8 immersion classes, and found that they elicited reflective talk about the language of the text they were reconstructing. LaPierre (1994, noted by Swain 2001) also studied grade 8 early French immersion students over a period of about a month. It was hypothesized that when learners reflected on the language they produced (metatalk) to complete the dictogloss task, that metatalk may be a source of second language learning.

A few years later, Swain and Lapkin (1998), carried out research similar to that of LaPierre's, however, it differed in that two tasks were employed; namely, dictogloss and a jigsaw story construction task, using a pretest/posttest design. One goal of the study was to see if one type of task led students to focus on form with greater frequency than the other. It was found that approximately 90% of the reflexive verbs used by the dictogloss students were correct (as opposed to 60% via the jigsaw task), which illustrates the importance of the dictogloss in providing grammatically accurate input. Later, further positive results for dictogloss were also documented in a similar study (Lapkin & Swain, 2000).

Noteworthy is Kuiken and Vedder’s (2002) paper which investigated the effect of interaction between L2 learners during a dictogloss task on the acquisition of the passive form. They focused on whether acquisitional gains would be better if students worked alone or in small groups during the text reconstruction phase of the dictogloss procedure. Although the quantitative analysis of their data did not demonstrate any significant statistical gain, the qualitative analysis revealed that interaction often stimulated noticing, which led to forming new linguistic structures. Abbasian and Mohammadi’s (2013) analysis also found mixed results when applying dictogloss to writing: “It can enhance their organization and mechanics but not content, language usage and vocabulary of EFL learners” (p. 1371).

While many studies focused on investigating dictogloss and/or jigsaw tasks, Yeo (2002) took a slightly different direction. In Yeo’s study, dictogloss is compared with an input enhancement technique in which the targeted language form is enhanced with bold and large letters. The results indicated that the dictogloss group outperformed the input enhancement group in learning English participial adjectives.

In addition to examining the impact of different FonF tasks, some started realizing the need to investigate whether and to what extent collaborative dialogues are effective for different proficiency levels. Lapkin, Swain, and Smith’s (2002) posttest data provided evidence that learning is assisted by multiple opportunities in a meaningful context, especially for higher-proficiency pairs. Fortune’s (2005) collaborative writing task experiment also showed that advanced learners used metalanguage much more often than their intermediate counterparts. Along the same line, Shin, Lidster, Sabraw, and Yeager (2016) additionally found that “low-level students paired with high-level partners benefited most” (p. 366).
Conclusion

Indeed, the efficacy of dictogloss tasks in promoting L2 grammar knowledge has been empirically examined in many contexts; however, there are no studies to the best of the researcher’s knowledge that had assessed the value of such tasks in the Middle East. Hence, motivated by the continued growth of research on the effect of dictogloss tasks on students’ grammatical competence, this study explores its effectiveness in a Saudi context which is important for establishing the generalizability of the technique. Furthermore, the majority of past studies investigating the dictogloss technique were conducted with pre-university/college students. As such, applying the dictogloss with university students becomes pertinent to get an insight into whether such tasks work with students at this level.

This study also sheds some light on two other previously unexplored areas: (a) comparing students’ test results of post-traditional exercises only vs. post-traditional exercises and dictogloss tasks, either done in pairs or in small groups, and (b) getting students’ satisfaction feedback. Teachers in a Saudi context need to know whether activities like the dictogloss can be successfully used for reinforcing various language items, within different skills courses, and most importantly, whether female university students enjoy doing dictogloss more in small groups or pairs and how they truly feel about the dictogloss procedure in general.

Methodology

Research Design

This longitudinal study draws on primary data collected from 3 groups enrolled in Grammar (1) at COLT, KSU over a period of 3 months. The research approach was a hybrid of two approaches: (a) quasi-experimental research since it was not feasible to randomly assign subjects to treatments – in more specific terms, this type of design is considered as a non-equivalent control group design since even though the subjects were not randomly assigned to groups, there still was a control or comparison group, and (b) survey research. The study comprised of four stages. In the first stage, a pretest was distributed to all the 3 groups. The second stage was the experimental period whereby the treatment was implemented with 2 groups (i.e. dictogloss done in pairs and in small groups). The third stage involved the 3 groups of students doing the posttest and in the final stage, the two experimental groups were surveyed by completing an attitude questionnaire in class.

Subjects

The population of this study is female Translation students at COLT, KSU. The study began with approximately 121 subjects; however, due to missing data from irregular attendance of some subjects, it was narrowed down to 106 subjects as following: Group A (n = 40), Group B (n = 36), and Group C (n = 40). The experimental groups (B & C) included 76 subjects who studied eight tenses and did traditional-type textbook exercises as well as doing the dictogloss in pairs in Group B, and in groups of four in Group C. Meanwhile, the 40 subjects in control Group A studied the same eight verb tenses without undergoing dictogloss treatment; they only did the traditional-type exercises found in their textbooks.

Material

Nine dictogloss texts were prepared while taking into consideration the topics of each text, their level of difficulty, their length, and their internal cohesion, hence, the vocabulary used in these passages was of an appropriate level for level 1 students. The first text was used for the
training session in week one and the eight other texts were utilized during the eight-week experimental period (See Figure 1.).

Last night, while I was doing my homework, Angela called. She said she was calling me on her cell phone from her biology classroom. She said that the professor was at the front of the hall lecturing while she was talking to me. I couldn't believe that she was making a phone call during the lecture. I asked what was going on. She said her biology professor was so boring that several of the students were actually sleeping in class. When Angela told me she was not satisfied with the class, I mentioned that my biology professor was quite good and suggested that she switch to my class.

Figure 1. Sample text used in the dictogloss procedures focusing on the past progressive tense (Verb Tenses, 2004)

Instruments
Two instruments were selected to collect data for each of the four dependent variables; fill-in-the-blank tests were used for research questions 1, 2 and 3 (See Figure 2.), whereas a questionnaire was used for 3 (See Figure 3.). Instruments are explained below in relation to the collected data.

The Past Progressive Tense
Name: ____________________________        Group: _______        Score: ____/10
Instructions: Fill in the blanks with the simple past or past progressive forms of the verbs in parentheses. (½ point each)

Min: Look at this photo. That's how my apartment (look) __________________ right after the 1994 Los Angeles earthquake.

Bob: That's terrible. What (you, do) __________________ when the earthquake (strike) __________________?

Min: I (sleep) _________________. It (happen) _________________ early in the morning.

(Note: The rest was removed due to space limitations)

Figure 2. Weekly test sample used in the dictogloss procedures focusing on the past perfect tense (Fuchs & Bonner, 1995, p. 12)

1. Ruminative pretest and posttest. These were designed to have exactly the same 10 fill-in-the-blanks format. These items tested the same set of eight verb tenses in order to assure that they were equivalent enough to be reliably used to compare the subjects’ performance at the beginning and end. Both tests were of the same difficulty level, however, they did have different content to eliminate the retention effect in the posttest. Pretests yielded no significant statistical difference between the three groups at the beginning of the study at the p>.05 level [F(2, 113) = .084, p = .919] (as shown in Table
1), which meant that the final carminative verb tense posttest would show whether the dictogloss, in general, had longer-term effects or not.

Table 1
Mean averages of subjects’ pretest scores out of 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control Group A (n = 40)</th>
<th>Experimental Group B (n = 36)</th>
<th>Experimental Group C (n = 40)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Weekly verb tense tests.** These were administered during the experimental period to all three groups immediately after the subjects finished the dictogloss activity, on a weekly basis after finishing the exercises in their textbooks. Each of these eight fill-in-the-blanks tests assessed only one verb tense each week depending on the tense that was taught, and thus used in the dictogloss, that week (See Figure 2). The weekly tests were crucial in assessing the immediate or short-term effect of the dictogloss.

**Tests Validity and Reliability**

Two kinds of validity were considered. First, content validity – each of the culminative verb tense pretest/posttest, and eight other verb tense tests consisted of items aimed at assessing the eight verb tenses with equal weighting of scores assigned to each item/blank. Given that all the tests sufficiently covered the entire body of content that was intended to be measured, it can be assumed that content validity was achieved. In addition, all tests in this study also have face validity. All 10 tests were shown to three experienced Grammar teachers at COLT and all of them confirmed the face validity of these tests.

Regarding reliability, the two tests, that would later be used as the pretest and posttest for this study, were piloted with a sample (n = 35) of level 1 Grammar students at COLT who were not involved in any way with the experiment. Parallel forms reliability was calculated for the scores of the two tests in order to determine how similarly the two test forms functioned. A reliability coefficient of 0.738 was calculated on the scores of the two measures taken by the same group of subjects which indicates that the participants’ responses to the two instruments were generally reliable.

3. **Students’ Attitude Questionnaire.** The type of response scale employed in the questionnaire used in this study was the Likert five-point scale. In writing the items of the questionnaire, the investigator followed Rodger and Brown’s (2002, p. 143) suggestions on writing good survey items. The first six items focused on students’ overall level of satisfaction with dictogloss, while the last four concentrated on eliciting their opinions about certain procedures (See Figure 3.). After the questionnaire was written, it was given to three of the researcher’s colleagues and tested for face validity.

Additionally, to insure its comprehensibility to all students, the researcher gave the questionnaire to five (Level 1) students who were entirely uninvolved in the experiment. A proper explanation was given to these students who understood the whole questionnaire except
for two words which were later adjusted. And since this questionnaire was developed for the present study, internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha which was calculated to be .79, with a range of item-total correlations from .65 to .81, almost all of which are above the acceptable level of 0.70.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students’ Attitude Questionnaire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please rate each statement by marking the box below the number according to the following scale:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 = Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel that the dictogloss activity was enjoyable in general.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I feel that doing the dictogloss activity has given me more confidence to talk with others in English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I wish we had done a dictogloss activity for all the grammar forms we took this semester; not just for the eight verb tenses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I feel that the dictogloss activity has improved my learning process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I wish more teachers would try out the dictogloss activity in other skills courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I wish the teacher had spent more time on doing dictogloss activities and less time doing the exercises in our textbook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. While doing the dictogloss activity, my partner(s) and I talked in English most of the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. While doing the dictogloss activity, I was able to find out what grammatical forms I still didn’t know well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The length of the texts that were read by the teacher was suitable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The length of time that we were given to complete the reconstruction of the text was enough.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Figure 3. Students’ Attitude Questionnaire_

**Results**

The scores retrieved from the eight tense tests, the pretest, and the posttest were used for comparing the differences between the 3 groups to see whether or not there was a significant difference between treatment groups (B & C) and the control group (A). Statistical computations were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 11.5 for Windows. The alpha-level of significance \( p < .05 \) (95% confidence) was determined prior to data collection and was used throughout the study. Mean score differences were considered significant whenever the \( p \)-values obtained in the calculations were more than \( \alpha = .05 \).

**Research Question One**

Research question one poses: Are traditional grammar exercises combined with dictogloss tasks (performed by female Translation students at KSU either in pairs or in small groups) more effective than, less effective than, or equally effective as traditional grammar exercises alone in
the short-term learning of English verb tenses? Descriptive analyses as well as a series of one-way between-groups ANOVAs with Tukey tests were used to investigate any statistically significant differences in the weekly verb tense test findings of the control and experimental groups.

Figure 4. Means scores of all subjects in verb tests (1-8)

An overall look at the results (Figure 4.) reveals that group C’s means scores were the highest for most of the verb tense tests as this was the case in six out of eight tests. This indicates that students who did traditional grammar exercises coupled with dictogloss in small groups achieved slightly better scores than those who only did traditional-type grammar exercises and/or dictogloss in pairs. Also noteworthy is that the differences in means scores were not significantly different for all the groups, with the exception of the statistical significance of mean scores found for verb tense test seven.

**Research Question Two**

Are traditional grammar exercises combined with dictogloss tasks (performed by female Translation students at KSU either in pairs or in small groups) more effective than, less effective than, or equally effective as traditional grammar exercises alone in the longer-term acquisition of English verb tenses?

To answer the second question, a one-way between-groups ANOVA was conducted to explore the impact of dictogloss done in pairs or in small groups on verb tense test scores (out of 10) as measured by the one-week delayed culminating verb tense posttest. Both experimental groups B and C surpassed control group A by a mean difference of (.5) (See Table 2). However,
there was no statistically significant difference at the \( p < .05 \) level in test scores for the three groups \( [F (2, 113) = 1.04, p = .35] \).

**Table 2**

*Means of students in groups A, B, & C for the posttest*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A ((n = 40))</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B ((n = 36))</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group C ((n = 40))</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Question Three**

Research question three poses: Will there be a significant improvement in subjects’ performance on the culminative verb tense posttest in the experimental groups? And if so, which group will have significantly improved the most? The degree of improvement in verb tense usage was determined by subtracting the values at pretest from those at posttest. Subjects in experimental Group B (in pairs) had an overall mean change of 1.31, whereas Group C (in small groups) had an overall mean change of 1.18.

Although the improvement in performance from the pretest to the posttest for both groups is evident, what still remained to be seen is whether the differences between the pre-/post-test for the groups were significant and attributable to the different post-lesson practice methods. Thus, paired-samples \( t \)-tests compared the mean score of the posttest with that of the pretest at the beginning of the experiment in both groups, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Pre-post test paired-samples \( t \)-test results within Groups B and C*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>( t )</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group B ((n = 36))</td>
<td>-3.85</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group C ((n = 40))</td>
<td>-3.49</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at \( \alpha = .05 \)

The \( t \)-test analysis for Group B showed that the increase in the means between the posttest \((M= 3.5, SD= 1.7)\) and the pretest \((M= 2.1, SD= 1.5)\) was statistically significant \((t= -3.85, df= 35, 2\text{-tailed } p<.000)\). The eta squared statistic (.29) indicated a large effect. As for Group C, the \( t \)-test analysis showed that the increase in the means between the posttest \((M= 3.5, SD= 1.6)\) and the pretest \((M= 2.3, SD= 1.5)\) was statistically significant \((t= -3.49, df= 39, 2\text{-tailed } p<.001)\). The eta squared statistic (.23) indicated a large effect. One can conclude from the findings that, indeed, there was a significant improvement in subjects’ performance on the culminative verb tense posttest in the experimental groups. In addition, it can be said that Group B achieved a slightly higher significant difference than did Group C.

**Testing Question Four**

The fourth research question poses: Will students who received verb tense practice using dictogloss in pairs report different attitudes than those using dictogloss in small groups? To answer this question, the Students’ Attitude Questionnaire (*Figure 3.*) was used to gather data from both experimental groups upon completion of the treatment period. SPSS was used to
calculated percentages for showing how often each response was chosen and a series of Chi-Square tests for independence to determine whether a relationship existed between the frequencies of responses of both experimental groups. The significance of these tests are reported as a p-value, where p is less than or equal to .05 is considered to be significant.

Due to the limitations of space in this article, the 10 figures are not presented, however the analyses results demonstrated that, for the most part, students expressed positive reactions towards statements 1 – 6 which aimed at finding out their levels of satisfaction with the dictogloss. As for statements 7 – 10 that sought to find out students’ attitudes towards certain dictogloss procedures, it was found that students reacted negatively to two statements (i.e. statements 7 and 8).

Since no other research, to the best of the researcher’s knowledge, had investigated students’ attitudes and satisfaction with dictogloss, the findings of this questionnaire could not be evaluated against other similar questionnaires. However more recently, Gallego’s (2014) study surveyed learners on their perceptions about the dictogloss task and found that “most students found it both useful and effective for learning” (p. 33).

Discussion

This study’s primary aim was to investigate whether traditional grammar exercises coupled with dictogloss, in pairs or small groups, was more effective than, less effective than, or as effective as traditional grammar exercises alone for improving verb tense performance on tests. By investigating three different grammar approaches simultaneously, factors contributing to the success or failure of each approach could be identified and compared.

Though this study did not find dictogloss to be significantly more superior to traditional grammar exercises within a 10-week intervention period, it seems fairly clear from the way students behaved during the dictogloss tasks, together with their answers on the attitude questionnaire, that dictogloss is just one of the many tasks for creative and reflective teachers to adopt since it promotes collaborative dialogue by motivating learners to engage in lively and realistic verbal interaction.

Reasons for this negative finding could include that learners may have had a difficult time focusing on both the events taking place in the dictogloss texts and the targeted verb forms, as was expressed by several students in the form of voluntary comments on the satisfaction questionnaire. This explanation is supported by VanPatten’s claim that beginning learners find it difficult to focus on meaning and form at once (VanPatten, 1990, as cited by Tragant& Munoz, 2004). This suggests that we should try more overt techniques to draw learners’ attention to a linguistic item(s) through possibly more oral emphasis (i.e. pronouncing the verbs with a louder tone of voice, or stressing their pronunciation).

Nonetheless, it is extremely necessary for researchers to investigate whether and to what extent FonF tasks, such as the dictogloss, are effective for the different proficiency levels for which they are intended to appropriately generalize the findings to other contexts and identify how instruction and reinforcement can be best designed to promote L2 learning. In conclusion, while aware of a number of issues that need to be addressed in further research, no doubt,
dictogloss is a useful addition to both teachers’ and researchers’ repertoires for focusing students’ attention to a rich variety of linguistic items during meaningful interaction.

Conclusion
To conclude, the findings from this study did not statistically confirm what has been largely found by other dictogloss-related studies (Mayo, 2002; Tocalli-Beller & Swain, 2005) that differences in the types of treatments lead to differences in language learning, and that raising learners’ awareness of specific L2 forms facilitates acquisition to a certain extent. In fact, the results of this study seem to agree, to a large extent, with the minority of studies which found no significant difference in their subjects’ language performance, such as those found in the studies of (Kuiken & Vedder, 2002) and (Abbasian & Mohammadi, 2013).

Nonetheless, the results of this study did indicate that subjects who received dictogloss in small groups showed the most short-term improvement on the weekly tests, and those who received dictogloss in pairs showed the most longer-term improvement on the posttest. This clearly shows that both experimental dictogloss groups outperformed the control group, though not in a statistically significant sense.

As for learner attitudes towards dictogloss, in general, participants reported satisfaction in the current study, nevertheless, both dictogloss groups expressed mixed attitudes towards dictogloss procedures, more specifically it appeared that during the reconstruction phase, learners had no way of knowing which grammatical forms they still didn’t know well while trying to solve the fill-in-the-blanks items, as indicated in the results for statement 8. Therefore, the claim that learners explore the accuracy and extent of their own linguistic knowledge in a dictogloss task (e.g. Swain & Lapkin, 1998; Tocalli-Beller & Swain, 2005; & Yeo, 2000) was not supported in this study.

About the author:
Dina Alsibai is a lecturer and Writing coordinator at the Department of English Translation, College of Languages and Translation, King Saud University (KSU), as well as a TOEFL test administrator. I received my BA and MA in Applied Linguistics from the College of Arts, KSU, respectively in 1995 and 2008. I started working at COLT in 2000 as a TA, and then as a lecturer in 2008.

References
Using Dictogloss Tasks: Attention to Form in a Collaborative Classroom

Alsibai


The Impact of Class Size on Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language: The Case of the Department of English at Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University

Hayat Aoumeur
Department of English, Faculty of Foreign Languages
Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University
Mostaganem, Algeria

Abstract
This paper is devoted to the study of the impact of class size on teaching and learning English as a foreign language. The investigation was conducted at the department of English at Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University. The department has witnessed a huge increase in the enrolment figure in the past decade which resulted into an increase in class sizes. This has created problems for staff and students alike. Despite the steps taken by the administrators to reduce the number of students, the problem of class crowding still persists. The department of English, alone, has an enrolment of almost 3000 students, it is a huge number indeed if we take into consideration the availability of facilities and resources. The aim of this study is to explore the organizational and pedagogical difficulties that are frequently encountered by the teachers dealing with large classes and the effects on student learning. Additionally, this paper proposes some suggestions on how to deal with class overcrowding. As part of our research, we have given questionnaires to 200 students and 40 teachers. The findings of the survey clearly demonstrate that large class sizes have an adverse impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

Keywords: Class size, overcrowded classes, teaching English in large classes

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Introduction
Since the twenties, scholars, teachers and experts, in the domain of education, have been concerned with the investigation of the factors associated with the teaching and the learning processes. One of the main issues has been the impact of class size on the learner achievements. According to Messineo et al. (2007) “Interest in the impact of class size on teaching and learning has emerged since the twenties” (P. 126). Indeed, several studies, mainly on undergraduate learners, have been conducted (Edmondson & Mulder, 1924; Glass & Smith, 1979; Hedges & Stock, 1983). Although the issue seems more complicated at tertiary level, much of the investigations were conducted in elementary and secondary schools. Kerr (2011) points out that “fewer studies have assessed the impact of class size on the learning experience and outcomes in the postsecondary context, and even fewer still in the Canadian or Ontario context” (P.3).

Research on the effect of class size on student performance has resulted into rather controversial notions, definitions and opinions. The intersection of the factor of class size with a variety of other factors was one of the reasons behind such a controversy. There was not a consensus among researchers about the definition of large class. Kerr notes that the definition differs according to the discipline, the level and nature of the class and the perceptions of lecturers and individual students. He argues that a large class may include an introductory class of 700 students or an upper year seminar with fifty. Similarly, in some countries, 25-30 students per one teacher could be considered large, while in other countries this is seen to be normal or even quite small. Mulryan-Kyne (2010) admits that it is not that easy to determine exactly what constitutes a large class, mainly in a tertiary level education context.

Opinions have then varied across disciplines and education levels. In addition to the number of students, other factors such as the teacher competency, the availability of resources have been associated to the investigation of the impact of class size on student learning. Class size, according to Blatchford, Moriarty, Edmonds, & Martin (2002) is a very important environmental factor that influences teachers and pupils in a number of ways, however, the other contextual factors should not be ignored. In the same vein, Mulryan-Kyne (2010), argues that there are several factors that should be considered as relevant such as the nature of the programme or course being taught, the accommodation and facilities that are available and the resources needed. For example, meeting the needs of a class of 50 in a science laboratory designed for 30 is likely to be more challenging than presenting a history lecture to 220 students in a lecture room designed for 200. “The great challenge to experts, scholars and teachers was to provide sufficient evidence to identify the connection between class size and student achievement”(Mulryan-Kyne, 2010, P. 176).

In the view of Biggs (1999), the practical problems faced by students and teachers increase and change in their nature as class size increases, especially in tertiary level institutions where the student population is more diverse and the teaching staff have to deal with a variety of factors, such as student ability, background, age and experience. There is no doubt, according to Biggs, that these factors should be taken into consideration while designating a class as large or
‘too large’ however, the skills, competencies and ability of the lecturer are also important factors. Many studies have recognized the central role of the teacher in promoting the quality of education. Indeed, many studies have shown that teacher competency is a more significant determinant of student learning than class size. McKeachie (1990) argues that although there are both practical and theoretical reasons why class size should make a difference at tertiary level, in the end, it is the skill and competency of the teacher that counts. The same view is supported by Nomaye (2006) who notes that “What counts is not the size of the class, but the quality of the teaching” (P.1). Baldwin (1993) focuses on this particular issue. In his study, he investigates whether a qualified teacher with an excellent reputation as a lecturer could do better in a mass lecture section than doctoral students with smaller sections. Baldwin concludes that there is no significant difference in students’ performance. Similarly, Hill (1998) does not recognise any performance advantages for small classes. Other researchers have attempted to support the idea that a large class impact negatively on teaching and learning by focusing on the problems that teachers and students meet in large classes. Problems such as anonymity and passivity among students, poor engagement of student with course content, low motivation and low participation level are the consequences of being taught in large classes (Biggs, 1999; Carbone & Greenberg, 1998; Ward & Jenkins, 1992).

Much of the available literature on class size also focuses on the choice of methods and tools. Wanous, Procter & Murshid (2009) point out that “large class size is increasingly less accepted as an excuse for not adopting new more effective approaches” (P.79). This view is supported by Pedder (2006) who notes that if we take into account the fact that teachers who teach different subjects and work in different contexts can bring different strengths and expertise to the classroom and that their pupils come to class with different personalities, behavioural and cognitive capacities, we will not be surprised if we find teachers maximising opportunities for pupils to learn in classes of different size in different ways.

This study makes clear that learning in a large class impacts negatively on the student performance. It is an exploration of the organizational and pedagogical difficulties that are frequently encountered by the teachers dealing with large classes and the effects on student learning. It is also an investigation of the approaches and strategies adopted by the teachers to handles difficulties encountered in such contexts.

Some Facts about Tertiary Education in Algeria
Tertiary education in Algeria has witnessed a move from the traditional structure to the three-cycle Bachelor, Master and doctorate system. The ‘LMD’ system has gradually been implemented since September 2004. The investigation of the consequences of the reform on educational quality is still ongoing. In Algeria, the enrolment process has always been subject to availability of places at university which, in turn, is related to the number of students who pass their baccalaureate exams at the end of the high school. Since 2004, the success rates have increased dramatically. The highest success rate, since independence in 1962, was in 2012, with 62, 45%. The increase in the number of baccalaureate holders has obviously led to an increase in the number of university students. Most of the institutions have responded to these pressures,
mainly by increasing average class sizes. Despite the several measures taken by the ministry of higher education to increase the number of the teaching staff, most of the universities still face a shortage of teachers. This shortage is mainly due to the doubling in the number of students which is, in turn, is affected by the flexibility of the criteria of selection. Indeed, in Algeria, every holder of the baccalaureate or an equivalent foreign certificate can easily matriculate free of charge at a university institution. The criteria for the choice of course include the student’s wishes, the nature of the baccalaureate or other qualifying certificate, the student’s marks or grades in the relevant subjects and the number of places available in every specific course. Unfortunately, most of Algerian universities and institutions do not respond to these criteria in the same way and do not adopt the same mechanism of selection. As a consequence, in some faculties the class size has increased dramatically in the last few years.

The Department of English at AbdelhamidIbnBadis University

The department of English has witnessed a huge increase in the enrolment figures over the two last decades. Until recently, the number of places available in the courses offered at the level of the department was not taken into consideration. Table 1 provides sufficient evidence of the connection between the LMD system, the success level in the baccalaureate and the figures of enrolment.

Table 1. Enrolment data

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of EFL Students</td>
<td>1230</td>
<td>1208</td>
<td>1525</td>
<td>1702</td>
<td>1827</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>2373</td>
<td>2456</td>
<td>2430</td>
<td>1609</td>
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<tr>
<td>level of success in the baccalaureate</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>37.29%</td>
<td>51.95%</td>
<td>53.27%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>45.1%</td>
<td>61.2%</td>
<td>62.45%</td>
<td>58.84%</td>
<td>44.72%</td>
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</table>

Since 2004, the number of teachers has also increased remarkably. From four to eleven teachers are recruited every year. In September 2013, seven teachers were recruited and the teaching staff currently includes 52 teachers.

As shown in table 1, the number of students hit its peak in 2012 as a consequence to the rise in success level in the 2012 baccalaureate session. The university started with a series of measures since September 2011, when the faculty of science and technology responded to the request of the faculty of letters and arts by accepting to receive, for one year, almost 1500 English language students. In September 2012, an agreement, signed between AbdelhamidIbnBadis University and three other universities, allowed 500 new students to join any of the three departments of English. In September 2013, the faculty of letters and arts, with 7200 students, was considered as the largest faculty and the department of English as the largest with 1609 students, followed by the department of French with 1650 students, the department of Arabic literature with 1300 students, the department of Spanish with 1037 students, and the
department of Arts with 500 students. In July, 213 a decision was made to relocate the department of English to a separate building at the recently founded faculty of medicine for four years until the establishment of the faculty of foreign languages in 2017.

For the first time since the implementation of the LMD system in 2004, the number of first year students has remarkably decreased. Here again, the decrease in the enrolments was related to the success level in the 2013 baccalaureate session. The number hit its peak in the year 2011-2012 with 900 students. Table2 demonstrates a decrease in the number of students in tutorial groups in 2013.

Table2. Number of students per group

<table>
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<tr>
<td>1st year</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd year</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>30</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The decrease in the number of new students and the availability of enough classrooms and lecture halls in the new building at the faculty of medicine have contributed to reducing the tutorial group size. However, it is still worth investigating the difficulties still encountered by teachers and students in large lecture sections, especially in the third year class which contains more than 600 students.

Method

Data were collected through the use of two questionnaires (see Appendices A, B). One questionnaire was given to 200 students from the first, the second and the third year bachelor. The participants comprise 138 females and 62 male. Another one was given to 40 teachers. Both questionnaires contain open-ended, multiple-choice, and scalar response and they revolve around the following issues:
- Assessment and class size: quality of assessment, assessment workload, providing feedback, standardization of assessment and marking, assessment workload;
- Feelings of isolation & anonymity in large classes;
- Controlling absenteeism in large classes;
- Exchanges between teachers and students;
- Difficulties encountered by teachers in large classes;
- Difficulties encountered by students in large classes.

Results

Out of the 40 teachers surveyed, 35 report that not all of the third year modules should be taught by means of lectures only; modules such as research methodology and discourse analysis should be supported by tutorials. Teaching skills such as speaking and writing should be taught in smaller classes. The modules that must be taught by means of tutorials are: grammar, written expression, oral expression, methodology, English for specific purposes, discourse analysis, morpho-syntax and lexical-semantics.

All the students report that large classes are particularly very noisy. Out of the 200 students surveyed, 169 students report that they prefer small classes; as learners of a foreign language, they really need to be actively involved. 180 students believe that certain modules such as: written expression oral expression, methodology, and phonetics should be taught in very
small classes and the number of the students should not exceed 15. Only 22 students say that they prefer large classes because they are university students and learning in a crowded lecture hall is much more motivating, exciting and challenging. Only 3 out of 200 students say they prefer experiencing learning in both small and large classes. For 39 out of 40 teachers, the size of class really matters and it does affect their choices while selecting the teaching method (40); while designing the course-unit (13); while allocating students to groups (40); while allocating assignments (40), while assessing students (40) and while using visuals aids and other resources (8). The participants on the whole declare that they have already experienced teaching in large classes, and except two, they have all met difficulties. All of the teachers report that they have not been trained on how to teach large classes. When asked whether they are satisfied with the size of tutorials, 21 teachers respond negatively. Twenty-three report they are not satisfied with the current size of the classes apart from the first year classes. All the teachers surveyed declare that they would prefer small classes if they were given a choice.

As regard class attendance, 155 students out of 200 report that they skip class more easily in a small class than in a large one. 88 informants consider that the department’s attendance policy is unsatisfactory while 59 evaluate it as good and 35 evaluate it as very good. For 36 teachers, absenteeism is not tolerated. According to 38 teachers, it is not an easy task to track students’ attendance in large classes.

Ninety-four out of 200 students believe that grading in class is sometimes fair, for 50 students, it is usually fair, for 32, it is rarely fair, for 18, it is always fair and for 6 students, it is never fair. With regard the feedback provided by grading, most of the students report that it is most of the time oral. 99 students report that the feedback is good, 69 students say it is poor, 20 students say it is fair and only 13 students say it is excellent.

The majority of the teachers who responded to the question related to assessment declare that class size affect the choice of methods, materials and assignments. It is only in small classes, for example, that they can ask their students to prepare tutorial presentations and produce essays. A minority of the informants report that standardization of assessment and marking is possible in large classes. The assignments provided in class are evaluated positively by 120 students who consider them as relevant to the objectives of the courses. For 18 students, the assignments are rather excessive.

As regard the exchanges between the students and their teachers, various answers have been provided. The most negative evaluation (Poor) is provided by 80 students, where as the most positive one (excellent) is proposed by 21 students only. Unlike the students, the teachers’ answer is the other way around; 36 teachers believe that the teachers- students relations are rather good. For 155 students, it really matters that the teachers know their names. Surprisingly, 9 students report that all teachers know their names and 51 students say their names are not known by any teacher. As regard the teachers, most of them report that they do care about knowing the names of their students.
The problems that students encounter in large classes include: noise, distraction, unfair assessment, lack of motivation, lack of self confidence and isolation. The solutions suggested by 188 out 200 students are:

- Large classes should be divided into smaller groups.
- Some lectures must be supported by tutorials, especially methodology and phonology.
- The number of students in tutorial groups should not exceed 15.
- Lecturers should offer students more opportunities to express their ideas and discuss controversial issues.

The problems encountered by teachers in large classes include lack of opportunities to get to know students, reduced motivation, reduced level of active involvement, reduced quality of interaction and reduced opportunities to work on cognitive skills and increased behavioural problems. Increased student diversity as a result of greater student numbers is also a frequently cited issue.

To improve the large class experience, all the surveyed teachers suggest the following solutions:

- The classroom should be selected according to the learning goals and instructional objectives. Teaching oral expression, for instance requires particular resources. The teachers recommend that enough space should be allowed for students to move around, to perform songs and to act out role-plays.
- Teachers should work o-operatively to develop different and practical types of continuous assessment.
- Teachers should use a variety of teaching methods and strategies
- For a good class management, teachers should set rules of acceptable behaviour
- Teachers with little experience should be assisted by teachers with greater experience and training.
- Teachers should adopt approaches that offer active learning.
- Teachers must conduct research into pedagogy and keep up with recent advances in pedagogical approaches and new technologies to improve the large class experience.

Discussion
The results suggest that class size plays an important role in the learning and teaching processes. Most of the teachers, in the department of English, have already experienced teaching in large classes and the problems they have encountered clearly back up the assumption that class size has an impact on the student achievement. The class size affects the teacher’s choices and decisions. Most of them, if not all, believe that large classes require greater investment of time and resources. For many teachers, finding efficient ways and time to communicate with a greater number of students, to assess their performance and to correct hundreds of exam papers is a great challenge. Blatchford et al. (2002) drew similar conclusions. Their study of English infant schools provided consistent evidence that in small classes more teaching took place; children were more likely to interact with their teachers, as they were more often the focus of a teacher’s attention.
In large classes, students are more likely to skip classes. Indeed, attendance in such context is very difficult to control. Most of the teachers believe that absenteeism should not be tolerated in the department and that an efficient attendance system should be implemented. They believe that the students who do not attend classes regularly miss opportunities to learn from their teachers and their peers as well, and those who attend classes regularly have a better chance to learn the curriculum. Findings of several studies have demonstrated a correlation between attendance and grades (Silvestri, 2003; Hammen & Kelland, 1994; Callahan, 1993; Van Blerkom, 1992). Attendance should then be controlled at least in tutorials where the number of attendants is reduced and where students are offered more opportunities to acquire the relevant academic skills such as responding to questions, thinking critically, evaluating, interpreting, processing and synthesizing information, drawing conclusions and practicing the language in different contexts of use. Learners of a foreign language should be given more opportunities to practice the skills acquired more frequently and both orally and in writing.

The teachers are unanimous in the view that for the third year of study, the modules should not be taught by means of lectures only or at least the lectures should be followed by discussions. Students need to be actively engaged in the lesson and should be able to participate in class discussion and ask and answer questions.

One of the most critical problems faced by students in large classes is the feeling of isolation. Students are not only anonymous to both the teachers but to one another, too. Indeed, students who perceive that they are anonymous often feel less personal responsibility for learning, have decreased motivation to learn, and attend class less frequently (Cooper, MacGregor, Smith, & Robinson, 2000).

The results suggest that the teachers prefer rather small classes. The justification they provide is that in large classes they are exposed to rather a heterogeneous context. It is a real challenge for them to meet all the students needs or to establish rules and norms. Another point is that teaching modules like: lexical semantic, morpho-syntactic, written expression, research methodology or even American, British and African civilization, requires particular efforts such as: encouraging group work, encouraging debates and arranging seating.

Assessment in general and continuous assessment in particular, is also affected by class size. It is not an easy task to develop effective activities. Teachers should receive adequate training to develop appropriate assessment tools and use appropriate means to provide feedback. The answers provided by students clearly show that teachers should do their best to provide enough written feedback instead of using the class size as an excuse. Overall, these findings were consistent with previous research that suggests that class sizes do affect students and instructors in a number of ways (Biggs, 1999; Carbone & Greenberg, 1998; Ward & Jenkins, 1992).

Conclusion
The study was conducted to show how the teachers and students, at the department of English at Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University, deal with the problem of class overcrowding.

The results demonstrate that class size can affect teaching and learning in different ways. A class with large numbers of students lead to increased number of academic and pedagogical issues, which in turn, lead to increased administration and management responsibilities. While
the students complain of lack of opportunities to express themselves, the teachers complain of passive engagement on the part of students. A minority of teachers advocates the assumption that large numbers of students in class provide opportunities for positive teaching and learning experiences. They believe that diversity in large classes can offer a chance to explore multiple perspectives on course content. Similarly, a few students acknowledge that studying in large classes is more interesting and challenging.

Dealing with large classes requires coordination, management and training. Every teacher can develop the approach that works best for him/her, based on his/her teaching style, students’ needs and capacities, the goals and objectives of the curriculum.

About the Author:

Dr. Hayat Aoumeur is a lecturer in the Department of English, Faculty of Foreign Languages at Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University. She received her Ph.D. in sociolinguistics from The University of Mostaganem (2015). Her research interests lie in the area of language and gender studies, sociolinguistics, didactics and feminist/critical discourse studies.

References


Appendices

*Questionnaires used in the study*

**Appendix A.**

**Questionnaire for Teachers**

Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University  
Faculty of letters and arts  
Department of English

This study is an attempt to explore the experience of teaching and learning in large size classes. Your co-operation in completing this study by responding to the following questions would be greatly appreciated. Please do not put your name on the questionnaire since all the responses are confidential and anonymous.

Gender: M__ F___  
Years of teaching experience: ___________________

Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Vol.8. No. 2 June 2017
Teaching position: Grade_________ Specialization_____________

1) Should all the third year modules be taught by means of lectures?
   Yes                                             No

2) Which lectures should be supported by tutorials?
   ...............................................................................
   ...............................................................................
   ...............................................................................
   ...............................................................................
   ...............................................................................
   ...............................................................................
   ...............................................................................
   ...............................................................................
   Which modules should be taught by means of tutorials only?
   ...............................................................................
   ...............................................................................
   ...............................................................................

3) Does the class size matter?
   Yes                                             No

4) Have you had the opportunity to teach large size classes?
   Yes                                             No

5) Have you ever faced difficulties in large classes?
   Yes                                             No

6) Have you been trained on how to teach large classes?
   Yes                                             No

7) Are you satisfied with the size of tutorials groups?
   Yes                                             No

8) Are you satisfied with the current size of the classes that you now teach?
   Yes                                             No

9) If you were given a choice, you would choose:
   A small class                                   A large class

10) Does the size of the class affect your choice while (you may select more than one response)
    *Selecting the teaching method?
    *Designing the course-unit?
    *Allocating students to groups?
    *Allocating assignment?
    *Assessing students?
    *Using visual aids and other resources?
    Other.................................................................................................

11) Is your assessment/evaluation affected by the size of the class?
    Yes                                             No

12) Do you think that standardization of assessment and marking is possible in large classes?
    Yes                                             No

13) Do you ask your students to prepare tutorial presentations and produce essays?
    Yes                                             No

14) Is your choice of an assignment affected by the class size?
    Yes                                             No
15) Do you tolerate absenteeism? 
   Yes  No
16) Is it easy to control absenteeism in large classes? 
   Yes  No
17) How would you evaluate the exchanges between students and teachers? 
   Excellent  Good  Satisfactory  Fair  Poor
18) Do you care about knowing the names of your students? 
   Yes  No
19) What are the other difficulties that a teacher may experience while teaching a large class? 

Which practical tips do you suggest for teaching large classes?

*****THANK YOU*****

Appendix B.

Questionnaire for Students

Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University
Faculty of letters and arts
Department of English

This study is an attempt to explore the experience of teaching and learning in large size classes. Your co-operation in completing this study by responding to the following questions would be greatly appreciated. Please do not put your name on the questionnaire since all the responses are confidential and anonymous.

1. Gender: I am: Male  Female
2. I am presently in my: 
   1st Year  2nd Year  3rd Year
3. Do you prefer large classes or small classes? .................
4. Which problems do you face in large classes? 

5. How would you evaluate the department’s attendance policy? 
   Excellent  very good  good  fair  unsatisfactory
6. Do you skip classes in a large class than in a small class? 
   Yes  No
7. The grading in class is 
   Always fair  usually fair  sometimes fair  rarely fair  never fair
8. How would you rate the quality of feedback provided by grading (oral/written)?
9. How would you evaluate the assignments?
A. They are relevant to the objectives of the course
B. They are not relevant to the objective of the course
C. There are not assignments
D. They are excessive
10. What are the best courses taken in the department, and what are your reasons for saying so?
..............................................................................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................................................................
11. What are the worst courses taken in the department, and what are your reasons for saying so?
..............................................................................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................................................................
12. How would you evaluate the exchanges between students and teachers?
Excellent              Good              Satisfactory              Fair              Poor

13. Does it matter that the teacher knows your name?
Yes                   No
14. How many teachers, you think, know your name?..............
15. What recommendations do you have for improving the department?
..............................................................................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................................................................

*****THANK YOU*****
EFL Learners’ Higher Order Thinking and Technology Based Instruction in Literature
Case Study of Biskra University 2nd Year Students

Nadia Rezig Betka
Department of Foreign Languages, Division of English
University of Biskra, Algeria

Abstract
The presence of higher order thinking aspects in EFL learners’ productions constitutes one of the major achievements of the teaching process. It denotes learners’ ability to think, analyze and draw conclusions about the taught information. Different approaches were implemented to promote EFL learners’ critical thinking but they were limited into questioning strategies that raise speculation. The present paper is an investigation of the advantages of implementing technology devices to promote Algerian University EFL learners’ higher order thinking. Noticing that their written productions in literature carried almost no critical thinking aspects, this case study attempts to check the usability of E learning in developing EFL learners’ ability to think critically through a qualitative method of research. The study is based on data obtained from a questionnaire administered to second year students on their attitude towards replacing the traditional classroom by a technology classroom. An E-learning test was initiated through Emails to deliver and correct home works where analysis and speculation questions were designed. The results showed that 83% of the sample were in favour of change and admitted that they spend more than 2 hours a day using their digital devices for entertainment as well as for research. Learners’ answers to the test questions carried analysis, reliance on evidence and argumentation. E learning can motivate EFL learners to combine research with learning in foreign languages classrooms.

Keywords: E learning, Higher order thinking, Teaching literature, Technology based instruction

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Introduction
Critical reflection promotion is one of the best outcomes of pedagogical policies, since it enables the learner to develop a balance in reasoning and evaluate issues considering facts and evidence. In the academic context, higher order thinking or critical thinking development entails a complete view of the information presented; a better comprehension, interpretation and results in accurate analysis and treatment of data. It is a valuable feature of brilliant students who flexibly consider and review viewpoints and reach conclusions after analysis. Many scholars (Paul 2005; Facione & Facione, 2007; Moore, 2004) point at the relevance of critical reflection as a skill to the foreign language teaching process in terms of the methods implemented and materials used such as using speculative texts instead of informative ones to encourage learners to interpret and analyse data instead of storing them and urge them to participate in discussions and opinion gaps to exchange ideas and evaluate each others’ viewpoints which entails a vivid classroom with a high interaction level.

Literature Review
1-Higher Order Thinking in Philosophy and Cognitive Psychology
Critical pedagogy was and old concern for Philosophy as well as cognitive psychology before being a concern for education (Lai, 2011, p .4). Philosophers’ school of thought view the critical thinker as an example of perfection (Paul, 1992, p.9) by attributing to him ideal features like being inquisitive in nature, open minded, flexible, fair minded, has a desire to be well informed, understands diverse viewpoints and is willing to both suspend judgment and consider other perspectives. Facione, (as cited in Lai, 2011, p.5).

In cognitive psychology, scholars who belong to the behaviourist school and empirical research tradition believe that focus should be put on how people think rather than how they would think in and ideal state. (Sternberg, 1986) which implies that cognitive psychology defines critical thinking by critical thinkers’ skills and behaviour.

Thus, philosophers focus on the process of critical thinking while cognitive psychologists believe that since the process is not observable, focus should be put on its outcomes that can be observed. For this, the definitions of critical thinking provided by philosophers and cognitive psychologists differ.

Cognitive Psychologists define critical reflection as the mental processes, strategies and representations people use to solve problems, make decisions and learn new concepts (Sternberg,1986, p.3) while philosophers give to critical reflexion definitions such as : ‘Discipline, self directed thinking that exemplifies the perfections of thinking, appropriate to a particular mode or domain of thought’ (Paul, 1992, p. 9) and, ‘Judging in a reflective way what to do or what to believe’ (Facione, 2000, p. 61)

Higher Order Thinking in Education
Bloom’s (1956) taxonomy starts by comprehension and ends with evaluation including three highest levels : analysis, Synthesis and evaluation. (as cited in Kennedy et al. 1991) The educational approach to critical thinking, unlike philosophy and cognitive psychology is based on experimentation and observation of teaching and learning processes while (Bussham et al, 2010, p. 1) views higher order thinking as :
The general term is given to a wide range of cognitive skills and intellectual dispositions needed to effectively identify, analyse and evaluate arguments and truth claims; to discover and overcome preconceptions and biases; to formulate and present convincing reasons in support of conclusions and to make reasonable, intelligent decisions about what to believe or what to do. Which implies that, in education, the terms critical thinking encompasses both views in philosophy and cognitive psychology.

**Critical Thinking Visible Aspects**

Bussham et al. (2010) consider eight standards of higher order thinking which are: clarity, precision, accuracy, relevance, consistency, logical correctness, completeness and fairness.

**Clarity**

Clarity is an essential requirement in educational settings, before we evaluate a learner’s statement or idea, we need to fully understand it, which can not be possible if the learner has no complete conception of what he thinks.

**Precision**

Precision is highly evaluated as an essential feature in scientific domains in general, but in social sciences, precision aids the learner to cut through personal views, uncertainties and confusions. The ability of learners in a foreign language classroom to precisely ask questions and provide answers reflects his thoughts’ clarity and decreases ambiguity.

**Accuracy**

The correct information is the ground for a correct information treatment. If learners do not attribute due importance to the accuracy of information and its truthfulness, their productions will reflect their lack of accuracy.

**Relevance**

Relevance is a symptom of the learner’s thoughts’ line continuity and complete comprehension of issues’ dimensions. Irrelevance is distracting and confusing.

**Logical Correctness**

To think logically is to reason correctly, to be able to draw well founded conclusions, to think critically we need well supported beliefs to link them to conclusion that logically follow them. (Bussham et al, 2010, p. 6)

**Completeness**

One of the main features of learners’ higher order thinking is their deep and thorough reasoning, based on a complete view and consideration of issues.

**Consistency**

There are two types of inconsistency that should be avoided: the logical inconsistency which means believing in inconsistent things, and practical inconsistency which implies saying one thing and doing another. Consistency constitutes a basic characteristic of higher order thinkers that denotes their continuous search for stable and fixed beliefs.
Fairness
Impartiality and objectivity and freedom of distorting biases are all important criteria of the critical thinkers, they prevent learners from leaning to a given position with no founded reasoning.

Technology Based Instruction Classrooms
New technologies are challenging academic cultures which are the ways in which we learn, teach and research in universities as stated by Elhers and Schnekengerg, (as cited in Wankel & Blessinger, 2013, p.112). Nowadays, the networked student and networked teacher became so familiar and the students’ continuous need to be well acquainted with the current complex digital devices’ potentialities is now conventional. Moreover, the gap between students’ and teachers’ knowledge about digital tools is considerable. It constitutes, according to Brown (2012 p.51), a real barrier to reaching a universal best practice in education.

Technology classrooms are defined as a set of technologies that facilitate students’ participation in learning activities in the classroom, they can be viewed as participatory tools that mediate discourse in the classroom. (Wankel & Blessingerr, 2013, p. 5) It might refer to digital tools in general; interactive white boards, desk top computers, laptops, smart phones and tablets. In these classrooms, students implement these devices for investigating data, achieving and submitting homeworks and interacting with their classmates as stated by Odera & Ogott (as cited in Altun 2015, p.23).

Technology tools for communication, collaboration, social networking… in particular, these tools have transformed how parents and families manage their daily lives and seek entertainment, how teachers use materials in the classroom with young children and communicate with parents and families, and how we deliver teacher education and professional development. In today’s schools all over the world, the information technologies are more powerful tools to teach, to motivate and to make the subjects more interesting (Altun 2015, p.22)

The study
Background of the study
At Biskra University English classes, the relatively elevated number of students that exceeds 60 students in one group and with over 10 groups in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd years, the traditional classroom can no longer be satisfactory. Teachers face difficulties in delivering lessons and correcting tests.

This situation hinders the application of new strategies in developing students’ higher order thinking which needs specific activities provided through internet. For this reason, we projected to initiate our research by measuring English learners’ predisposition to technology-based instruction before designing tasks and activities that promote English learners’ critical thinking.

Method
By applying the Holistic Critical Thinking Scoring Rubrics elaborated by Facione in 1994, (Appendix A) we could evaluate second year English learners’ written productions in literature examination in terms of Critical thinking standards’ presence. The evaluation shows clearly that
the answers of only 12 % of the selected sample (80/440) carried aspects of higher order thinking. Students’ answers were descriptive and carried generally the standard justifications presented by the teacher during the course; no personal appreciation or argumentation by the learner is delivered. Students do not rely on events or time chronology to justify their answers, they rather limit themselves by the content of the course even in speculative questions such as ‘How can you relate the church to Middle Ages’ literature? The students find difficulties in answering questions such as : are you in favour of ? Comparing, giving another interpretation or opting for a standpoint different from the author’s.

The Questionnaire
To collect data on English learners’ readability to a radical change in the EFL classroom from a traditional one into a technology integrated to help English learners in developing Higher order thinking skills In this perspective, we administered a questionnaire (Appendix B) to randomly selected groups among the ten groups registered. The focal points in the questionnaire are :

- The daily amount of time students spend with their digital devices.
- The types of activities they use the devices in.
- Their conception of the use of digital devices in education.
- Their conception of E-learning.
- Technology aspects that attracts learners.

After piloting the questionnaire, the students were informed it was administered and answered by the total number of the sample during one session.

Email Assignments
By using Emails in instruction, we aimed to give learners a personal space to use the internet in the classroom, receiving a distinct question for each student and mainly to be able to make research on it during an hour that is dedicated to the assignment, then writing his answer and send it back to the teacher. It was clearly explained to the students that the answers should be short and that they should use academic writing. The question designed were :
Comparing literary movements, Comparing writers’ themes and styles, Providing an opinion on a literary period, providing a summary of a written text, criticizing a review and developing an argument.

Findings and Results
The students’ answers to the questionnaire denoted that : about 66.66% of the participants possess a personal computer that they use for at least 2 hours a day in addition to other devices such as smart phones, while 26.66% use it all day long. As far as students’ use of their digital devices, the answers denoted that : 33.33% watch movies and videos, 23.33% use it for chatting with friends through different websites, 40% state that their use of the computer is mainly for assignments and research, while a little number of students is using the computer and the other available devices for entertainment. As far as their appreciation of the digital tools and whether they use them only when need be, 83% of the students stated that they like using technology in all cases because it is useful, fast, enjoyable and enables them to know what happens in the world, the news, to post hopeful statements to others and to be continuously in touch with their large families. It is noteworthy that 26% of these participants have no idea on E-learning but
they recognize that technology eases lesson delivery, motivates students and makes the content of the lesson more interesting. It is also noteworthy that among the participants, 48% consider that writing constitutes their major difficulty in learning English.

As far as the assignment, the majority of students’ provided well written answers, brief but coherent and containing valuable data. The students used facts and events to argue for their answers and presented a wider view about the question, they used examples and more than one interpretation of the same idea. They were motivated, willing to write more if time was available. 46.33% of the respondents obtained the average mark in the assignment and 35.66% obtained a mark between 13/20 and 16/20, while 18% of the sample obtained marks between 6 /20 and 8/20.

Discussion

In Algeria, Developing EFL learners’ linguistic competence is a priority for programs’ designers. For that, EFL educational programmes undergo systematic changes continuously. The English textbooks are subject to content and form alteration for the sake of improving the teaching outcomes. This improvement tackles mainly the amount of information included and the number of exercises designed but not the type of exercises; students are trained to transform sentences, follow a given example and change tences but are not trained to analyze, compare or interpret information. For this reason we could notice in the present study that EFL learners’ written productions were mainly descriptive and carried no aspects of higher order thinking. Through implementing technology, the participants in the present study have benefited from the assignment to rely on their own comprehension and attempted to write an original answer based on the information they find through research in addition to their taught information. This broke their habitual learning custom to revise or learn by heart and raised their motivation.

Conclusion

The technology based instruction is nowadays a necessity to cope with EFL learners’ abilities and interest in using the digital devices. One of the main best outcomes of an instruction is to develop learners’ higher order thinking and its skills such as interpretation, analysis, synthesizing information and argumentation which are all possible through technology. In this investigation, the English students at Biskra university showed much appreciation of the digital tools use in their classroom and more ability to write freely coherent answers and motivated to make research at the same time. The present paper is a first step to the implementation of technology devices in Biskra EFL classroom to promote their critical thinking and to achieve best exploitation of this type of instruction for quality teaching.

Technology devises ensure application easiness and achievement of learning activities in a relatively short time. It is highly recommended to replace the traditional teaching approaches in EFL contexts by a technology based instruction to benefit from the immediate open access to information in classrooms. It can promote students’ ability of data interpretation, analysis, evaluation and selection.

About the author

Dr. Nadia Betka- Rezig is a lecturer at the English division of the foreign languages department in Biskra university- Algeria since 2004. Her research subjects are Psycholinguistics, literary...
EFL Learners’ Higher Order Thinking and Technology

Betka- Rezig

studies, higher order thinking, and technology classrooms. She is a member in a research team on the implementation of technology devices in teaching foreign languages since 2015.

References


4- Consistently does all or almost all of the following:
• Accurately interprets evidence, statements, graphics, questions, etc.
• Identifies the salient arguments (reasons and claims) pro and con.
• Thoughtfully analyzes and evaluates major alternative points of view.
• Draws warranted, judicious, non-fallacious conclusions.
• Justifies key results and procedures, explains assumptions and reasons.
• Fair-mindedly follows where evidence and reasons lead.

3- Does most or many of the following:
• Accurately interprets evidence, statements, graphics, questions, etc.
• Identifies relevant arguments (reasons and claims) pro and con.
• Offers analyses and evaluations of obvious alternative points of view.
• Draws warranted, non-fallacious conclusions.
• Justifies some results or procedures, explains reasons.
• Fair-mindedly follows where evidence and reasons lead.
2- Does most or many of the following:
• Misinterprets evidence, statements, graphics, questions, etc.
• Fails to identify strong, relevant counter-arguments.
• Ignores or superficially evaluates obvious alternative points of view.
• Draws unwarranted or fallacious conclusions.
• Justifies few results or procedures, seldom explains reasons.
• Regardless of the evidence or reasons, maintains or defends views based on self-interest or preconceptions.

1- Consistently does all or almost all of the following:
• Offers biased interpretations of evidence, statements, graphics, questions, information, or the points of view of others.
• Fails to identify or hastily dismisses strong, relevant counter-arguments.
• Ignores or superficially evaluates obvious alternative points of view.
• Argues using fallacious or irrelevant reasons, and unwarranted claims.
• Does not justify results or procedures, nor explain reasons.
• Regardless of the evidence or reasons, maintains or defends views based on self-interest or preconceptions.
• Exhibits close-mindedness or hostility to reason.

Appendix B  The questionnaire
Dear student, through the following questions, we intend to gather data for an investigation on EFL learners’ attitude towards technology based instruction. You are kindly requested to answer them.

Questions
Circle the appropriate answer or give your own response:
1- Do you have a computer at home? yes
   No
2- If yes, is it your personal computer? Yes
   No
3- How much time do you spend in using the computer/phone in one day?
4- What do you do exactly using these tools? precise
   .................................................................................................................................
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   .................................................................................................................................
   .................................................................................................................................
5- Do you like using these tools or you use them only when need be?
6- Do you frequently make searches on your computer for entertainment? Yes No
7- If YES, precise the frequency: everyday once a month once a week
8- Do you use Facebook? Yes
   No
9- What do you like in using Facebook?
10- What do you think of E-LEARNING?
11- Order the following skills in terms of their difficulty.
Speaking Reading Writing Listening

12- Do your EFL teachers use digital material in delivering the lessons?

13- In case they do, give a percentage of the sessions where these materials are used among the total number of sessions.

14- What attracts you most in using technology based instruction.

Thank you
Causal Relationship amongst Epistemic Beliefs, Motivations, and Strategies Use in Reading for EFL Students

Ive Emaliana  
Graduate Program, Universitas Negeri Malang  
Malang, Indonesia  
&  
English Language Education Program, Faculty of Cultural Study  
Universitas Brawijaya, Malang, Indonesia

Utami Widiati  
English Department, Universitas Negeri Malang  
Malang, Indonesia

Mohammad Adnan Latief  
English Department, Universitas Negeri Malang  
Malang, Indonesia

Suharmanto  
English Department, Universitas Negeri Malang,  
Malang, Indonesia

Abstract
Motivated by the need for more empirical evidence on factors affecting English as a Foreign Language (EFL) reading enhancement, this paper aims at elucidating causal relationship between reading epistemic beliefs, reading motivations, and strategies use in reading. The present study provides an evaluative perspective with regard to the directions of influences among them. A model that reflects the hypothesis that epistemic beliefs affect strategies use in reading which are strengthened by reading motivation is constructed and tested. The structural equation modeling (SEM) confirms this hypothesis, which implies interdependences across the factors as promising resources that can be utilized in EFL reading context for comprehension development. A few important implications for EFL reading instruction and research can be drawn from the results.  
Keywords: Epistemic beliefs, motivation, reading, reading strategies

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Introduction

It has been frequently mentioned that developing reading comprehension is one of the most important concerns of teaching English as EFL reading courses are the medium to improve students’ comprehension and thinking skills. Teachers’ learning instructions have been identified as key elements in successful reading comprehension, yet teaching reading and helping students have a reading habit are not sufficiently successful (Naseri & Zaferanieh, 2012). Although most teachers agree that it is important to teach students to understand reading materials, there is not much agreement on how students’ comprehension skill should be best achieved.

Teaching reading comprehension can commence from seeing factors affecting students’ reading comprehension skill that later become a promising resource for comprehension development. In their study on ‘Toward a Tripartite Model of the Second Language (L2) Reading Strategy Use, Motivations, and Learner Beliefs’, Matsumoto et al. (2013) state that strategy training resulting strategy use can help L2 students become more motivated by making them notice the relationship between learning strategy use and students’ beliefs. Based on the assumption, Matsumoto et al. (2013) investigated whether and how strategy use, motivations, and students’ beliefs are associated in L2 reading context although relevant studies suggest potential associations among them.

Based on the previous study, some information in relation to the teaching of reading has been elicited. In Matsumoto et al.’s (2013) study there were 360 first-year university students majoring in non-English at a university in Japan participated. They were enrolled in a required reading-based course the aim of which was for students to acquire the basic skills for English reading comprehension and to practice reading English passages with the strategic focus on identifying main ideas, summarizing, making inferences, and utilizing text organization. A self-report questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale was distributed to the students. The results showed (1) reading strategies shape motivations and beliefs, and this information can be utilized in the L2 reading context for comprehension development; and (2) main idea strategy plays a vital role in the process of reading comprehension.

Inspired by the former conceptualization on factors affecting reading comprehension, the present study provides an evaluative perspective with regard to the directions of influences among them. Matsumoto et al. (2013) considered strategies use affected motivations, and motivations affected students’ beliefs. On the other hand, the present study supports the opposite direction, suggesting that students’ beliefs can help EFL students become more motivated to comprehend reading materials through a particular reading strategy. A few studies include the possibility of the interaction across students’ beliefs, motivations, and strategy use. It is generally considered that beliefs would likely affect reading motivations (Bagherzadeh & Azizi, 2012), and that motivation is one of the most influential factors for the use of learning strategies (Guthrie, et al., 2007; Anmarkrud & Bråten, 2009; Bråten, et al., 2014). Besides, students’ beliefs are reported to influence learning strategies (Zare-ee, 2010; Naseri & Zaferanieh, 2012).

The basic idea that forms students’ beliefs is further elaborated. Broadly speaking, learning beliefs, investigated by Bagherzadeh & Azizi (2012), shows that more proficient EFL students hold stronger beliefs, so they have better learning motivations. Furthermore, on a theoretical model proposed by Zare-ee (2010), EFL students’ beliefs about language learning
affect the deployment of different cognitive, meta-cognitive, social, and affective language learning strategies. In accordance with this view, Naseri & Zaferanieh (2012) brought the idea that there was a significant strong positive correlation between beliefs in reading and reading strategies use, namely cognitive, testing, meta-cognitive, and compensatory strategies. Investigating these three underlying theories, it is conceived that students’ beliefs in learning can affect their learning motivations as well as learning strategies use. Accordingly, the present study proves empirically the relationship between students’ beliefs and strategies use, especially research on areas relevant to EFL reading.

While the causal relationship among factors affecting reading comprehension development is examined by structural equation modeling (SEM) both in Matsumoto et al. (2013) and in this present study, it is worth investigating due to several disparities between them. Most importantly, the prior study that guided this present research did not consider students’ belief particularly in reading comprehension. As stated in the limitation of the study, the general students’ beliefs scale used to elicit data might not be sufficient to encompass a range of relevant beliefs. Therefore, in the present study, epistemic beliefs in EFL reading are used.

As previous studies have proposed several different methods for the creation of motivations in learning, among them is a remark to beliefs about knowledge and knowing, that is epistemic beliefs, have been linked to cognition and academic performance. Students’ motivation is enhanced when teachers assist students in improving and growing up their beliefs by changing their simple primary beliefs to sophisticated one (Sosu & Gray, 2012). Students with more sophisticated epistemic beliefs have internal motivations, self efficacy, interests, self regulated learning, and goal orientation to reach high degree of academic achievement (Ulucinar, et al., 2012; Akbari & Karimi, 2013). It is also noteworthy that sophistication of epistemic beliefs can be achieved by facilitating students to deeper level of comprehension of multiple texts. In the context of reading multiple texts on a specific topic, Ferguson, et al., (2012) and Ferguson et al., (2013) mention that this is one way to increase students’ sophisticated beliefs.

In other words, the expectation of the existence of causal relationship chain which occurs among epistemic beliefs, reading motivations, and reading strategies use can be elicited in the context of EFL reading, albeit mostly prior studies do not directly examine in the precise direction of influences among them starting from epistemic beliefs. There is a growing body of published research demonstrating possible linkages between them, in particular, epistemological beliefs influencing achievement indirectly through their effects on learning motivations (Kizilgunes, et al., 2009) and learning strategies (Mellat & Lavasan, 2011). It is generally considered that epistemic beliefs is the most influential factor to affect motivations and so reading strategies use becomes the gap to be filled in this present study.

Further, this present study differed from Matsumoto et al.’s (2013) research in the questionnaire used. The reading questionnaire in this present study is constructed and validated using exploratory factor analysis from several theories underlying epistemic beliefs in reading, reading motivations, and reading strategies use, including some dimensions from Matsumoto et al.’s (2013) study.
For the above mentioned reasons, the present study addresses two research questions: (1) Are epistemic beliefs, motivations, and strategies use associated in EFL reading contexts?, and (2) How are epistemic beliefs, motivations, and strategies use associated in EFL reading contexts?

On the basis of theoretical and empirical backdrop, the hypothesized model displayed in Figure 1 tested the fit of the model to data obtained from undergraduate students. Considering the present indications and the numerous theories from findings in studies about the study of probable relations between epistemic beliefs in reading, reading motivations, and reading strategies use, theoretical model of hypothesis on the causal relationship among them is set. The first hypothesis is that epistemic beliefs in reading have effect on reading motivations. The second hypothesis is that reading motivations have effect on reading strategies. Thus, an assumption is about the mediating role of reading motivations between epistemic beliefs in reading and reading strategies use. It means that epistemic beliefs affects reading strategies use indirectly through direct effect on reading motivations. Therefore the method used in the present study follow the correlation designs of this structural equation.

Accordingly, the results of the present study add to the understanding of ways in which students use their epistemic beliefs to affect their reading motivations that will determine their choice to use particular reading strategies in comprehending reading materials. More broadly, the results of the present study have implications in the teaching of reading.

Materials and Method

Participants

One hundred and fourteen (114) second year undergraduate students volunteered from four classes from a reputable university in East Java province in Indonesia. They enrolled in a required reading-based course in the even semester of the 2016/2017 academic year. The aim of this course was for students to practice reading English passages with the strategies like identifying main ideas, summarizing, making inferences, and utilizing text organization.

Instrument

The students expressed their views in 4-point Likert scales (4=strongly agree, 1=strongly disagree). The value of the structure of the EFL Reading questionnaire was examined and
confirmed by exploratory factor analysis. It is aimed at collecting each item in the questionnaire which has similar characteristics under the same dimension (Fushino, 2010). The questionnaire includes information on epistemic beliefs in reading, reading motivations, and reading strategies use. The estimation of coefficients was done by the maximum likelihood. The assessments of fitting Indexes in each questionnaire was relatively good among the confirmed models.

The revised Ferguson’s (2012) questionnaire was used (13 items). The wording is revised so that each item would be relevant to the participants and the context in this study. Considering the presence of numerous variables in this research could be effective, exploratory factor analysis was implemented. The results of exploratory analysis were as follows: using Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin was .465; and using Bartlett’s Test ($p = .246$). These results indicated that the new variables formed via exploratory factor analysis were not significant, so, the questionnaire was highly suggested to use the same dimensions as the underlying theory taken. In other words, the new questionnaire on epistemic beliefs in reading part held the original three dimensions, namely personal justification (2 items), justification by authority (6 items), and justification by multiple sources (5 items).

Further, through SPSS 19, validity and reliability of the questionnaire were measured. Each item showed that the coefficient obtained has the level of significance smaller than .05, so they were claimed valid. The internal consistency reliability coefficients of adopted epistemic beliefs in reading as determined by Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha$) for the three dimensions were: personal justification ($\alpha = .380$), justification by authority ($\alpha = .514$), justification by multiple sources ($\alpha = .743$). The questionnaire, therefore, particularly in reading epistemic beliefs part is reliable.

To evaluate the level of reading motivations, a modified and shorter version of Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) from Guthrie, et al. (2007) was developed (15 items). Originally, there were 11 dimensions, but the usage of the shorter questionnaires considering the presence of numerous variables in this research could be effective. The results of exploratory factor analysis demonstrated that the obtained value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin was .740, and Bartlett’s Test ($p = .000$). The data, therefore, could be used to undergo the follow up test for exploratory factor analysis. The results of exploratory factor analysis shows 3 new dimensions, namely reading motivation in general (9 items), reading for grades (3 items), and reading involvement (3 items).

The validity and reliability of the questionnaire was measured using SPSS 19. The item which obtained coefficient smaller than .05 level of significance was valid, albeit some items which showed higher than .05 level of significance were not used to keep the validity of the questionnaire. Furthermore, to examine the internal consistency reliability coefficients of the adapted reading motivations dimensions, Cronbach’s alpha coefficient ($\alpha$) were computed for the three dimensions, namely reading motivation in general ($\alpha = .545$), reading for grades ($\alpha = .540$), and reading involvement ($\alpha = .379$). These statistical results are evidence of the reliability of the questionnaire in reading motivations.

To measure the students’ reading strategies use, the questionnaire (12 items) was developed by analyzing previous students’ reading strategies use. Following Matsumoto et al. (2013), there were four dimensions. Similar to the previous parts of the questionnaire, this part
also underwent exploratory analysis. The results of exploratory analysis were as follows: using Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin was .594; using Bartlett’s Test \( (p = .043) \). After having exploratory factor analysis, two dimensions are obtained, namely deductive (identifying main ideas= 6 items) and inductive (including: summarizing, making inferences, and utilizing text organization= 6 items).

In addition, validity and reliability of the questionnaire were measured through SPSS 19. Each item showed that the coefficient obtained was smaller than .05 level of significance, so they were claimed valid. The internal consistency reliability coefficients of adopted epistemic beliefs in reading was determined by Cronbach’s alpha (\( \alpha \)) for the three dimensions as follows: deductive (identifying main ideas) (\( \alpha = .516 \)), inductive (including: summarizing, making inferences, and utilizing text organization) (\( \alpha = .487 \)). It means the questionnaire particularly in reading strategies use part is reliable.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

The participants were requested to answer the EFL reading questionnaire in English at the beginning and the end of the course: 83 students agreed to complete the questionnaire at the beginning of the course, while only 31 of the students completed the questionnaire by the end of the course.

As stated above the purpose of this study was to examine the causal relationship among factors affecting reading comprehension. SEM using the maximum likelihood estimation method was performed integrally with the three upper variables, namely epistemic beliefs in reading, reading motivations, and reading strategies use, and the connecting eight lower-level variables (including personal justification, justification by authority, justification by multiple sources, reading motivations in general, reading for grades, and reading involvement, deductive strategy, and inductive strategy).

The data analysis involved several steps. Firstly, a chi-square test of independence was performed to assume that the maximum likelihood function over the measured variables has been minimized. Under that assumption, the null hypothesis for the test is that the population covariance matrix over all of the measured variables is equal to the estimated covariance matrix over all of the measured variables written as a function of the free model parameters (Fushino, 2010). This was administered to check whether there were significant relationships of the tested model of epistemic beliefs in reading, reading motivations, and reading strategies use. Secondly, using Tetrad 4.3.9-18 version software, SEM analysis was utilized. In that respect, SEM is useful for investigating how well a theoretical model explains the interrelationships among a set of variables (Fushino, 2010). That is, by using SEM, we can determine and obtain information on how plausible the model is in terms of revealing the existence of causal relationships (Fushino, 2010). See Figure 1 for the modeling frame. Relationships among the upper constructs were explored as causal correlations because the direction of influences has been made explicit. Thirdly, after obtaining the correlation values, they were determined as high (range of values between 0.99-0.60), medium (range of values between 0.59-0.49), or low (range of values between 0.48-0.10) relationships. Knowing the obtained significant values is also necessary to know whether they are significant (0.05 or below) or not significant (exceed 0.05) (Butler, 1985).
Results and Discussion

Regarding the model fit analysis, after administering the chi square test the results are as follows.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table 1. Chi Square Result</th>
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<td>CHI SQUARE</td>
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<td>MODEL</td>
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Table 1 displays that with the degree of freedom 506, the Chi square was 649.418 (p.0000). According to Kline (2005, as cited in Liu, 2012), the suggested $\chi^2$/df value is < 3. For this model, $\chi^2$/df = 649.418/506 = 1.28 (<3), the value was adequate. It means that all other values related to model fit indices were favorable; the research model had a good fit. Besides, these correlations were significant at a $p= 0.0000$ level.

Based on SEM analysis, the results in Figure 2 indicate that epistemic beliefs in reading have low negative relationships with reading motivation (-.305), unlike reading motivations with reading strategies use (.595), which show moderate positive relationship. Through SEM, significant paths were obtained leading from epistemic beliefs to their hypothesized destination of reading strategies use. As an upper variable or latent variable, epistemic beliefs in reading are affected by and correlated positively with three constructs, namely communication personal justification (.894), justification by authority (.231), and justification by multiple sources (.759).

Reading motivation which comprises reading motivation in general, reading for grades, and reading involvement, have negative relationship with the first construct, but have positive relationship with the rest two constructs: reading motivation in general (-.819), reading for grades (.828), and reading involvement (.187). In addition to this, reading strategies are correlated positively with the two constructs, namely deductive (.557) and inductive (.412).

This study uniquely contributes to the literature on epistemic beliefs in reading, reading motivations, and reading strategies use in several ways. First, it examined a network of causal relationship among three factors affecting reading comprehension in EFL reading setting. In relation to that, the present study has different results to the theories and previous study by Matsumoto, et al. (2013) which show different direction of the correlation amongst contributing to reading comprehension. In the present study, the findings can be interpreted that if students’
epistemic beliefs are high, their reading motivations are low, but their reading strategies use are moderate.

Second, it went beyond only examining direct relations and testing effects among factor contributing to reading comprehension. It brings implications in the teaching of reading comprehension in EFL setting. As assumed, the relationship between epistemic beliefs in reading and reading motivations can be predicted. Students who have high degree of epistemic beliefs in reading can be predicted to have low reading motivations. This is not in line with Mellat & Lavasani’s (2011) study that documents positive effects on students’ epistemic beliefs to learning motivation.

Presumably, the better students possess reading epistemic beliefs the lower the reading motivations they have. The results reveal that epistemic beliefs in reading, particularly including justification beliefs framework (Ferguson et al, 2012, 2013), that its justification by authority, personal justification, and justification by multiple sources, may underlie the reading motivations negatively. This is in line with Bråten, et al. (2008) that high degree of epistemic beliefs in reading can cause students to be distracted from building of a high quality representation of author and the text meaning. They view the reading activities as complex reading tasks by trying to obtain better multiple-text understanding so that these reading activities may demotivate them to read more.

This present research finding also provides new insight into how different types of justification beliefs may have negative mediated contribution on reading motivations improvement. In other words, both simple beliefs (personal justification) and sophisticated beliefs (justification by authority and justification by multiple sources) cannot bring relatively positive correlation to reading motivations. This particular belief in reading comprehension has not been explored in the previous study by Matsumoto et al. (2013), more specifically, simple and sophisticated beliefs in reading. Simple beliefs in this research is closely related to reading texts written by a particular person, while sophisticated beliefs are related to reading texts written by experts, or reading more than one source. As shown in the result of justification by authority in this research, students have lack opportunity to explore more reading texts written by experts. Therefore, the current study puts forward important implication for EFL reading instruction, especially when teachers expose students with various texts and numerous sources, they need to guide students to understand the contents in a simple way. Various interesting reading activities should be used as the teaching techniques so these can help teachers to motivate students to read more.

Of note is also that reading motivations contribute positively to students’ strategies use in reading. Nevertheless, different types of reading motivations may have positive and negative indirect contributions to reading strategies use. Reading motivation in general, which comprises reading efficacy, reading challenge, reading curiosity, importance of reading, reading work, competition in reading, recognition, social reasons and complacent, has negative relations indirectly on reading strategies use. On the contrary, reading involvement and especially reading for grades have positive correlation with reading strategies use. External motivation, especially reading for grades contribute higher effect on the correlation. This confirms information that students are encouraged to read due to external impulse (Chiu & Chow, 2010), unlike
Anmarkrud & Bråten’s (2009) study which shows internal motivations especially reading task value that encourages the students to read. The current study results appear to have more or less similar findings with (Chiu & Chow 2010) under the possibility of sharing similar culture. This leads to another important research that can be conducted in the future to see how culture brings impacts towards reading motivations among countries sharing similar culture root.

In relation to implication in the teaching of reading, students need to be autonomous learners, that reading habits and willingness to read need to be cultivated among students. As more thoroughly discussed, the chance to promote students to read autonomously is possible, retrieving information of positive correlation shown by motivation under the reading involvement reasons. Although the correlation is weak, it still brings positive contribution towards reading motivations as the upper variable. Reading involvement shows reading motivations that comes from students’ internal drive to read texts related mostly to their interest on the topics. Various topics related to students reading materials are encouraged to be implemented; if possible the topics should be based on students’ preferences (Zhao & Zhu, 2012). Besides, intensive reading activities should go in line with more activities related to extensive reading (Guo, 2012). These are aimed at facilitating students to increase their reading motivations.

Another important finding in this study is the pivotal role of reading strategies use employed by students. The current research similarly to the former one (Matsumoto et al., 2013), highlights that main idea strategy in this research is named deductive strategy, shows stronger positive correlation to the upper variable, i.e. reading strategies use than that the other strategy. However, different from the previous study by Matsumoto et al. (2013), in the present study deductive strategy does not really dominate the positive correlation. The other strategy, precisely, inductive strategy, which includes adjusting, reasoning, and monitoring strategies, has relatively the same value of positive correlation as deductive strategy.

Several important implications for the teaching of reading can be focused on providing various reading strategies to students. As it can be seen from this research, not only particular reading strategy informs that teachers have introduced as well as engaged students with different kinds of reading strategies in order to comprehend reading texts. As suggested by Naseri & Zaferanieh (2012), future investigations in this area may profitably prove which strategy use is the most effective one to reading comprehension.

Conclusions

This study unveiled the causal connection amongst factors contributing to reading comprehension improvement, namely epistemic beliefs in reading, reading motivations, and reading strategies use in in EFL reading context. Presenting a simple but good-fitting structural model provides a basis for the development of more complex tested model. Due to its simplicity, this model can be generalized to the broader EFL context. This current research is reexamines the causal relationship among some factors contributing to the improvement of reading comprehension by Matsumoto et al. (2013). Although the differences outweigh the similarity between the findings yield between the former study and the present study, both attempt to provide important implications in the teaching of reading comprehension.
Pedagogically, the present study provides three important implications. First, its core finding tells that if the students own high epistemic beliefs in reading comprehension, teachers might boost, to some extend, students’ motivations in reading by selecting particular reading strategies to improve their reading comprehension through interesting various reading activities. Second, finding a way to elevate reading comprehension directly is difficult; nonetheless, after getting to know that it is affected by epistemic beliefs, motivations, and strategies use, teachers can be more specific about how to raise students’ reading comprehension. Third, reflecting on the direct causality of reading comprehension improvement, enhancing students’ beliefs in reading more on multiple reading materials, improving their external motivation, and increasing reading texts comprehension by focusing on understanding the main ideas are the best ways to be implemented in EFL reading classes.

Among the limitations of the current study is that the causal relationship among factors contributing to reading comprehension enhancement should be correlated with reading comprehension achievement. Thus, a further study can fill in this gap. Besides, although the direct and indirect links that have been modeled made both theoretical and empirical sense, longitudinal studies where a model is tested over time or experimental studies where certain variables are manipulated to assess changes in other variables are needed to reveal more causal relationship among factors contributing to reading comprehension enhancement.

Bout the Authors:
Ive Emaliana is an English lecturer of Universitas Brawijaya who is currently a doctorate candidate in English Language Teaching in Universitas Negeri Malang.

Utami Widiati is a professor in English language teaching who has been teaching undergraduate and graduate students in English language teaching at Universitas Negeri Malang since 1990.

Mohammad Adnan Latief is a professor in English language teaching who has been teaching undergraduate and graduate students in English language teaching at Universitas Negeri Malang since 1979.

Suharmanto is a lecturer in English language teaching who has been teaching undergraduate and graduate students in English language teaching at Universitas Negeri Malang since 1983.

References


**APPENDIX**

**EFL Reading Questionnaire**

1. I make use of what I know about the text type and organization (RS-F2-Main Idea)
2. I translate difficult parts into bahasa Indonesia. (RS- F1-Adjusting)
3. I predict what is going on in the text. (RS-F1-reasoning)
4. Just one source is never enough to decide what is right in reading materials (EB-F3-justification by multiple sources)
5. I search for a topic sentence representing the main idea in each paragraph. (RS-F2-Main Idea)
6. I check my overall understanding of the text. (RS-F1-monitoring)
7. I take an overall view of the text type and organization to understand the text. (RS-F2-Main Idea)
8. I can never be sure about a claim in a reading text until I have checked it with at least one other source (EB-F3-justification by multiple sources)
9. To decide whether something I read is correct, I have to check whether it is related to other things I have read in the same topic(EB-F3-justification by multiple sources)
10. I read to improve my grades (RM-F2-Reading Grades)
11. I believe that everything I read in reading texts is correct (EB-F2-Justification by authority)
12. I read to learn new information about topics that interest me (RM-F1- reading curiosity)
13. I take an overall view of the text content to see what it is all about. (RS-F2-Main Idea)
14. I check to see if my understanding of the text is correct after reading e.g by discussing it with friends (RS-F1-monitoring)
15. I learn more from reading than most students in the class (RM-F1-reading efficacy)
16. I guess the meaning of unfamiliar words (RS-F1-reasoning)
17. Things that are written in reading class module is correct (EB-F2-Justification by authority)
18. When I read reading materials that is based on scientific investigations, then I believe that it is correct (EB-F2-Justification by authority)
19. I believe in claims that are based on scientific research (EB-F2-Justification by authority)
20. If an expert writes that something is a fact, then I believe it (EB-F2-Justification by authority)
21. To detect incorrect claims in reading materials, it is important to check several information sources (EB-F3-justification by multiple sources)
22. If the project is interesting, I can read difficult material (RM-F1- reading challenge)
23. It is very important to me to be a good reader (RM-F1-importance of reading)
24. To be able to trust knowledge claims in reading materials, I have to check various knowledge sources (EB-F3-justification by multiple sources)
25. I look forward to finding out my reading grades (RM-F2-Reading Grades)
26. I go back and forth in the text searching for necessary information (RS-F1-Adjusting)
27. Complicated stories are NOT fun to read (RM-F1-reading work)
28. I am willing to work hard to read better than my friends (RM-F1-competition in reading)
29. My friends sometimes tell me I am a good reader (RM-F1-recognition)
30. I sometimes read to my parents (RM-F1-social reasons)
31. I read because I have to (RM-F1-complace)
32. Grades are a good way to see how well you are doing in reading (RM-F2-Reading Grades)
33. I feel like I make friends with people in good books (RM-F3-Reading Involvement)
34. I read a lot of adventure stories (RM-F3-Reading Involvement)
35. I enjoy a long, involved story or fiction book (RM-F3-Reading Involvement)
36. I pay attention to the text type and organization of the text I read. (RS-F2-Main Idea)
37. I pay attention to the connections of key words to understand the main idea (RS-F2-Main Idea)
38. What is a fact in reading materials depends on one’s personal views (EB-F1-Personal Justification)
39. Every student can have different opinions about content in reading materials because no completely correct answers exist (EB-F1-Personal Justification)
40. If the reading instructor says something is correct, then I believe it (EB-F2-Justification by authority)

The abbreviations for classification of questionnaire dimensions and factors were not included in the administration but added in this paper.
F1= factor 1, F2 = factor 2, F3 = factor 3, EB = Epistemic Beliefs in reading, RM = reading motivation, RS = reading strategies use.
The Frequently Used Discourse Markers by Saudi EFL Learners

Maryam Alsharif  
Lecturer of Applied Linguistics at English Language Department  
Jubail University College  
Jubail Industrial City  
Saudi Arabia

Abstract  
The paper examines the use of discourse markers by Saudi English learners who struggle to master them when they write English essays. The hypothesis is, and based on previous studies of discourse markers by English learners, Saudi English learners overuse them. English essays are collected as a corpus for analysis and a concordance program is used to shed light on how frequently key words in contexts are used by learners. The study compares between Saudi learners and native speakers in their use of discourse markers and to investigate similarities and differences between the two groups. The results support previous studies as the analysis proves that Saudi learners overuse discourse markers. They have been used unnecessarily and redundantly. The preference of types of discourse markers has been investigated to show that learners use listing and resultive discourse markers mainly. The frequency count of the discourse markers in the collected corpus indicates their preference to vary specific types to avoid repetition and not to vary the semantic functions of discourse markers.

Keywords: corpus, discourse markers, EFL learners, frequency count

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1. Introduction

Learners need to produce a discourse that exhibits a good command of grammar, a vast knowledge of vocabulary, correct spelling, proper punctuation and an appropriate use of cohesive devices. A written discourse needs to be coherent and cohesive. One of the most important features of a well-formed discourse is its unity or connectedness (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2005). In fact, unity is the result of the coherent organization of ideas and proper use of cohesive devices. Among the most commonly used devices is the use of discourse markers (DMs). Studies that have been done on DMs suggest that learners either overuse or underuse them in their writings. Neither of the conditions is appropriate. Overusing DMs yields an artificial text. It "clutters up the text unnecessarily" and disrupts "the thread of argument" (Crewe, 1990:324). Underuse of DMs results in misinterpretation. It causes comprehension problems, and is, therefore, a problematic area for learners. Martinez (2004), in her investigation of the use of DMs, found that since the role of DMs is to facilitate communication, their absence or misuse hinders communication or leads to misunderstanding.

In the past twenty years and with the growth of corpus linguistics, several researchers adopted a corpus-based approach to analyze discourse markers. Milton and Tsang's (1993), Granger and Tyson's (1996), Altenberg and Tapper's (1998), studies and others provide frequency analysis of DMs which enabled researchers to compare learners "to native speakers". It was found that EFL learners tend to underuse certain types of DMs and to overuse others. Reasons were attributed to first language transfer, limited knowledge of DMs' use, and the belief that the larger the number of DMs, the higher quality of the essay.

Since the use of discourse markers is problematic for many EFL learners, this study focuses on their use by EFL Saudi learners of English in order to investigate problems that are related to the overuse / underuse in their writings.

Statement of the Problem

DMs signal relationships between segments in a discourse and their presence enhances comprehensibility. DMs reduce readers' processing effort by limiting the possible interpretations that a reader expects. Thus, they contribute to increasing the speed and the efficiency of communication (Blakemore, 1987). However, EFL learners experience difficulty when they use DMs. They usually overuse or underuse DMs, and in many cases, they misuse them.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study stems from the following points:
1. The study is a modest contribution to the field of corpus linguistics.
2. To the best of researcher's knowledge, it is the first corpus-based study of DMs that are used by Saudi female students of English. Previous studies have examined EFL learners' use of DMs in China (Milton and Tsang, 1993), (Ai, 2006), France (Granger and Tyson, 1996), Sweden (Altenberg and Tapper, 1998), Hong Kong (Bolton et al, 2002), Japan (Narita, Sato and Sugiuara, 2004) (Ying, 2007), Hungary (Tanko, 2004), and Taiwan (Chen, 2006). This study is significant in so far as it is conducted on Arab Saudi female students of English. It fills a gap in the field of applied linguistics and in particular in the domain of DMs in the academic writing of Saudi females based on a corpus approach.
Purpose of the Study
This study aims to investigate the use of DMs by Saudi female students of English. It will analyze the frequency of DMs as they appear in their writings. It compares the use of DMs by native speakers (NS) and Saudi Non-Native Speakers (SNNS). The purpose of this comparison is two-fold; first, it intends to find out if SNNS overuse or underuse DMs; second, it investigates the frequently used DMs by the two groups.

Research Questions
This study will address the following questions:
1. Do EFL Saudi college students overuse discourse markers?
2. What discourse markers are frequently used by NS and SNNS?

Delimitation of the Study
This study is limited to female Saudi students majoring in English Literature in fourth year in the college of arts at Dammam University. First year, second year and third year students are excluded because of restrictions pertaining to the writing course where they are not required to write elaborative essays. The researcher chooses female students as the only participants in this study due to convenience in collecting data in a segregated society. It is an intervening variable.

2. Literature Review
Corpus-Based Study of the Use of Discourse Markers by EFL learners:
Milton and Tsang (1993) analyzed the use of logical connectors in the writings of EFL Chinese learners of English. The data consisted of 2,000 files of assignments written by 800 first-year undergraduates. It also included 206 examination scripts. They were descriptive, expository and argumentative essays. The learners' corpus was compared to native speakers' corpora. The corpora consisted of different types because there is no one single corpus that is equivalent to the learners' corpus in term of genre and circumstances. They used Celce-Murcia and Freeman's classification which is based on Halliday and Hasan's taxonomy. The electronic analysis of the frequency count of connectors was used. When the learners' corpus was compared to the native speakers' corpora, there were discrepancies in the frequency of connectors. The learners overused additive and sequential connectors. Learners overuse connectors because they believe that the more connectors are used, the more coherent the text will be. Milton and Tsang (1993) believe that students especially during exams "resort to using logical connectors as the magic glue to bind their disorganized ideas together" (p.235). Solutions for the overuse and misuse of connectors were proposed. They suggested that:

students can concordance on collections of NS writing to discover for themselves the patterns of occurrence of logical connectors. Teachers can collect their students' writings and list the characteristics that make their students' writing different from that of native speakers. They can also develop teaching materials targeted at their students' most frequent problems (p.238).

In another study, Granger and Tyson (1996) examined the use of connectors by French learners of English. Since the structure of a French text is characterized by the overuse of connectives, it is assumed that French learners would transfer this feature to the second language (2L). Hence, they obtained data that consisted of 89,918 words produced by French learners of English. They...
formulated the "overuse hypothesis" on the basis of first language transfer (1L). To classify connectors, Granger and Tyson used Quirk et. al's (1985) list of connectors. TACT concordance software was used to contextualize connectors and then to calculate their overall frequency and the individual frequency. Result of individual frequency of connectors, proved that "learners use most frequently those connectors which add to, exemplify, or emphasize a point rather than those which change the direction of the argument or take the argument logically forward"(p.20). To test first language (1L) transfer, the corpus was compared to a corpus of German learners' writings in English. They found that the connector "indeed is transfer-related". They also found out that French learners were unaware of the "stylistic restriction of connectors".

In another corpus-based study, Altenberg and Tapper (1998) gathered 86 essays (about 50,000 words) from the Swedish components of the ICLE. They compared this data to 70 essays (about 50,000 words), which are written by native English students at the University of Surrey in England. The researchers hypothesized that "advanced Swedish learners of English underuse conjuncts in their written English" (p.83). The result of the computed frequency of conjuncts proved that Swedish learners used fewer conjuncts than native students. Results of the study were compared to those of Granger and Tyson's (1996) study. They found that French learners use more conjuncts in their writings. However, they share almost the same overused and underused conjuncts. Altenberg and Tapper (1998) noticed that Swedish learners tend to use informal connectors.

Bolton et al (2002) compared the usage of discourse markers in the writing of students in Hong Kong with the students in Britain. Both sets of data were driven from the ICLE. They focused on the phenomena of underuse and overuse. The two sets of data were compared to published academic writings. The results suggested that both groups of students overuse discourse markers in their writings. However, Hong Kong students were greater in their overuse of markers and their frequently used markers were different from markers used by British students.

More recently, Narita, Sato & Sugiura (2004) studied the overused and underused connectors in English essays which were written by Japanese learners. They compared Japanese component of the ICLE corpus to the Louvain corpus of native English essays. For classifying connectors, they used Quirk's et al taxonomy. They found that learners overused enumerative/additive and appositive connectors such as first, moreover and in addition and the resultative connector of course. They underused inferential then and contrastive connectors like yet and instead. They noticed that Japanese EFL learners overused connectors in sentence-initial position whereas English native students used the connectors both in sentence-initial and sentence-medial positions. This is due to lack of differentiation between adverbial connectors and conjunctions on the part of the learners. They believed that students' exposure to authentic texts and their use of concordance programs can have a positive effect on EFL writing.

Tanko (2004) conducted a study on the use of adverbial connectors in argumentative essays which were written by Hungarian advanced learners of English. The data was argumentative essays which were written in an examination. The researcher used Quirk et al's (1985) framework to categorize adverbial connectors. He compared the data of the study to native speakers' corpus. Hungarian overused connectors and it was also found that Hungarian used fewer types of connectors.
Chen (2006) investigated the use of conjunctive adverbials in academic writing by first year and second year students in a MA TESOL program in Taiwan. He formulated an overuse hypothesis based on observation of Taiwanese's writing. The connectors were classified according to the Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman's (1999) simplified framework of Halliday and Hasan. Results indicated that the most frequently used connectors by advanced EFL writers were additive whereas professional writers used adversative connectors.

Ai (2006) studied the patterns of connector usage by Chinese learners. Results supported the researcher's hypothesis that "the participants would overuse connectors". It was concluded that "connector overuse is likely to be a universal feature of EFL learners' second language acquisition" (p.19). Among the reasons for overuse and underuse are the genres of the essays, the English books used in China, the teachers' emphasis and ignorance of certain connectors and the learners' use of connectors as devices to organize and to shape essays rather than devices to develop their thoughts.

Ying (2007) analyzed and compared the use of DMs by the three groups of participants. The genres of the compositions were narrative and expository. The comparison suggested that there are differences among the three groups that could be attributed to differences in culture, language systems, and teaching approaches. It was found that JNNS underused DMs and repeated the same DMs which they learned at their elementary courses. He suggested different approaches to the teaching of DMs in an attempt to an improvement in the use of DMs by EFL learners.

3. Methodology

The aim of this study is to compare between Saudi Non-Native Speakers (SNNS) and Native Speakers (NS) in their use of discourse markers and to investigate similarities and differences between the two groups. Hence, NS and SNNS corpora are obtained to answer the research questions stated earlier.

Data Collection

The SNNS corpus is based on a collection of English essays produced by fourth year BA female students majoring in English literature at Dammam University. They are all Saudi Arabic native speakers whose age is between twenty to twenty three. The corpus consists of one hundred essays selected randomly. These essays are final timeable test papers. The reason behind selecting test papers as corpus is to guarantee that there would be no plagiarism.

Since the area of research we are involved in is comparative in nature and contrasts NNS and NS in their use of DMs in a comparable situation, it is necessary that the data under investigation will be comparable. Otherwise, the data would be meaningless by fundamental discrepancies in both data and research methods. To achieve this, three variables have been controlled in collecting the corpus; educational stage, text type, and native speaker reference corpus.

In this study, both NS and SNNS corpora are that of advanced learners. Advanced refers to university students of English between the ages of twenty to twenty three. Argumentative essays rather than descriptive or narrative ones form the basis of the two corpora. The native speaker corpus is used as a reference. It is essential that the corpus of SNNS be comparable in terms of
The Frequently Used Discourse Markers by Saudi EFL Learners

Method of data analysis

Quantitative Analysis

1. The selection of the discourse markers for the study is based on a list of discourse markers in Quirk et al's (1985) *Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. The researcher used Quirk et al's (1985) framework because of its detailed classification. Further, it is adopted by a number of major and influential corpus-based studies of DMs such as Granger and Tyson's (1996), Altenberg and Tapper (1998), Tanko (2004) and Ai (2006). Granger and Tyson (1996) added a category called corroborative to the taxonomy. This innovatory practice was followed by Altenberg and Tapper (1998) and Ai (2006).

2. The corpora of both groups NS and SNNS is analyzed with the aid of MonoConc Pro 2.2 (MP 2.2) concordance software which can provide the number of times DMs appear in the corpora (raw frequency).

3. DMs of the study are analyzed as cohesive ties that function at the sentence level. The focus then is on DMs that function at the global coherence level.

4. The task of calculating the ratio of occurrence of DMs will be done according to Granger and Tyson’ method (1996). It estimates a raw of frequency count of the target discourse markers in NS and SNNS writing corpus and then proceeds to calculate a ratio of occurrence based on the frequency of occurrence of DMs per 10,000 words of texts. Ratio of occurrence helps in determining the overuse and underuse. Calculation of overuse and underuse of DMs will rely on a comparison of non-native SNNS against NS corpus data.

5. Normalizing frequency count is necessary in case that the corpora under investigation are not identical in their size. The NS corpus is smaller in size. It has 16,497 words whereas SNNS has 49,598 words. Therefore, the researcher uses the normalization technique. Biber, Conrad and Reppen (1998) explain this technique as

   a way to adjust raw frequency counts from texts of different lengths so that they can be compared accurately. The total number of words in each text must be taken into consideration when norming frequency counts. Specifically, the raw frequency count should be divided by the number of words in the text and then multiplied by whatever basis is chosen for norming (p.263).

The researcher divides the total number of DMs by the total number of words in a corpus. The results of calculation for each corpus are then multiplied by 10,000. It indicates the frequency count of DMs per 10,000 words in each corpus.

4. Data Analysis

   **Overall Frequencies**

   The two corpora are not identical in size and therefore their raw frequency counts are not comparable. Because of this variation, they require what is called “normalization”. For the purpose of normalization in this study, the total number of DMs will be divided by the total
number of words in a corpus. McEnery and Wilson (2008) found that this arithmetic calculation gives a small number and therefore the result of the calculation has to be multiplied by a large number such as 1,000 10,000 or 100,000 words. The raw frequency counts of inter-sentence DMs in the SNNS is 663 whereas in the NS corpus there are 202 DMs. After normalization the results are shown in Table 1.

Tables and figures, please read out journal guidelines (page 5) y. http://awej.org/images/manuscript%20guidelines%20for%20awej.pdf

Table 1. Normalized frequency counts for the two corpora.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SNNS</th>
<th>NS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corpus size in words</td>
<td>49,598</td>
<td>16,497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of DMs</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMs per 10,000 words</td>
<td>133,6</td>
<td>122,4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results prove that SNNS slightly overused DMs. They used DMs in their essays 1.09 time higher than the native speakers did. It is to be noted that DMs used to link words and phrases are excluded from this study. The researcher has examined the tokens of each DM and then analyzed the context to constrain DMs under investigation to those achieving global coherence. Since the concern is with inter-sentence relations, the researcher manually excludes DMs that do not function at the sentence level. This exclusion reduces the number of DMs in the SNNS corpus which justifies the slight overuse. Figure 1 presents a graphic representation of the overall inter-sentence DMs usage in the two corpora.

![Overall DMs Usage](image)

Figure 1. Overall DMs usage.

Individual frequencies

In the individual analysis of DMs, many interesting findings have emerged. It is found that SNNS vary the use of DMs. It is not a variation of types but variation of DMs within specific types. For example, they used many resultive DMs such as accordingly, consequently, hence, so, now, therefore, thus, as a result, and of course. NS used only hence, now, so, therefore, thus, and
as a result. Similarly, they vary the use of additive DMs. They used again, also, further, furthermore, moreover, then, in addition, to top it all whereas NS used again, also, then and in addition. This indicates the tendency of SNNS not only to overuse but also to vary DMs. SNNS used around 56 different DMs whereas NS used only 37 DMs. SNNS are aware of the function of DMs and of the importance of variation. For the percentages and the ratios of usage of all inter-sentence DMs in the two corpora see table 2 in appendix A.

Table 3. The top ten frequently used DMs by both groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DM</th>
<th>SNNS raw</th>
<th>% per 10,000 words</th>
<th>NS raw</th>
<th>% per 10,000 words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. so</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. also</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. however</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. in addition</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. for example</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. as a result</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. then</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. moreover</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. therefore</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. finally</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. therefore</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. still</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a high frequency in the use of also in the two corpora. It ranks second in the SNNS corpus and first in the NS corpus. So ranks as first in the SNNS corpus. In the NS corpus, it appears as one of the ten frequent DMs. However, it forms only 4.4% of all the used DMs. This indicates the overuse of so by the SNNS. They used it 4.5 times more than the NS did. However ranks second in NS corpus and third in the SNNS. Actually, there is not much difference in the ranking of also, so, however, for example, then and therefore in the two corpora. These six DMs are believed to be the most commonly used DMs for both groups.

In addition and moreover rank fourth, and eighth in the SNNS corpus respectively but they do not appear in the NS top ten frequent DMs. These two DMs are additive. SNNS are noticed to rely heavily on addition during argument or reasoning and therefore they tend to vary the additive DMs in order to avoid repetition. For example, they use also, further, furthermore,
moreover, then, in addition, to top it all to create variation of use. However, in addition and moreover appear to be the most used ones. Four of the top ten frequent DMs in the SNNS corpus belong to the listing type. They are also, in addition, moreover and finally. They form 25.3% of all the used DMs in the corpus. In the NS corpus, also forms 26% of the used DMs. It is the only DM in the top ten that belongs to the listing type. Though rather, still, and yet have high frequency in NS corpus, they are rarely used by SNNS. Rather did not appear in the SNNS corpus. This might be attributed to the underuse of contrastive DMs by SNNS in general. Now is highly used by NS. It is noticed that SNNS underused transitional DMs and this explains the few uses of now compared to NS.

The two lists indicate that SNNS concentrate on listing DMs. In the NS list, there is more variation in term of types. The high frequent DMs almost cover seven types of DMs. They are listing, contrastive, transitional, corroborative, inferential, resultive and appositive. Such variation can strengthen the argument and makes it more appealing and hence more convincing. Figures 2 and 3 present graphic representations of the top ten frequent DMs in the two corpora.

Figure 2. Top ten frequently used DMs by SNNS.

Figure 3. Top ten frequently used DMs by NS.
6. Conclusion

Findings and Discussion

The researcher examined the overall use of DMs in the two corpora to answer the first research question that is Do EFL Saudi college students overuse discourse markers? The researcher found that SNNS have a tendency of overuse of DMs in their English writings. SNNS used 133.6 DMs per 10,000 words whereas NS used 122.4. This overuse of DMs is common among NNS of English. Ai (2006) similarly, concluded that “overuse of connectors by EFL learners is more likely a universal feature in the interlanguage that students develop in the process of second language acquisition” (p.42). Several studies yield similar findings; Milton and Tsang’s (1993), Bolton et al (2002), Tanko (2004), and Chen (2006). Reasons of overuse among NNS can be attributed to learners’ first language, teaching materials or inappropriate instruction on the use of DMs. Due to the study limitations; no reasons are tested or proved.

Further comparisons are made between the SNNS corpus and the NS corpus to answer the second question of research What discourse markers are frequently used by NS and SNNS? The results of the quantitative analysis show that SNNS used the DMs so, also, however, in addition, for example, as a result, then, moreover, therefore and finally which rank as the top ten frequent DMs in the whole corpus. The top ten frequent DMs in the NS corpus are also, however, for example, now, so, then, therefore, of course, rather, still and yet. The frequency results indicate that there are six DMs that are commonly used for both groups; also, so, however, for example, then and therefore. There is no great difference in their use by the two groups. In addition and moreover appear in the top ten list of DMs in the SNNS corpus but they do not appear in the NS list. These two DMs are listing DMs. There are four listing DMs in the SNNS top ten list whereas in the NS list there is only one listing DM that is also. The four listing DMs form 25.3% of all the used DMs in the corpus. In the NS corpus, also forms 26% of the used DMs. This finding indicates the tendency of SNNS to vary DMs specifically under the listing and the resultive categories. This variation is favorable. However, varying specific types of DMs indicate that the purpose of SNNS is to avoid repeating themselves rather than to vary the semantic functions of DMs. Now has a high frequency in the NS corpus. However, it is one of the most underused DM in the SNNS corpus. This suggests SNNS weakness in shifting argument. It is an area that deserves attention in the writing classes.

Pedagogical Implications

There are some pedagogical implications that can be drawn for language teaching and language learning:

1. Teachers should clarify to the students that the use of too many DMs does not necessarily imply high quality essay writing. Appropriateness of use in term of style and semantic properties is more important to draw the students’ attention to.
2. The results of frequent DMs analysis in the two corpora shed light on the importance of variation. SNNS tend to vary DMs under specific types; particularly listing and resultive. Students should be encouraged to vary DMs under other types such as appositive, transitional, and contrastive (replacive and reformulatory) DMs which prove to be areas of weakness to SNNS.
**Suggestions for Further Research**

The present study has several limitations. First, it is a corpus-based study and the size of the designed corpus is relatively small and it is comprised of essays written by Saudi female advanced students. Larger corpus-based studies on students’ use of DMs may be carried out in the future. Future research can also be conducted on participants of different proficiency levels to uncover similarities and differences. This can give a clear picture about progress in using DMs across different levels. Second, the current study did not investigate the possible reasons of DMs overuse. Future research may discuss this issue in details. For example, it is possible that there is a relationship between first language (Arabic) and overuse of DMs. Third, the corpus consists only of argumentative essays. Analyzing other writing genres may yield different results regarding the individual use of DMs. Future research may also investigate the relationships between the writing genre and the types of the used DMs.

**About the Author:**

Maryam Hamad Alshareef is a lecturer of Applied Linguistics currently teaching at the English Language Department in Jubail University College, Jubail Industrial City, Saudi Arabia. She has obtained master degree in Applied Linguistics from English Language and Literature Department, College of Arts, King Saud University. As an EFL teacher in Saudi Arabia who is interested in Corpus Linguistics, the researcher reveals the finding of a research on how discourse markers are used by Saudi female students.

**References**


The Frequently Used Discourse Markers by Saudi EFL Learners

Alsharif


**Appendix A**

**Table 2. The percentages and the ratios of usage of all inter-sentence DMs in the two corpora.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SNNS</th>
<th>NS</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Alsharif 2</td>
</tr>
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<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>hence</td>
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<td>Percentage</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>instead</td>
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<td>yet</td>
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Aspects of Taboos Surrounding Algerian Females’ Daily Issues and Language

Nadia GHOUNANE
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Tahar Mouley University, Saida, Algeria

Abstract
The present article focuses on gender differences in using some types of taboos. In this sense, it explores the world of Arab women and investigates aspects of taboos surrounding their issues and language use. In other terms, the focal point of this paper is centered on the linguistic devices that females employ to express taboos. This paper also evaluates women’s discourse and the reasons that keep their lives surrounded by mystery and ambiguity. Hence, Arab females’ issues and language are investigated in the light of the stereotypes Westerners have about the Islamic religious beliefs. Our study further explores the lexicon related to females’ topics like virginity, menstruation, menopause and their body parts. To this vein, a thorough examination was made depending on the informants’ gender, age and their sociocultural background with the support of a structured questionnaire, a focus group interview and participant observation. The findings demonstrate that Algerian females’ issues are directed by the cultural norms of their society. The results also reveal that speakers resort to euphemistic strategies to speak about women’s private lives, although Algerian dialects are rich in euphemistic expressions related to females’ sensitive issues.

Keywords: Algerian society, females’ tabooed issues, social norms, taboos

Introduction:

Males and females differ from each other not only on how they behave, but also in the language they use. Many studies have shown that women are conservative in nature and prefer more polite forms of language, whereas men are more attached towards the use of offensive expressions and taboo words. Therefore, society is split into males and females and this is apparent in the beliefs which they follow and the language they use.

Additionally, the societal norms have created a gap between men and women in the way they behave and speak. In fact, these differences are seeded in the minds and beliefs of people from their childhood. Thus, it influences the linguistic devices they tend to employ. In here, there have been a remarkably great number of gender studies. Most of them focus on gender differences in using linguistic devices in relation to certain sociolinguistic parameters including age, gender, the educational level and the socio-cultural background. Besides, most of scholars have turned their attention towards women’s use of language. However, studying gender differences in using linguistic taboos is a recent topic which has been regarded as a sensitive issue related to the field of sociology.

Aside from the study of gender differences in using taboos, another focus which has recently gained the interest of sociolinguists is women’s sensitive issues and the linguistic devices related to the subjects of menstruation, virginity, pregnancy, menopause and female’s body parts including vagina, bosom and ass. Still another focus of sociolinguistics is the substitutions that women have created in order to lessen the damaging nature of taboo words related to their issues while using them in some contexts.

As far as Arab females are concerned, this study tends to explore women’s tabooed issues in Algerian varieties in general and Tlemcen dialect in particular. Secondly, this paper concentrates on gender differences in using taboo words. Besides, it is interested in describing topics of menstruation, virginity and menopause in relation to the socio-cultural and religious norms of Algerian society. To these ends, it aims to explore the following research questions like: are Tlemcen speakers conscious of the tabooed status of females issues? And what are the different women’s tabooed issues that exist in Algerian culture? Or do Tlemcen speakers differ in using lexicons related to females’ body parts?

Trying to find reliable answers to these research questions, this study is based on three hypotheses:

In fact, the consciousness of a given person is related to the norms that the society has imposed. Females differ from males in perceiving the tabooed status of their issues since they are always aware of hiding these sensitive topics from other sex. In other terms, discussing females’ issues is restricted by the religious norms of the society. Secondly, Islam has made women’s life taboo through restrictions on their speech, clothes and behaviour. Among Arab females’ tabooed issues, we have menstruation, virginity, pregnancy and body parts. Lastly, Tlemcen speakers may differ in using taboos related to females’ issues since Tlemcen women may create their own vocabulary to discuss their topics. They avoid dealing with these issues in mixed sex groups.
Algerian Socio-cultural and Linguistic Profiles:

A lot can be mentioned about the history of Algerians, their culture and language, but since our main work is limited to explore taboos surrounding females’ issues and language, we are not supposed to dig deeper on the Algerian linguistic profile. Notably, Algerian culture constitutes a mosaic picture as a result of the successive comings of different civilisations starting with the Romans, then the Islamic Empire which left a great impact on the people’s traditions in addition to the French occupation which had lasted for 130 years. What can be also noted is that the French influence is deeply rooted in the Algerian culture as well. Kaye & Zoubir (1990) have summarised the most important stages in the Algerian history as follows:

Before the Arab conquest in the seventh century and the Islamization of the Berbers, Algeria was annexed by the French in the nineteenth century, who subjugated the Berbers and the Arabs in the sixteenth century, turned Algeria into a pirate state open to a multiplicity of cultural models during two centuries of Ottoman presence (p.69).

Furthermore, the national language of the country is Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) as all Arab Muslim countries. MSA is used in formal prestigious situations including education, press and administration, whereas Algerian Arabic (AA) or ‘darija’ is employed as a code in informal settings such as family conversations, markets and streets…etc. In order to explain this idea, Oakes (2008: 18) writes that “Most people speak a dialectal form of Arabic, known as Algerian Arabic or Darija”. Along with the same line, Ruedy (2005) explains this idea as follows:

The Arabic speech most widespread in Algerian today is a dialect descended from these nomadic invaders. The sedentary Arabic dialects presumed to be pre-hilalian are limited to the Arabic speaking parts of the lesser Kabylia […] Algerian Sahara was dominated by a nomadic group known as the Towareg. The Aures and most of the Nementcha mountains were home to Chaouia (p.10).

What can be understood from the above extract is that Algerian linguistic profile constitutes a fertile land for researchers in language variation which is not our cup of tea in this article.

Types of Females’ Tabooed Issues in Arabic Culture:

First of all, it is worth noticing that Islam has created boundaries that restrict its people’s daily speech as well as their behaviours. The most vital topic, that Islam has regulated, is Muslims’ sexual life. In this case, the latter remains taboo since religion has put restrictions on it as Ali (2011) has affirmed that “Faith and sexuality are hand in glove concepts of life. It is religion that makes it look alien and taboo” (p.11).

According to Islam, the most tabooed topic is adultery which is defined as an illegal intercourse between a man and a foreign woman. In this sense, Amer (2008) defines the term as a:

vaginal intercourse between a man and a woman who is neither his lawful wife nor his concubine […] zina is emphatically and unambiguously condemned in both the Qu’an
and the Sunnah, and has traditionally been the focus of Islamic scholars and of jurisprudence (p.11).

It is also essential to inform that everything related to women is subject to taboo including dress, speech and behaviour. Thus, it is considered as a shame to utter their names in friends’ meetings. According to Sadiqi (2003) Arab societies have made some topics taboo in order to protect women. In this respect, she states that “The use of taboo to protect collective and public identities, as well as property and social identity, is a peaceful, but very powerful means of keeping women invisible and legitimizing their exclusion from what culture considers ‘serious’ domains” (p.78-79).

Interestingly, one should note that the strongest linguistic taboos, in Muslim societies, are related to female body and its changes since girls “socialize in an environment where sexual discrimination is sanctioned by society. This explains the spread of taboos related to sexuality” (Sadiqi, 2003: p. 80). Hence, there are three major tabooed issues in Arab females’ lives related to sex including virginity, menstruation and menopause.

As far as the subject of virginity is concerned, it should be noted that the latter is a symbol of honour of both girls and their families as it has been noted by Sadiqi when she (2003) writes:

> Virginity symbolizes the honor of both girl/women and family. Just as motherhood is venerated after marriage, virginity is venerated before marriage. The great value attributed to virginity […] is attested in the fact that girls are more ‘watched’ than boys before marriage (p. 80).

Henceforth, virginity is so sacred for all Arab females and is seen as the most sensitive issue in their lives and for this reason it takes the first place in the topics that should be avoided in mixed sex groups. This idea can be explained by Sadiqi (2003) when she maintains that “Girls are continuously ‘hammered’ with the importance of virginity since a very young age and they grow up in the fear of loosing it. This phobia often creates psychological traumas that deeply affect girls’ and women’s lives” (p. 81).

Another sensitive issue is menstruation. The latter is regarded as a taboo topic in Islamic teachings since females are considered vulnerable, weakened, polluted and impure. Therefore, they are not allowed to pray, fast, read Quran or have intercourse because menstrual blood is ‘najis’: ‘dirty’ since Allah values people who are clean and pure. In this vein, Sadiqi (2003) mentions that “Another reason for the taboo status of menstruation […] is understood to be najasa ‘dirty’, ‘soiled’ or ‘ritually unclean’ and is often cited in religious prescriptions as a reason for impurity” (p. 82).

Sadiqi reveals the fact that religion has made menstruation taboo since women are forbidden from praying, entering the mosque, fasting and touching the holy book. Another reason is that society has also made this subject taboo. In other words, girls, in most Arab societies, are obliged not to talk about this period. Thus, the restrictions of the society have made menstruation as the most tabooed issue in females’ lives. In this vein, Sadiqi (2003) points out that “menstruation is surrounded by taboos. The taboo surrounding menstruation is related to the
Aspects of Taboos Surrounding Algerian Females’ Daily Issues

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‘unclean’ state-post partum of women. This taboo is mainly due to the negative attitudes of the family and society towards the female body” (p. 82).

As for menstruation, menopause is an important step in the lives of Arab females since they fear it and tend to hide its beginning. Indeed, some women even try not to discuss the problem. This psychological step leads into a moral crisis including sadness and anger. For this perspective, Sadiqi (2003) tries to throw some light on menopause in Moroccan culture when she states that “Another experience in the lives of women which is associated with taboo in Moroccan culture is menopause. Menopause is perceived in this culture as ‘old age’, ‘failure’, and the beginning of the end” (p. 81).

Apparently, Arab people avoid talking about this period in order not to hurt women’s feelings. Besides, menopause is like menstruating stage since girls try to hide this reality. With this point in mind, Sadiqi further maintains that women try even to hide this stage from their husbands, fearing that they will marry. In this sense, she (2003) states:

People do not talk about menopause because it is considered as a phase in the life of women in particular; feel more ashamed to talk about menopause than to talk about menstruation or virginity. This is mainly due to the fact that this attitude is basically male (p. 81).

Sadiqi (2003) completes her idea saying that “a woman knows that old age may lessen her prestige in the eyes of her husband, who may start thinking of remarrying a younger wife” (p. 82-83).

In all cases so far mentioned, it has been very important to show that these stages, namely virginity, menstruation and menopause, are of great importance in women’s lives since they are followed by moral, physical and psychological changes. Moreover, these topics are the most discussed in public either by men or women themselves. In other to explain more this idea, Sadiqi (2003) writes that “The experience relating to a woman’s body and cycles of her life are generally talked about in public from a made viewpoint. This explains the fact women’s lives are surrounded by powerful taboos” (p. 83).

In sum, sexuality and changing of female body are considered taboo not only in Algerian society, but in all human cultures. In this regard, Kelly (2002) avers the view that “Human sexual expression in general is something few people in this society, in fact few people in the world, wants to talk about” (p. x).

Taboo Words Related to Arab Females’ Issues:

First of all, the study of taboo words can be included in Arabic lexicography which may be of great importance to the fields of sociolinguistics and dialectology. However, our main concern, in this regard, is to investigate the different taboo terms that Arab females employ to talk about menstruation, virginity and menopause.
Additionally, some neutral words can become taboo when they are used by females to talk about the topic of menstruation such as [ddem]: (blood). In this context, Sadiqi (2003) posits the following idea that:

Menstruation is referred to by special terms that are not taboo out of context, but become so when associated with menstruation: […] ddem ‘blood’. The usual sense of lbuluy, for example, is not taboo when it is used to explain the puberty of boys, and its taboo sense becomes clear when it refers to menstruation. The same is true of ddem when is used to refer to menstruation (p. 81).

Admittedly, it should be stated that words which are used to talk about menstruation differs from one region to another and from one dialect to another, for example, the word [ældædæ]: ‘the habit’ is employed in Morocco and Yemen. According to Ritt-Benmimoun & Prochazka et al (2009), there are a set of words used to talk about menstruation in the Arab world by women (p. 35). To explain more this statement, they state that “The term /ældædæ/ ‘the habit, the custom’ is sometimes combined with the adjective /æʃæhriyyæ/ ‘monthly’ and found from Morocco in the West to Yemen in the East” (p. 34), whereas terms like [ hæjd] and [æddæwɔraæ] are used in Damascus, Jerusalem and Morocco. However, the term [ddem] can be also used in sentences such as [ ẓa:tni ̂ddem] or [ ræ:he ̂lija ̂ddem]: ‘I am menstruating’. These expressions are restricted to females’ use and found in Morocco, Algeria and Cairo. In this regard, Ritt-Benmimoun & Prochazka (2009) highlight that “The word damm for ‘menstruation’ is also combined with prepositions like ala and fi (for instance in Cairo and Khartoum) for expressing ‘she is menstruating’; e.g. aleha d-damm heard in Cairo” (p. 34).

Furthermore, Maghrebian dialects are rich in other terms denoting menstruation such as [bint əʃʃæhæ]: ‘the daughter of the month’ or [ tæriq əʃʃæhæ]: ‘the road of the month’. These expressions belong to Moroccan females’ words. In her part, Sadiqi (2003) declares that most words, denoting menstruation, are related to the unclean state of women such as [rænɪ mɔʁæʃ]: ‘I am dirty’. In fact, they also tend to employ the euphemised term [læwɔʃæ]: ‘dirt’ which is [ælaʁʊs]: ‘washing’. The latter is mostly used in Algerian and Moroccan dialects. Sadiqi (2003) further claims that the pain of menstruation is referred to as [æmærɔd]: ‘illness’ (p. 82).

As far as the issue of virginity is concerned, the Arabic term [ælbika:ʁæ]; ‘virginity’ is not used in Arabic dialects. They have created euphemistic expressions which differ from one variety to another. According to Ritt-Benmimoun & Prochazka et al (2009), Arabs use other words that cover up the term bikara such as [bint]: ‘girl’ or [bnijæ] which are found in Baghdad, [bint bʊnʊt] in Cairo and Beirut, whereas countries like Algeria and Morocco use [ ḍæ İzbaæ]: ‘young’ or [ʃyːɾa]: ‘girl’ or [ʃaːtq] especially in “The Algerian dialects of Talga
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and Sidi Aissa” (idem) and when the girl looses her virginity after marriage, she is called [mræ]: ‘a woman’ (p. 38).

Concerning defloration especially of a non-married girl, there are many terms that are used by men including [mæftuːhæ]: ‘opened’ and [mæνqʊːbæ] or [mætqʊːbæ]: ‘pierced’, whereas Moroccan and Algerian people employ different terms which are most vulgar than those used in the Middle East such as [χærɡuːhæ] or [tæqbuːhæ]: ‘she is pierced’. In the light of this idea, Ritt-Benmimoun & Prochazaka et al (2009) state that:

Many different lexemes are reported for ‘defloration’ in the Maghribian dialects and there are often three or more words used for it in one single dialect. [...] the connection with ‘opening’ through the mæhlula is found in the urban Moroccan dialects of Fes and Sefron. Much more widespread are roots bearing the actual meaning of ‘piercing’- for instance the passive participles of χ-r-q, q-r and t-q-b in Algerian and Moroccan dialects other roots used in the context of ‘deflowered’ are the passive voice of χ-s-r ‘destroyed’ (мүχәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәәã

As for defloration, the wedding night has also taken a great part of Arabs’ interests. In this sense, they have created terms [æd dukːæ] or [ælhamːæ]. These terms are used in all Arabic dialects, whereas terms referring to defloration differ from one variety to another. Indeed, the blood of virginity is related to the honour of the girl and her family for this reason, in some regions like Cairo, they use [dæmː æʃːæʃːæ] (the blood of honour).

Pregnancy is another issue which is handled with care in most Arab societies since it is seen as a sensitive issue in women’s lives. Therefore, they have developed a rich vocabulary referring to pregnancy. Among the terms which they employ, we have [mætæɡlæ] and [hæmil]: ‘pregnant’. The latter is found in Eastern dialects, while the former is used in Bedouin dialects of Maghreb countries. On the other hand, urban people, in these countries, prefer French loanwords such as [mɑsɛ] : ‘pregnant’.

Female Issues in Algerian Dialect:

According to Ritt-Benmimoun & Prochazaka et al (2009), the sex of the person determines his/her selection or choice of words and expressions. In this sense, they highlight that “a woman will certainly use different words regarding her menstruation when talking with another woman than when talking with a male member of her family. And many words considered as taboo will often be alluded to euphemistically” (p. 33).

As far as Algerian women are concerned, the terms, that they use when talking to each other about menstruation, are different from those which they employ with men. In effect, they avoid talking about menstruation in the presence of males. Among the expressions that Algerian females employ, we have [raha ʃlija haq əʃːar]: “I have the right of the month”, or [ranĩ mɔʃːa]: “I am dirty” since menstruation is seen as a dirt in the beliefs of most Algerian people.
and other important examples lie in [raha ḥlija damm]: “I have blood”, or [raha ḥlija lỳusla]. Moreover, they have also borrowed words from French including [raňi ręgli], or [raňi ındșpɔ̃zi]. This idea is better explained by Sadiqi (2003) when she states that “many linguistic strategies are used amongst women as euphemisms and metaphors to refer to menstruation: haq ḥʃhar ‘the right of the month’, ḥwsax ‘dirt’, ḥmarD ‘illness’, or simply ḥadik ‘that one’” (p. 82). They even try to talk about menstruation by using indirect expressions such as in [raha fija ḥadi:k], or [ʒaʈni]: “it came to me” or [ḥadi:k]: “that one”. In this sense, Marçais (1955)2 talks about the expressions that Algerian women use regarding menstruation including “andha-hādūk ‘elle a ceux-la’ i.e. ‘elle ses menstrues’” (p. 342).

Furthermore, another taboo topic related to females’ body, we have virginity. However, the latter “is widely used among educated people in many, especially urban dialects of the Meghrib” (Marçais, 1955: p. 39). In fact, when it comes to violation of a virgin through an illegal relation, males and females share the same words including “x-r-q, q-f-r and t-q-b in Algerian and Moroccan dialects” (Marçais, 1955: p. 39)3.

Interestingly enough, the stage of menopause is also surrounded by taboos for this reason women resort to employ some strategies to hide their shame as Daniluk (2003) has explained when she declares that “Women sometimes feel shame about experiencing this inevitable biological process. This is apparent in the euphemistic language women often use in reference to menopause (e.g., “change of life”, “the change”)” (p. 276). Interestingly, Algerian women fear this stage; as a result they employ euphemistic expressions including [mọʃ ʒatlha əỳusla]: “she lost her period”. On the other hand, pregnancy is also regarded as a taboo topic. Consequently, women resort to euphemisms as in: [raḥa məṭtəqla] or [raḥa mriːqa]: “she is ill” instead of [raḥa bəlkər]: “she is pregnant”.

### Research Design:

#### Materials:

First of all, one should inform that taboos related to females’ issues and their substitutions are parts of oral culture for this reason we have focused on an interview and a semi-structured questionnaire which was distributed for 110 participants from Tlemcen city since it will take time to do the research in all Algerian towns. Thereby, this research has taken about one year and the age of the group sample is between 18-25 years, 26-35 years and over 45 years of age. In fact, we tried to select an equal number of both sexes in order to test their attitudes towards Arab females’ tabooed issues. Indeed, we have also selected men to know more about their attitudes and motivations towards females’ tabooed issues.

It is also important to note that the levels of education and occupation of the informants give us a general idea about their knowledge. Henceforth, the participants belong to various professions and cultural backgrounds.

#### Data Preparation, Analysis and Interpretation:

#### Questionnaire:

- How do you call a prostitute?
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As it is shown in the previous table and figure, there is a difference between respondents’ answers about this question due to its sensitive nature. It is estimated that (29.09%) of the
informants claimed that they resort to the substitution [fla:na rabbî jahdî:ha] “X may God guide her” since the previous choices represent a direct attack towards such type of women. In contrast, the term [χamzâ] is almost spoken by (16.36%) of the participants. Thus, this forbidden act is illegal and is seen as a dirty behaviour which is banned in Islamic Norms and the cultural values of Algerian society.

Furthermore, the comments of the informants were very rich since they added other terms connected with the word [χamzâ]. However, males and females differ in the expressions they use. In women’s part, the most tabooed terms are represented in words like [matûswa:] or [χa:rmâ ṭri:ɡ]: “she is out of faith” and [ḥamûja]. All these expressions indicate this dirty forbidden act. On the other hand, males employ different terms such as [n̄ta:lu tul mûnd]: ‘she belongs to all people’. Indeed, all these words and sentences have the same meaning of “a prostitute”.

- How do you call a menstrual woman?
  - [ra:ha m̄wesχa].
  - [ra:ha m̄riχa].
  - [ēdispōze].
  - [ règle].
  - Suggestions.

**Table 2. Taboos and Euphemisms Related to Women’s Menstrual Period**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestions</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ra:ha m̄wesχa]</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ra:ha m̄riχa]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ēdisp̄ŏze]</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ règl̄e]</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2. Taboos and Euphemisms Related to Women’s Menstrual Period**

What can be summarised from these results is that the term [ règl̄e] remains the most used word especially among females with a percentage of 50 percent. In fact, menstruation is regarded
As the most tabooed step in women’s life because of the sensitivity of everything related to their body since they are seen as [ʔawrə] and are banned to expose. In the second position comes the term [ʔdispɔze] with a percentage of 28.18 percent. This proposition realises nearly an equal rate of use for females. In this regard, this fact draws us to say that both males and females tend to borrow French taboo words in order to lessen the effect of [ɾaːha ʕlija ḥaqq əʃʃar]: ‘she has the right of the month’.

Arguably, the results show the fact that teenagers tend to employ [ɾaːhæ rɛgle], whereas adult women use [ɾaːha ʔdispɔze]. In men’s part, they also tend to employ other euphemistic substitutions such as [ɾaːha mrixʃa] to indicate that the female is either pregnant or passing her menstrual period. However, the informants gave no suggestions due the sensitive nature of this question.

- How do you call a virgin girl?
  - [ʕaːtek].
  - [ʕædɾaːʔa].
  - [ʕæzbaː].

**Table 3. Names Referring to Virginity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestions</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ʕaːtek]</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ʕædɾaːʔa]</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ʕæzbaː]</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>110</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it is shown in the table, most of the respondents (52.52%) selected the last choice which is a substitution related to virginity. The latter is mostly used by Tlemcen urban people, whereas the term [ʕæzbaː]: ‘a girl’ is found in rural regions of the city such as Sebdou, Ain Fezza, Beni Snous and Maghnia…etc. On the other hand, [ʕædɾaːʔa] is used by few people since it is a word that exists in standard form of Arabic. Hence, one may claim that the topic of virginity is a sensitive issue for all Arab girls and is avoided in from discussion in mixed sex groups.
Figure 3. Names Referring to Virginity

- How do you call a pregnant woman?
  - [raːha mriḍa].
  - [raːha məṭtaqla].
  - [raːha belkarʃ].
  - [ʕεsent].
  - [hɔːmil].
  - Comments.

Table 4. Taboos Related to Pregnancy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestions</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[raːha mriḍa]</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[raːha məṭtaqla]</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[raːha belkarʃ]</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>[ʕεsent]</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[hɔːmil]</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. Taboos Related to Pregnancy

As we went back to the questionnaire, we have observed that these expressions are typical of women’s vocabulary. We have also noticed that the use of substitutions is a basic feature of Algerian speakers’ daily interaction. Thus, the results of the previous graph demonstrate that the
notion of [ləhʃuːma] is still existing in Tlemcen society in contrast with other parts of the country. What can be also observed from the results is that all participants display different views towards the above propositions. Therefore, this question clearly shows that the participants’ selection is strongly related to their attitudes. Hence, such results demonstrate that the majority of informants (41.81%) declared that they use the word [üşent] in their daily interaction. In contrast, some of them (29.09%) reported that they employ [raːha belkarʃ] which is considered taboo though it is employed unconsciously. On the other hand, about (18.18%) of the participants declared that they use [raːha mriçɔː].

- How do you call women’s sexual organ?
  - [əlkarmuːsa].
  - [ʕeːʃa].
  - [fanʃɔːra].
  - [sawwa].
  - [əlfara3].

Suggestions and comments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestions</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[fanʃɔːra]</td>
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<td>/</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[sawwa]</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[əlfara3]</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>86</td>
<td>172</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A closer look at the previous table reveals that 24 of the participants refused answering this question due to its sensitive nature, although they answered the previous one. The main reason is that we do not give them any substitution as a proposition in this question, whereas the choices of the remaining informants were so varied. They have showed their positive attitudes towards the use of such terms and they have justified their selections claiming that they use these words when they are angry or as a kind of jokes between each other. Besides, they continued stating that they employ such words with their intimate friends of the same age. Moreover, some of the comments of the informants revealed that some girls or boys especially teenagers employ these expressions to attract the attention of each other or to show their belongings to their groups.
Figure 5. Taboos Related to Woman’s Sexual Organ

This figure clearly shows the difference of use between participants. (60.46%) of them took the forth proposition which is considered as the most tabooed word related to the body of women, whereas (22.09%) chose the second proposition. In fact, naming sexual organs after the names of people is used by women more than men since females tend to create code words for their interaction between each other such as [ranî māːja nəfliksî] which means that “I am going to the toilet”. In terms of this question, males tend to employ terms different from females including [lmətmoːra] or [lbbɛkkʊːʃa] or [xnʃɛːfa], whereas women use special words such as [xbiːza] or [bubuːʃa] or [ssfanʒa] and [fula wə nqɔsmɛt ʃla zuːʒ]...etc.

- How do you call women’s breast?
  - [təffaːhɑːt].
  - [rmmanaːt].
  - [ɡdɔr].
  - [bzəːzal].
  - [le sɪn].
  - Suggestions.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Suggestions</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[təffaːhɑːt]</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[rmmanaːt]</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ɡdɔr]</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[bzəːzal]</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[le sɪn]</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most of the propositions are similes which are used as substitutions in order to lessen the harm of certain taboo expressions. In fact, Algerian varieties are rich in similes related to human body. The main aim behind the creation of such terms is to decrease the power of taboo words that exist side by side with substitutions in these dialects. Besides, Algerian speakers do not stop at this stage, but they tend to borrow from other languages expressions which may diminish the harmonious power of the local words as the case of this question.

Henceforth, the terms [tɛfːaːuxtap] and [bzaːzal] have nearly equal percentages, though the former represents (29.72%) of the respondents’ selections i.e., this term is the most obviously used in Tlemcen dialect, whereas the latter is employed by almost (26.74%). In fact, [tɛfːaːuxtap] can be considered as a lexicon of man’s language, whereas women resorted to the use of French taboo word [le sin]: “breast” thinking that this latter is more acceptable to mention rather than [bzaːzal]. Consequently, men have created certain expressions to use, whereas women have developed more positive attitudes towards the use of French taboos and euphemisms. Among males’ expressions, we have [dɛɾaʔ] which is only spoken by old males in addition to [nhuːd] or [lɛdɛkaːjaː]...etc. On the other side, women tend to create feministic expressions which suit their views and attitudes such as [ʔamʔuːmaːt] or [bɛkbʊːkaːt].

- How do you call women’s ass?
  - [lɛɾaɾza].
  - [lɛːqlija].
  - [mæɾeɾiɾel].
  - [mʃaːʒiɾ].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestions</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>[lɛɾaɾza]</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>[lɛːqlija]</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[mæɾeɾiɾel]</td>
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<td>38</td>
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<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>86</td>
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</table>
Aspects of Taboos Surrounding Algerian Females’ Daily Issues
GHOUNANE

Figure 7. Taboos Related to Woman’s Ass

From the assessment of the results, it seems that (44.19%) of the participants selected [matɛrijɛ] which means ‘a woman’s ass’. The latter is a French term, which is used in Algerian varieties, to denote the different sexual parts of females’ body including breast and ass. Men, however, use the latter in their speech to refer to ‘a woman’s ass’ since it has not the same degree as [mɛsɔːʒit], whereas (30.23%) of the informants chose this term especially women. Thus, it should be noted that this latter is a character of women’s speech, although it is used by men. The results also show that (21.81%) of the informants refused answering this question because of its sensitive nature.

Interview:
One should note that the social norms, which the Arab societies have created regarding females’ tabooed issues, have become a part of the members’ attitudes and how they perceive these subjects. Besides, it is worth mentioning that female’s body is still seen as the most fearful subject from which taboos begin since Islam has put restrictions on women’s dress, speech and behaviour.

In fact, to collect our data we have focused on a focus group interview. Therefore, we have selected two groups of ten individuals from different ages, educational backgrounds and occupations. Five females, who were given the questionnaire, were interviewed at the same time, whereas five males were only interviewed since they have refused answering the questions of the questionnaire because of their sensitive nature.

Findings:
One should note that our findings supported the idea that Arab females’ life is surrounded by taboos which are created by Islam and practiced by society. Moreover, what we have also understood from this interview is that the perception of females’ issues as taboo subjects differs from one individual to another depending on certain socio-cultural parameters including age, gender and the socio-cultural background of the person.

Additionally, we have also noticed that people, whose age is between 45 and 60 years, are more attached to the norms and taboos that society has put on females’ sensitive issues, whereas young people show less interest towards these subjects especially females due to the social changes that Arab societies have recently witnessed, although these restrictions do not change. In other words, the new generation seems far from the practice of the ancient habits such as the wedding night tradition and proving virginity. Furthermore, this generation tends even to borrow substitutions from other languages to cover up the tabooed meaning of the local words as the case of menstruation and pregnancy. The results of the interview have also revealed that women
tend to create an acceptable vocabulary to discuss their sensitive issues. They have even developed lexicons denoting their body parts including vagina, ass and bosom.

**Conclusion:**

Females’ issues, in the Arab world, are always on the centre of the society’s duties and restrictions since Islam has made women’s body, speech and behaviour as the most sensitive subjects related to sexuality which is regulated by norms and taboos for this reason everything related to females are taboos. Hence, this subject was avoided from academic research either by sociolinguists, sociologists and dialectologists. It is until the emergence of the feminist movement that this subject has gained some interests from scholars. Furthermore, one should inform that social norms have also restricted women’s use of language since females are always expected to use appropriate words and expressions unlike the other sex.

Last and not least, the attitudes of females towards these issues and the use of taboo words related to virginity, menstruation, women’s body and menopause differ largely from men according to certain socio-cultural parameters including gender, the social milieu, age and these factors play a substantial role in directing the speaker’s attitudes, views and, therefore, his beliefs.

**About the author:**

Dr. Nadia GHOUNANE is a researcher in Language Contact and Sociolinguistic Variation and a full time teacher in Dr. Mouley Tahar Saida University, Algeria, her areas of interest include teaching phonetics, sociolinguistics, grammar and written expression. Her journal articles address the use of taboos and euphemisms in Muslim societies and eroticism in Arabic literature.

**Footnotes:**

1. It is used in Iraq.

**References:**

Book Review
Arabic Grammar in Context: Languages in Context

Author: Mohammad T. Alhawary
Year of Publication: 2016.
Publisher: London & New York: Routledge
Number of Pages: xi + 276 pp.
Reviewer: Yahya Kharrat, Western University, London, Ontario, Canada.

The teacher of Arabic as a second language, confronted with an ever-increasing demand for Arabic studies in western universities and institutions, finds at his or her disposal a veritable wealth of printed academic resources to assist in advancing personal academic qualifications and in developing teaching curricula. Alhawary’s book, Arabic Grammar in Context, appears amongst these resources. The author is an accomplished academic with extensive experience in linguistics and the acquisition of languages. His book presents us with a welcome new offering in this field of study.

The introduction of the book gives clear expression to the essentials of teaching the rules of grammar, a teaching which if presented to a class only in theory remains beyond the
Book Review: Arabic Grammar in Context. Languages in Context

Kharrat

comprehension of the students if not given along with practical applications. The practical applications supplied by this book include extensive use of examples that illustrate these different rules. These are then followed by written exercises that reinforce the rules.

The author takes great care to present examples of well-known styles taken from excerpts of famous as well as less well-known texts. These form a required part of each of his 22 lessons that contain the fundamental rules of Arabic grammar that all students at the upper-intermediate and advanced levels need in order to master the essentials of Arabic grammar. The acquisition of these grammar rules thus occurs through the examination of actual texts rather than simply through studying summaries of grammatical rules and theoretical formulations. The lessons deal with the most commonly encountered grammatical rules of which the student of Arabic as second language must have firm grasp. The author proceeds by presenting the lessons in a consistent manner, taking great care to extract from the texts, along with other examples, those relevant passages which serve to illustrate the rule in question.

The author also takes care to add the correct textual vocalization of each word (through diacritical marks) and makes it possible to double-check the accuracy in detail. Rarely does the reader encounter any errors in the text, including the examination of each word letter by letter. Some diacritical marks in the examples, such as those found on page 93, are left without the correct vocalizations as an exercise, in order to allow the student to apply the correct declensions.

Alhawary addresses the importance of the methodology of trial and error when introducing rules of grammar in his lessons. Students are encouraged to learn by experiencing with their own ears and eyes the sounds and appearance of incorrect grammatical usage and by applying their knowledge to correct the errors such as exercise 3, page 43. Theoretical rules are thus transformed into practical experiences of incorrect, then correct and precise linguistic usage. By virtue of this method the teacher of Arabic as a second language stimulates the intellect of the students through these lessons, reinforcing correct usage and avoiding by example and experimentation many common mistakes and shortcomings.

Exercises in the practice and application of the grammatical cases i.e. nominative, accusative, genitive (well known to Latin students as declensions), are not highlighted. Such exercises, in my opinion, are a fundamental necessity for fully understanding the theoretical grammatical rules presented in the lessons. I expect there will be ample opportunity in forthcoming editions of the book to include such practical exercises. These are especially useful, for instance, in the study of verb tenses, attached pronouns, case indicators (declensions) and the truncation of soft letters in defective verb forms etc. Unless accompanied with practical exercises the student will be unable to acquire an adequate proficiency in the application and understanding of these declensions.

As teachers of Arabic grammar, it is in our interest to familiarize our students with the rules of declensions. We encourage the students to proceed in proficiency by practicing their understanding of declensions by forming many written and auditory examples and exercises in Arabic. Furthermore, we encourage students to apply their learning, in addition to their classroom lessons, to real life examples outside the classroom, by remembering and reviewing
these rules in the selection of prose, poems and essays encountered in their studies. These studies effectively become practical exercises for students, helping them familiarize themselves with the material while working on other texts and passages.

The author has produced fine work in his comparative table highlighting the grammatical differences between special cases of nouns and adjectives and regular verbs, with examples given in the Arabic text. The comparative presentation illustrates the differences between the two groups. This comparative approach is extremely helpful to those studying Arabic grammar. This illustrates the analogous grammatical structures between ‘Kana’ and ‘Inna’, page 39, for example. In the exercises the author relies heavily on the practice of filling in the blank in a partial sentence by having students choose a word from a selection of possible choices. This method helps to stimulate the students’ thinking by challenging them to choose the appropriate word from the list of possibilities.

The amount of space dedicated to the subject of morphology is limited. We would hope that subsequent editions of the book will give this subject the attention it deserves. There are in fact plenty of opportunities in the Arabic vocabulary for further study of these grammatical forms. For instance, we have in the sample texts provided by the author significant examples of active and passive participles, nouns of time and place, the relative adjective, verbal nouns and verb patterns. All of these morphological rules should be taught in order to stimulate the students’ minds, in addition to providing the vocal declensions that form part of the usual grammar lessons.

The author completes his book by including a number of lengthy texts written on page 178 in order to review the rules that have been studied. This review helps students to better understand the rules they have learned in the preceding chapters. The end of the book also contains a helpful glossary of new terms used in the texts, along with their translations organized in alphabetic order.

Alhawary’s book, Arabic Grammar in Context, offers a valuable supplement to the collection of academic texts available to the student learning Arabic as a second language. This is especially true given that the reviews of the subject matter in the book is distinguished by error-free formatting and printing, whether in the Arabic or the English. Furthermore, the book contains practical teaching methods that the author has accumulated over many years of practical instructional experience. We look forward to the next edition.

About the Reviewer:
Yahya Kharrat is an Assistant Professor of Arabic at Western University in London, Ontario, Canada. He holds a PhD in applied linguistics and an MA in language teaching methodology from the University of Kansas. Dr. Kharrat has taught a wide range of language courses for non-native speakers as well as heritage speakers. His areas of interest include Arabic literature, applied linguistics, and pedagogy of Arabic as a second language.
Fear of Negative Evaluation in an EFL Setting: An Algerian Case Study

Anxiety is one of the most important factors that affects language learners either positively or negatively in the language classrooms. Many research studies have been conducted in order to find the types, symptoms, causes of, reasons for and solutions to language learning anxiety. In addition, many books have been written to introduce foreign language learning anxiety. Dr. Nadia Idri presents another research study conducted in Algeria over a period of three months entitled “Fear of Negative Evaluation in an EFL Setting: An Algerian Case Study”. It introduces a comprehensive analysis of anxiety as an affective factor in language learning. The

Author: Nadia Idri
Book: Fear of Negative Evaluation in an EFL Setting: An Algerian Case Study
Publisher: Éditions Universitaires Européennes
Year of Publication: 2016
Place of Publication: Saarbrücken, Deutschland/ Germany
Pages: 259
Reviewer: Esra İstek
Near East University, Lefkoşa, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
author gives the aim of the study as “analyzing fear of negative evaluation (FNE) as a component of language anxiety which is an educational problem and, thus, finding out its causes and influences on learning EFL in our defined population (p. 112).” As far as research studies on foreign language anxiety of Asian students are concerned, Table 3 (p. 116) summarizes recent studies in a comprehensive manner. The flowchart (Figure 11, p. 92) displays symptoms of fear of negative evaluation in detail. The ideas in the book are also supported by a case study which was done in Algeria.

This is a research-based book that consists of eight chapters. The author presents a different issue related to foreign language learning anxiety in each chapter. The book can actually be divided into three sections. In the first section including chapters 1, 2, 3 & 4, the author gives comprehensive background information about the fear of negative evaluation. The first chapter of the book displays important information in the field of education in Algeria because it introduces the LMD (Licence, Master, Doctorate) reform in higher education, and how learners are evaluated in this system. By explaining the LMD system in Algeria in the first chapter, the author establishes a connection between the LMD system and fear of negative evaluation. The readers of the book are offered some useful ideas related to the LMD system. The next three chapters of the first section are based on anxiety in general. In chapter two, the author deals with performance anxiety and talks about types of anxiety in general by focusing on the ideas of the researchers. In this chapter, the definitions and the research results help the readers to have a clear understanding of the issue of anxiety. In chapters 3 and 4, the author mentions the sources, results and symptoms of anxiety. Furthermore, the author links fear of negative evaluation to language learning. This chapter highlights some important aspects of anxiety in language learning. Both the educators and the researchers can find some useful information based on foreign language learning anxiety in these chapters.

The second section of the book is the research part. In chapters 5, 6 and 7, the author describes the methodology of the study, clearly defines the problem (Figure 13, p. 118), objectives of the study, research questions and the hypotheses (Figure 14, p. 121) of the study. These chapters also give a detailed description of the research methodology, participants, instruments, procedures of data collection and analysis and the results of the study. The author as a researcher, used qualitative methods. As data collection instruments, interviews and participant observations were used in order to collect data from the participants. In interpreting the results, the author includes some quotations from the participants’ answers that support the hypotheses of the study. These quotations enrich the content of the chapters and they consolidate the findings of the study. In addition, the results of the study are presented in such a way that the readers can easily comprehend them. Although it is a qualitative study, the author uses tables in presenting the results in order to help the readers visually understand them better. In the final chapter, Dr. Nadia Idri gives some suggestions to decrease the level of fear of negative evaluation. These suggestions include developing self-awareness, creating a positive learning environment, improving group dynamics and the teacher-learner interaction. Furthermore, the author suggests using techniques of humanistic approach as in Curran’s (1972) counseling/community language learning, Lozanov’s (1978) suggestopedia (later changed to desuggestopedia) and relaxation techniques employed in the field of psychology in order to reduce the level of fear of negative evaluation. These suggestions are also supported by quotations from the participants of the research study and they include very useful ideas for educators and language learners.
In the overall conclusion, the author says, “By the end of our research work, we have tried to establish the link between teacher’s feedback and learners’ reactions. We try to suggest the following Model to relate all the variables we treated so far as contributing factors in learners’ affect (p. 216)”.

Figure 15 (p. 217) summarizes teachers’ role in creating positive or negative responses when providing feedback. The book ends with an overall conclusion summarizing the research study. The book gives six instruments used in the study in the Appendix section and contains a long and useful list of references on recent literature concerning foreign language learning anxiety.

Nadia Idri’s book, *Fear of Negative Evaluation in an EFL Setting: An Algerian Case Study*, is a valuable contribution to the present literature on symptoms, causes and solutions to fear of negative evaluation. The book presents an engaging study that explored the factors that cause anxiety in the evaluation process of the LMD system in Algeria. The book is essential for those interested in foreign language anxiety research in terms of its symptoms, causes and solutions in an EFL context. I strongly recommend the book for English language teachers, researchers, MA and PhD students.