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A Critical Discourse Analysis of Nelson Mandela’s Defense Speech

I am Prepared to Die

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Abstract
This paper attempts to present a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Nelson Mandela’s defense speech I am prepared to die, which was delivered in 1964 during his trial in what is often called as Rivonia Trial. More specifically, the paper tries to explore the hidden relations of power and ideologies that have been encoded in Mandela’s defense speech. The main research question is: what are the ideological meanings Mandela tries to communicate through his speech, and how are these ideologies conveyed by CDA strategies? The paper draws on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as discussed in the writings of Fairclough (1989, 2013) and Van Dijk (1993, 2001, 2014). The analysis covers two levels of analysis: the lexical level and the pragmatic level of analysis. Both levels are discussed under the theoretical umbrella of CDA. The paper reveals that Mandela managed, by using specific CDA strategies, to communicate particular ideological meanings that reflect his political stance, as well as his rebellious spirit as the most distinguished revolutionary leader who struggles against racial discrimination in South Africa.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, court discourse, defense speech, ideology, I am prepared to die, legal discourse, Mandela, racial discrimination

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Introduction

Nelson Mandela is considered one of the greatest leaders in Africa and a person who represents the most critically revolutionary period in South Africa. Mandela was a leader, a revolutionary, an equality defender, an anti-apartheid activist, a famous prisoner, and a competent president. Mandela struggled against apartheid in various ways. His fight against racial discrimination constitutes his efforts to form the Youth League of the African National Congress (ANC). He also led the Defiance Campaign, which started in 1952. During such a period, Mandela worked jointly with members of the South African Indian Congress and the Communist Party (Mandela, 1995; Sampson, 2011). In 1961, Mandela effectively helped in the establishment of Umkhonto weSizwe (Spear of the Nation), whose target was to launch an armed fight against apartheid in South Africa. Mandela’s core concern was to create the spirit of resistance among the blacks in South Africa against the racial discrimination and towards ending the white privileges, as well as the White rule in the country. Under the White rule, the blacks in South Africa led sever conditions of segregation and discrimination that deprived them of most of their rights and restrict their freedom in all aspects of life. Mandela’s decision to adhere to a policy of resistance that is based on armed struggle, violence, and sabotage, leads him to trial for sabotage and treason against the state. During his hearing, Mandela delivered a long speech in which he refuted the accusations leveled against him and provided justifications for the violent acts he was accused of.

Nelson Mandela’s defense speech during his trial in 1964 was one of the most famous speeches that effectively contributed to legal discourse studies. This speech abounds in linguistic tools that encode both the power and ideology of the speaker. A key feature of discourse analysis, in general, and legal discourse, in particular, is its concern with the contextual meanings of language. This means that legal discourse, as a type of discourse analysis, is determined by several factors, such as how it is expressed, the intentions of its users, their intended meanings, the purposes beyond its use, and the relationship it holds with other texts.

The significance of this paper lies in its attempt to offer a linguistic analysis that functions to shed light on the extent to which language is employed in legal discourse settings to encode ideology and communicate power. As such, the paper tries to establish a triadic relationship between what is legal (courtroom discourse), what is linguistic (linguistic expressions used in the selected speech), and what is ideological (specific meanings beyond surface structures of discourse). Crucially, revealing the way agency encodes ideology in courtroom discourse, instanced by Mandela’s defense speech, aims to offer a better understanding of the way language is used to communicate ideologies its users within the different legal settings. The value of this paper, therefore, is twofold: legal and linguistic. Legally, on the one hand, the article provides a new analytical perspective to legal discourse in courtroom interaction. This is conducted by offering a CDA of the selected speech, which functions to explore issues related to power, ideology, and inequality in the discourse of the selected speech. Linguistically, on the other hand, the paper’s value stems from the fact that it tackles legal topics linguistically. This linguistic analysis attempts to offer insights into the understanding of the different uses of language to communicate specific meanings of its users in legal discourse, which also functions to emphasize the reciprocal relationship between law and language. As such, the paper provides some sort of linguistic enlightenment to the ways through which language is employed in legal settings.
This study attempts to answer three research questions: first, what are the different CDA strategies used in Mandela’s speech to defend his situation? Second, what are the ideological meanings Mandela tries to communicate through his speech? Third, to what extent does Mandela’s defense speech reflect his political stance? The answer of these research questions represents the objectives of this paper: to shed light on the different strategies used by Mandela to defend his speech, by demonstrating the way language encodes power and ideology in the context of courtroom discourse; to explore the different linguistic manifestations through which power and ideologies are communicated in courtroom discourse; and, to highlight the reciprocal relationship between language and law in terms of message delivery and discourse interpretation.

Literature Review
This part offers a theoretical background to Critical Discourse Analysis as well as a discussion of the related literature concerning the topic under investigation.

Critical Discourse Analysis
Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a linguistic approach that is concerned with the exposition of issues related to language, power, and ideology concerning the way language communicates ideology and encodes power (see, e.g., Fairclough, 1989; Van Dijk, 1993, 1997, 2014). The origins of CDA were dated back to Critical Linguistics and Linguistic Criticism, as introduced in the writings of Fowler (1991, 1996) and Fowler and Kress (1979). This field of study offers a way of understanding the role of language in the production of dominance and inequality. Its primary concern is to show how discourse reflects power and asserts it. CDA tends not only to study the acceptable power enactment but also to analyze the "illegitimate exercise of power abuse or dominance" (Van Dijk, 1997, p. 24). This form of power "is being exercised primarily in the interest of the powerful and against the interest of the less powerful" (Van Dijk, p. 24). CDA offers a type of illumination against the oppressive manipulation of language, and supports a way of resisting injustice and inequalities.

Van Dijk (1993) states that CDA focuses on “the structures of text and talk” (p. 259), and tries to reveal the linguistic devices that are used to exercise power in written and spoken discourse. This, in turn, helps the public differentiate between the linguistic tools which serve to illuminate and those dedicated to manipulating. The public's ability to understand the hidden motivations beyond any discursive act enables them to combat the oppressive use of language, and forces them to struggle against dictatorship and to resist inequalities. Emphasizing the significance of CDA in revealing the hidden discursive structures of exercising power and producing persuasion, Van Dijk (1993) proposes that:

If powerful speakers or groups enact or otherwise exhibit their power in discourse, we need to know exactly how this is done. And if they thus are able to persuade or otherwise influence their audiences, we also want to know which discursive structures and strategies are involved in that process. (p. 259)

Critical Discourse Analysis perceives language as a tool of ideological purposes. It addresses issues of power and ideology and shows the way language manifests power, control, and discrimination among discourse participants in the courtroom (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). CDA
attempts to uncover the hidden relations of power in discourse in general and in courtrooms in particular. CDA is described as critical since it criticizes the way language can be biased towards specific ideological assumptions of its users (Fairclough, 2013; Van Dijk, 2014). It exposes the hidden ideologies and offers useful insights towards the understanding of the use of language in different types of discourse. Van Dijk (2001) perceives CDA as a type of analytical research that is concerned with the ways through which power, dominance, and inequality are produced, reproduced, and exercised in text and talk within the different social and political contexts. As such, CDA focuses on the way language is used to produce control and exercise power in the discourse, either spoken or written.

Van Dijk (1993) argues that one characteristic of CDA is to clarify how language is used to confirm, reproduce, or challenge existing power relations of individuals and institutions. Stating the intimate relationship between CDA and power, Van Dijk maintains that "one crucial presupposition of adequate critical discourse analysis is the understanding of the nature of social power and dominance" (p. 254). Van Dijk (1989) states that "for power to be exercised, legitimized and reproduced, it must also be expressed and persuasively conveyed in discourse and communication" (p. 21).

Characteristics of CDA
One of the most distinguishing features of CDA as a model of analyzing text and talk is its relevance to describe, explain and interpret how “discourses construct, maintain, and legitimize social inequalities” (Mullet, 2018, p. 116). Mullet maintains that CDA rests much emphasis on the fact that the use of language in different contexts should always be purposeful, that is, ideological. One of the main tasks of CDA is to reveal the different ideological meanings encoded in the linguistic expressions of language. It also focuses on aspects of power and domination that lead to issues of inequality. Here lies the relevance of CDA to the study of Mandela’s selected speech, mainly if we take into consideration the political and social contexts in which this speech was delivered. Nelson Mandela’s I Am Prepared to Die focuses on the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, for social equality, and political rights for all South Africans. Further, CDA attempts to expose hidden strategies of domination and inequality in discourse. It reveals the ways through which what is forbidden is institutionalized for the sake of the elites and the powerful (Khafaga 2017a, 2017b), and attempts to shed light on the manipulative dimension of language that inherently depends on the rhetorical dimension of power (Khafaga, 2019).

Van Dijk (1995) postulates that the following criteria characterize CDA:

(i) CDA is a problem-oriented approach to analyzing language that focuses on relevant social problems such as the different forms of social inequality (as is the case for the primary concern of the speech in the current paper).
(ii) CDA is a multidisciplinary approach that allows the integration of more than one level of analysis within its theoretical plan, such as the lexical, the semantic, the pragmatic, the syntactic, etc. It also opens the door for contributions from other fields, including psychology, sociology, literature, law, and political sciences.
CDA studies the role of discourse in society, with a particular focus on group relations of power, dominance and inequality, and the ways these are produced, reproduced, consumed, or resisted by members of a social group through text and talk.

CDA thematic priorities revolve around topics, such as class, gender, ethnicity, race, language, religion, age, and nationality.

Much work on CDA attempts to reveal the hidden ideologies in discourse that play a significant role in the reproduction of or the resistance against dominance or inequality.

CDA tries to expose the strategies employed to communicate and realize manipulation and legitimation intended for affecting the minds of the public in the interest of the powerful elites.

Language and Courtroom Discourse

According to Gotti and Williams, 2010, linguistic expressions are widely employed in court to defend or to accuse. Language is perceived as a tool that reflects social control and power (Fairclough, 2013 [1989]). This sociolinguistic characteristic is not only noticeable in social settings, but legal settings as well (Coulthard & Johnson, 2007). Within the courtroom, language is used to facilitate control and to exercise power among discourse participants, be they lawyers, judges, witnesses, or otherwise. This is because a trial is a linguistic activity in which a linguistic interaction is meant by language users to advocate their position and to challenge their opponents. Language, in this sense, is perceived as a tool of control. Thus, one can say that there is a reciprocal relationship between language and legal discourse, reciprocal in the sense that the latter is interpreted according to the linguistic interpretation of the former in discourse. From this context, the relationship between language and law can be said to be worthy of linguistic research to explore the ways through which language is used within the framework of courtroom discourse. In the context of this paper, the focus will be on exploring relations of power within the discourse of the selected speech, as well as the ideological meanings encoded beyond its linguistic expressions.

Methodology

This part is dedicated to present the process of data collection, data description, the rationale of the study, and the procedures of data analysis.

Data Collection and Description

The data used in the analysis of this paper consists of Nelson Mandela’s defense speech entitled *I am prepared to die* which he gave from the dock during the Rivonia Trial, Pretoria Supreme Court, 20th April 1964. The speech consists of nearly 14307 words and is downloaded from Famous Trial site available at https://www.famoustrials.com/nelsonmandela/691.

The rationale constituting the selection of this speech, in particular, is due to three reasons. First, Mandela’s trial represents one of the most effective events that reshape world opinion concerning apartheid. Second, the speech abounds in different CDA strategies that constitute different linguistic manifestations that are dexterously employed to communicate specific ideologies of the speaker. Third, the selected speech reflects a type of legal discourse in a courtroom setting that shows the manner through which language is employed to demonstrate relations of power, ideology, and dominance in discourse.
The procedure adopted here requires the process of downloading the selected speech, reading the whole text extensively, and then highlighting the essential expressions that are relevant to the current study in order to be ready for analysis. In the analysis stage, the focus is on marking specific CDA strategies employed in the speech to reveal the hidden ideologies and the intended meanings of the speaker.

Mandela’s Trial: A Background
In 1963-1964, Nelson Mandela and ten other opponents of South Africa’s apartheid regime went on trial for their lives in what is known as the Rivonia trial. Mandela and the other accused persons were charged for acts of sabotage, violence, and conspiracy against the then government of South Africa. These violent acts came as a result of the constant policy of racial discrimination adopted by the White rule in South Africa against Black South Africans. The increased state violence against the Blacks was also met by more violent acts against the government. To institutionalize their violent resistance, a group of persons, including Mandela, established what was known as Umkhonto we Sizwe organization, which was in charge of recruiting the Blacks to join in the violent resistance against the state. After being arrested, for Onwumechili, Mponda, and Jenkins (2015), Mandela and his followers were charged with the following charges: (1) recruiting persons in preparation for guerrilla warfare for purposes of violent revolution and acts of sabotage, (2) conspiring to aid foreign military units when they invade the republic, (3) acting to further communist objectives, and (4) soliciting and receiving money for these purposes from sympathizers outside South Africa (Algeria, Ethiopia, Liberia, Nigeria, Tunisia, among other states). The trial ended with a life imprisonment sentence of Mandela.

It was apparent then that evidence will be collaborated to announce the defendants as guilty. Meanwhile, Mandela, within the courtroom, announced that achieving a free and democratic society is a goal that deserves death, or as he put it: “is one for which I am prepared to die” (Mandela’s defense speech, 1963). During the trial, the government legal representative was Percy Yutar. He delivered his opening statement in which he emphasized that the defendants intentionally and spitefully plotted against the state, and launched acts of violence and destruction throughout South Africa. He maintained that these premeditated violent acts tended to bring about disorder and confusion in the Republic of South Africa.

On the other side stood the defendants attorney represented by Bram Fischer who denied all accusations launched against Mandela and the other defendants, refuting their relationship with African National Congress by stating that Umkhonto we Sizwe (a political movement formed and led by Mandela) was not created to practice violence against the state. He maintained that this movement resorted to sabotage only when it was evident that no other way remained to achieve their political rights. He ended his opening statement by denying the allegations made in the state’s case that Umkhonto or the African National Congress depended on what was referred to as being ‘the alleged hardships’ suffered by people. Importantly, Mandela’s speech, known as the Rivonia speech, is considered to be one of the most famous speeches of the 20th century.

Analysis
Before analyzing Mandela’s speech, it is important first to present a brief account of the political and social contexts in which the speech was delivered, as well as the main themes addressed in it.
This is because the speech cannot be understood without a clear understanding of both the social and the political contexts surrounding the speech at the time of its delivery.

**Political and Social Contexts of the Speech**

Mandela’s defense speech was surrounded by many political circumstances that significantly shaped and influenced the period when the speech was delivered. The black South Africans were deprived of their rights and freedom under a very severe White rule that imposed racial classification in South Africa through which people were categorized according to physical appearance. People were classified into native, colored, Indian, or White (Posel, 2001). This unfair racial classification adopted by the White government in South Africa led to more practices of segregations among South Africans; it determined the place where one lived, the school he/she could attend, the job he could hold, and many other activities whose practice depended entirely on racial discrimination criteria. Within this atmosphere of apartheid, black South Africans or natives led an unprecedented state of suffering.

The segregation policies were reinforced by several governmental laws that widen the blacks suffering, banning them from working or living in certain places, and preventing them from collaborating with specific types of people in the whole country. The blacks were also deprived of voting in elections. They were separated from their families in seeking work; even their movement from one place to another within the country was also controlled by the White minority (Worden, 2012). Significantly, the Whites were migrants from Europe. Although they were a minority, they controlled both the state and the economy and used it to oppress and dominate the natives (black South Africans) (Sparks, 1996).

With time, the Blacks tasted more bitter conditions under the White government; no freedom of movement, no access to public services, no health services, no housing, no schools, no sanitation, and above all they were treated with violence in the hands of the elites (the Whites). Under such ruthless conditions, appeared a resistance movement to fight against these bitter situations. Mandela was a member of this movement who admitted that violence and sabotage were the most appropriate methods to face this policy of racial discrimination and to end it (Sampson, 2011) However, Mandela and a number of the rebels were accused of treason. They were set for a trial in 1964 in which he delivered his famous speech, the core concern of this study.

**Themes Addressed in the Speech**

Tracing the discourse of Mandela’s speech, one can say that it focuses on the struggle of the black South Africans to gain equal rights, both socially and politically, with the Whites minority. Mandela’s *I Am Prepared to Die* is perceived as a defense speech in which the speaker discusses specific issues in defense against the accusations brought against him from the court. Thematically, the speech can be divided into parts. In the first part, Mandela provides the court with information concerning his background as a student of law and a lawyer, and then he rejects all the accusations leveled against him from the court. The second part presents a clear confession from Mandela that he is responsible for all violent acts prevailed in the country. Still, at the same time, he maintains that these actions were the only way towards equality in rights. This part also sheds light on the *Umkhonto we Sizwe* organization, its activities, and the role played by the Communist Party in the
fight for equal rights. The third part occupies a significant part of the speech in which Mandela advocates equal rights for all South Africans.

Now, it is time to present analytically specific CDA strategies employed by Mandela to reflect his ideologies and communicate his intended meanings to both the audience in the court and the whole people of South Africa. In the subsections below, four main CDA strategies will be analytically focused on: (i) words selection, (ii) terms of address, (iii) the use of rhetoric, and (iv) organized argumentation.

Words Selection
The selection of specific words and/or phrases is one of the skillful CDA strategies speakers employ to convey their ideologies (Sornig, 1989; Schaffner, 2004). This strategy is used by Mandela in his speech to communicate his intended meanings. The following extracts from the speech show how specific words are employed in the speech.

(1) There would be outbreaks of terrorism which would produce an intensity of bitterness and hostility between the various races of the country.
(2) They are called volunteers because they volunteer to face the penalties of imprisonment and whipping which are now prescribed by the legislature for such acts.
(3) We believed it was our duty to preserve this organization which had been built up with almost fifty years of unremitting toil.
(4) We had no doubt that we had to continue the fight. Anything else would have been abject surrender.
(5) had brought the African people nothing but more and more repressive legislation, and fewer and fewer rights.
(6) Our followers were beginning to lose confidence in this policy and were developing disturbing ideas of terrorism.
(7) Experience convinced us that rebellion would offer the Government limitless opportunities for the indiscriminate slaughter of our people.
(8) To overcome their legacy of extreme poverty. (Mandela, 1964)

The above extracts show a clever selection of some words and phrases, including terrorism, intensity, bitterness and hostility in (1); penalties of imprisonment and whipping in (2); unremitting toil in (3); abject surrender in (4); more and more repressive legislation (5); developing disturbing ideas of terrorism in (6); indiscriminate slaughter in (7); and extreme poverty in (8). These expressions are selected to describe the bad treatment the Blacks lead under the White government. They are intended to present the White government negatively by exposing the atrocities they practiced against the Blacks in South Africa. Mandela’s words and expressions reflect his complete understanding of and concern with the situations of the Blacks under apartheid policy adopted in such a period. It is evident that Mandela tries to give justifications for the violent acts and the sabotage that he and his supporters did in the country. His intended meaning thus is to refute the accusations he is accused of before the court; that is to assure them the reason why they lead a violent resistance against the government.
Further, Mandel attempts to stimulate the feelings of sympathy for black South Africans and to reject the actions of the authorities represented in the many political and social violations committed against the blacks in South Africa. His repetition of the word *terrorism* conveys an implied reference to the government that terrorism is the only resort to face irrationalities and atrocities committed by the government. Mandela’s *more and more repressive legislation, and fewer and fewer rights* in (5) above is also an explicit accusation to the government in which he uses the oppositional phrases *more and more* and *fewer and fewer* to show the semantic link between the repressive legislation of the government and the deprivation of the rights of the blacks, where the former is semantically counterpointed by the latter.

**Terms of Address**
Throughout the speech, Mandela utilizes specific terms to address the court during his defense speech. Among these terms are those used as *honorific terms* that are usually used in legal discourse and courtroom settings. In linguistics, honorifics are used to reflect the relative social status of the discourse participants (Levinson, 1983; Brown & Levinson, 1987). They are used to show politeness, deference, and distance between the speaker and his addressee. One of the distinctive features of using honorifics in legal discourse is that they are used to express respect from the speaker to addressee regardless of what is being talked about (Frawley, 1992; Sifianou, 1999). This means that these terms of address are employed in positive and/or negative situations of the speaker.

In his defense speech, Mandela uses 54 honorific terms to address the chief judge of the court; 50 with the noun phrase *My Lord* and 4 with the expression *Your Lordship*. Here we can notice how familiar Mandela is in addressing the judge of the court. His recurrent use of the honorific terms indicate that he knows for sure the social distance between him as a speaker and his addressee as a judge of the court. This also reflects the degree of politeness Mandela has in his address. In all his expressions in his defense speech, he keeps the use of honorifics, which in turn attempts to emphasize his legal background as a student of law and a lawyer which he starts his long defense speech with when he tells the judge: *I hold a Bachelor's Degree in Arts and practised as an attorney in Johannesburg for a number of years in partnership with Mr. Oliver Tambo, a co-conspirator in this case* (Mandela, 1964)

**Using Rhetoric**
In courtrooms, lawyers usually make use of rhetorical devices to communicate specific meanings and ideologies, as well as to make their arguments sound more appealing to the jury (Tiersma, 1999; Williams & Tessuto, 2013; Tessuto, 2016). The speech under investigation is full of rhetorical devices employed by Mandela to defend his situation. Among these devices are (i) the use of rhetorical questions and (ii) the use of oppositional constructions.

**The Use of Rhetorical Questions**
Rhetorical questions do not seek answers. They are considered a polite indirect way of communicating an idea to the addressees (Flowerdew, 2002; Pinto, 2004). They are often used by persons who are rhetorically powerful to motivate their recipients to accept their arguments. Consider these extracts from the speech:
(1) Who will deny that thirty years of my life have been spent knocking in vain, patiently, moderately, and modestly at a closed and barred door? What have been the fruits of moderation?
(2) What were we, the leaders of our people, to do? Were we to give in to the show of force and the implied threat against future action, or were we to fight it and, if so, how?
(3) How much longer would it take to eradicate the scars of inter-racial civil war, which could not be fought without a great loss of life on both sides?
(4) How could we continue to keep Africans away from terrorism?
(5) How could black and white ever live together again in peace and harmony? (Mandela, 1964)

In the above extracts, Mandela manipulates several rhetorical questions to facilitate the delivery of argument in front of the court as well as to emphasize a particular idea. In all the above rhetorical questions, Mandela does not seek an answer from the judge, being the direct address, or from the audience, being the indirect addressees. However, by using this type of question, Mandela tries to communicate specific meanings that serve his case. His rhetorical questions function to direct the attention of the jury towards specific messages he wants to convey. In (1) above, Mandela attempts to communicate that he spent thirty years patiently in peaceful ways to demand equality and equal rights for the black South African. He tries to convey that peaceful ways end in vain as nothing changes concerning the situations of the Blacks or the policy of racial discrimination against them. His second question in the same extract emphasizes this idea: What have been the fruits of moderation? Again he does not seek an answer but to communicate the idea that restraint under apartheid proves to be useless and ineffective.

Similarly, in (2), Mandela directs his rhetorical questions to the judge, assuring him that they (the accused members) have nothing to do except to fight; when all doors are closed, one is enforced to illegal methods to realize his freedom. He asks the question and leaves the jury to bring the answer in their minds. Again, he wants o say that if black South Africans fail to gain their rights peacefully, they then will have no ways other than violence and sabotage. Here, another attempt is made to justify the violent acts that prevailed in South Africa is that period. Furthermore, in (3, 4, and 5), the three how-questions are rhetorically delivered to emphasize the argument that ultimate and investable consequences of the racial discrimination policies will be terrorism on the part of the Blacks. Mandela aims to communicate that violence breeds more violence. His questions imply a threat that racial discrimination will bring terrorism and terrorism will lead the country to a civil war between South Africans, both the Whites and the Blacks. This, for Mandela, will make it challenging to bring the South Africans back to live with each other in peace, which he communicates through the rhetorical question in (5) above.

Oppositional Constructions
The use of contrasts and oppositions also characterizes Mandela's defense speech. This is linguistically demonstrated in the frequent use of contrasted tenses and other oppositional expressions, either at the level of the word or at the level of the phrase. Consider the following extracts:
(1) The volunteers were not, and are not, the soldiers of a Black army pledged to fight a civil war against whites. They were, and are, dedicated workers who are prepared to lead campaigns initiated by the ANC to distribute leaflets, to organize strikes, or to do whatever the particular campaign required. 

(2) But the hard facts were that fifty years of non-violence had brought the African people nothing but more and more repressive legislation, and fewer and fewer rights. (Mandela, 1964)

The above examples show the skillful employment of oppositional construction to communicate specific ideologies. In (1), Mandela uses two contrasted tenses in his speech: the present and the past to emphasize the fact that the volunteers who conducted specific violent attacks in South Africa are mere workers and not soldiers. The use of the past tense in the negative form in *were not*, which is followed by the negative present in *are not* is dexterously employed to communicate the message that the *Umkhonto we Sizwe* organization did not recruit these persons to carry out violent attacks against the Whites. He wants to convey that they are not members of a *Black army pledged to fight a civil war against whites*. Here, Mandela tries to dissociate these people from being responsible for any mischievous acts. His emphasis that they *were not* and *are not* soldiers functions to eliminate any criminal intentionality on their part.

Similarly, in (2), the same contrasted construction is used in *more and more repressive legislation* and *fewer and fewer rights*. This contrast intends to communicate the fact that the more there is a punitive policy adopted by the White government against the Blacks, the fewer rights will be gained on the part of black South Africans. The literal semantic contrast between *more* and *fewer*; and the associative contrast between *repressive* and *rights* are highly indicative in communicating the amount of suffering the Blacks led under apartheid. A clear and powerful contrast is made by Mandela at the very beginning of his speech when he told the judge that he is a *black man in a white man's court*. Again, the contrast between the two adjectives black and white is highly indicative in communicating Mandela’s intended meanings. Here, one can highlight the role of language in communicating ideologies. Mandela tries to achieve verbally (linguistically) what he failed to realize nonverbally (physically).

**Organized Argumentation**

A further CDA strategy used by Mandela’s defense speech is the skillful and organized way through which he delivers his arguments in the court. This is clearly shown from the very beginning when Mandela starts his defense speech by providing a brief background about himself as a speaker:

I hold a Bachelor's Degree in Arts and practised as an attorney in Johannesburg for a number of years in partnership with Mr. Oliver Tambo, a co-conspirator in this case. I am a convicted prisoner serving five years for leaving the country without a permit and for inciting people to go on strike at the end of May 1961. (Mandela, 1964)

In fact, these introductory terms that shed light on the personality of the speaker are a feature of legal discourse used by lawyers in courtrooms (Mead, 1985; Stygall, 2012). Here, Mandela is keen
to adhere to the legal norms that are supposed to be in courts. Afterward, Mandela offers a summary of the contents of his speech that he is going to argue for or against:

In the statement which I am about to make, I shall correct certain false impressions which have been created by State witnesses; amongst other things I will demonstrate that certain of the acts referred to in the evidence were not, and could not have been committed by Umkhonto. I will also deal with the relationship between the African National Congress and with the part which I personally have played in the affairs of both organizations. I shall deal also with the part played by the Communist Party. In order to explain these matters properly, I will have to explain what Umkhonto set out to achieve; what methods it prescribed for the achievement of these objects, and why these methods were chosen. I will also have to explain how I came, I became involved in the activities of these organizations. (Mandela, 1964)

As is shown from the above quote, Mandela listed the points that he will deliver in his defense speech. This indicates that he is well-prepared for the court, i.e., linguistically. This, in turn, implicates the degree of conviction he has concerning his case. It is evident here that the official intention of the speaker was to address the accusations brought against him, by admitting and explaining those that were true, and rejecting those that were false. However, the speaker’s broader intention was to expose the injustices of the apartheid system and to gain national and international support for the cause of equal rights for black South Africans.

Mandela continues his organized argument by defending his actions. Although he firstly admits that he planned for committing violence and sabotage: I admit immediately that I was one of the persons who helped to form Umkhonto we Sizwe, and that I played a prominent role in its affairs until I was arrested in August, he denies committing any violent attacks against people in South Africa: I shall correct certain false impressions which have been created by State witnesses; amongst other things I will demonstrate that certain of the acts referred to in the evidence were not, and could not have been committed by Umkhonto (Mandela, 1964). Mandela’s intended meaning seems to be an attempt to persuade both the jury and the audience that his mischievous, unlawful and violent acts are justified by the oppressive rule and repressive laws the blacks had under apartheid. This is clearly expressed in his speech when he says: I did not plan it in a spirit of recklessness, nor because I have any love of violence. I planned it as a result of a calm and sober assessment of the political situation that had arisen after many years of tyranny. (Mandela, 1964)

Importantly, in admitting and/or rejecting the accusations leveled against him, Mandela tries to gain the sympathy of not only the national audience, but the international ones as well. He knows for sure that black South Africans cannot struggle against the white government alone, and, therefore, he tends to persuade the international community to support and advocate equal rights in South Africa, by practicing some sort of pressure on the government.

Mandela ends his defense speech with one of the most rhetorically powerful statement in the whole speech:
I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die. (Mandela, 1964)

Here, Mandela emphasizes that he fights for freedom, equality, and harmony in the South African society. Crucially, Mandela’s *I am prepared to die* is worldly perceived to be the most famous statement he is known by. It shows his elastic and impenitent attitude towards black South Africans cases. He states that he spends most of his life fighting for equal rights in South Africa, both peacefully and violently, and expresses his willingly resilient readiness to die for his purpose.

**Conclusion**
This paper presented a critical discourse analysis of Nelson Mandela’s defense speech *I am prepared to die* during his trial in 1964. The study revealed that the selected speech exhibits different linguistic manifestations through which ideologies are communicated to addressees. This is linguistically evidenced by the employment of four CDA strategies, including lexical selection, using specific terms of address, the utilization of rhetorical devices, and the skillful employment of organized argumentation. Mandela uses these strategies in his speech to advocate freedom and equal rights on the part of black South Africans. This is demonstrated by his skillful use of specific linguistic, rhetorical, and discursive devices to communicate his ideological meanings persuasively, both to the national and the international audience.

The paper also clarified that courtroom discourse is a type of institutional discourse that is characterized by linguistic features that, however expressed in a context of powerlessness, reflect ideology and power of its users. This, in turn, emphasizes the fact that legal discourse is goal-oriented; that is, it always targets specific purposes beyond the discursive practices delivered in court settings. Further, the analysis of the selected data showed that language is an effective tool in communicating ideologies as it can be used and abused to achieve particular objectives of its users, and to shape and reshape attitudes of its receivers.

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Feedback on the Classroom Performance of Pre-service English language Teachers in Oman

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Abstract
The research reported here is part of a larger, doctoral study that aims at examining the process of assessing the classroom performance of pre-service English language teachers in three higher education institutions in Oman. This article reports on an investigation into the social practices associated with assessing the classroom performance of pre-service English language teachers at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), Rustaq College of Education and Nizwa University. Specifically, this study aims at answering one research question: How do stakeholders understand and experience feedback when assessing pre-service teacher classroom performance? The research adopted a phenomenological approach for examining a total of 10 participants’ feedback experiences through semi-structured interviews and observations of the phenomenon in situ. The findings of this study revealed shared understandings about the purpose of feedback for improving pre-service teachers’ classroom performance. However, it was revealed that variations in feedback processes affected its efficacy in enhancing pre-service teachers’ classroom readiness. Pre-service teachers confirmed this finding and expressed their desire for greater agency and some consistency and uniformity in the type of feedback they receive during their school experience. The paper concludes by presenting recommendations that go to heighten the quality of the feedback process provided to pre-service English language teachers in Oman.

Keywords: classroom performance, feedback, pre-service English language teachers, Omani institutions

Introduction

A sociocultural perspective fits well with this study, as it examines learning in a social environment. The sociocultural perspective, a recent learning theory, arises from a resurgent interest in the work of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1978). It focuses on the social nature of learning and the idea that a learner’s performance is developed through socially mediated participation in meaningful practical activity (James, 2006; Shepard, 2006). That is, it embraces the social and cultural influences that develop the learner’s performance. Thus, this view of learning takes into account the learner’s social interaction and social participation within the environment in order to form their identity as a learner. In relation to this study, the apparent simplicity of the term ‘feedback’ and its literal definition (to feed something back) belie a complex social construct which Sadler (2009) refers to as the sine qua non of effective pedagogy. Feedback can be broadly understood as “information provided by an agent regarding aspects of one’s performance or understanding” (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 82), or as “information about how we are doing in our efforts to reach a goal” (Wiggins, 2012; p. 25) whereas Black and Wiliam (2009) refer to feedback as information that moves the learner forward. Based on these definitions the feedback provided to pre-service teachers should consist of information that enables them to improve their capacity to teach so they can meet the professional standard expected of graduating teachers. Thus, feedback is one of the 10 principles and practices for Assessment for Learning (ARG, 2002a).

Moreover, feedback as a social practice is constituted as a dialogic interaction that enables a supervisory teacher to create a context in which pre-service teachers can actively participate with the assistance and support of the supervisory teacher (Mustafa, 2012). This assistance and support will be gradually reduced once pre-service teachers are self-independent. Thus, the application of Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) provides an opportunity that can support the pre-service teachers in order to reach their intended goal, and to be less dependent. In other words, feedback is said to be mediating as it promotes pre-service teachers to self-correct and be more self-reliant. Within the sociocultural perspective, feedback is also an important practice for mentors so as to enhance a pre-service teacher’s pedagogical development. Hudson (2007) highlighted types of feedback required which are: observing teachings to provide feedback; providing oral feedback; reviewing lesson plans; providing formative assessment on teaching; providing written feedback; and articulating expectations. Similarly, Smith’s (2010) study stressed that pre-service teachers generally wanted feedback on the overall quality of their lessons and practical suggestions to how to improve their performance. Further, Akkuzu (2014) has emphasized that feedback is a vital informative practice allowing pre-service teachers to view their teaching performance critically, and as a means of improving their own teaching performance and style of presentation. To conclude, this sociocultural perspective will give a lens on how feedback is constituted between pre-service teachers and their assessors namely university supervisors and cooperating teachers.

This study aims to investigate into this social practice associated with assessing the classroom performance of pre-service English language teachers at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), Rustaq College of Education and Nizwa University. These institutions host English Language Teaching (ELT) program. Pre-service teachers are offered a teaching practice course where they experience their first-hand teaching. Those pre-service teachers are guided by feedback
Feedback on the classroom performance of pre-service Al-Malki, Weir & Usher

provided by university supervisors and cooperating teachers who visit and observe the process of teaching in classrooms. As one of the authors used to be a supervisor at one of the institutions in Oman, she felt strongly that the assessment practices do not reflect what is quality teaching. Feedback, as an integral component of assessment, was sometimes postponed or never provided. Most importantly, there was no clear picture of how both supervisors and cooperating teachers understand and experience feedback for assessing pre-service teachers’ classroom performance. For this reason, the study was conducted.

The study is significant in terms of its aim. In relation to what the study aims to achieve, there is limited extant research that undertakes a cross-national research on how feedback is understood and practised among all stakeholders involved in the assessment practices of pre-service English language teachers. A great number of studies focus on one institution; for instance Al-Mahrooqi (2011) examined SQU pre-service teachers’ views about teaching practice component, classroom observation and supervisors’ feedback. Similarly, Al-Issa (2008) conducted a study related to the implications of the SQU school professional experience to the ELT policy implementation in Oman. Also, Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi (2010) conducted a study describing the SQU supervisor’s roles, approaches and strategies used to help the pre-service teachers to become reflective teachers.

**Literature Review**

Hattie and Timperley (2007) and Sadler (2002) recommend feedback strategies, both effective and cognitive, that focus on closing the gaps in student’s performance and building a trusting relationship between givers and receivers. Hattie and Timperley (2007) suggest that feedback reduces the difference between knowledge understanding, and present learning results and expected outcomes. They summarize three main components in feedback as questions: Where am I going or what are the goals of learning? What I am supposed to do to achieve the goals of learning? Where do I go next or what activities need undertaking to make better progress? These three questions match three types of feedback: feed-up, feed-back and feed-forward. Carless, Joughin and Liu (2006) emphasize that feedback includes forward-looking perspectives to maximise students’ opportunities to progress in learning.

A number of researchers have highlighted the technical structure of quality of feedback (e.g. Brookhart, 2013; Falchikov, 1995; Carless, 2009; Richards, Bell & Dwyer, 2017). For example, one of the technical structures is that feedback should be timely, accurate, comprehensive, appropriate and accessible to students’ work. Wiggins (2012) asserts that features such as goal-referenced, tangible and transparent, actionable, user-friendly, timely, ongoing, and consistent and progressive towards a goal make feedback effective. Another technical but important structure is the language of feedback. Falchikov (1995) highlights that the discourse of feedback should carefully avoid negative emotional effects. In their meta-analysis, Richards, Bell and Dwyer (2017) summarize the features of quality feedback as:

- Feedback must focus on content rather than grammar, and minor issues such as referencing, structure as the latter produce a negative emotional response in students;
- Feedback must be timely in order for it to be useful
Feedback must be about the task rather than students
Feedback must be consistent, tailored, and explain not only what students have done poorly but what they have done well - and why
Feedback must not be generic such as ‘good work’ as that do not explain the reason for student’s achievement.

In relation to pre-service teacher’s classroom performance, feedback is a valuable component throughout school-based professional experience. A number of researchers have emphasized the value of providing appropriate feedback when assessing pre-service teacher classroom performance. For example, White (2007) found that supported and effective guidance on feedback for pre-service teachers had been given. However, his research indicates that spoken or written feedback which is specific and containing information relevant to the behavior of the pre-service teacher can make a difference. In the English language context, Ali and Al-Adawi (2013) agree with White (2007) and found that pre-service English language teachers in Oman believe that both types of feedback are important to them yet they prefer written feedback more than spoken as “they can refer to it in the future and they can reflect on it” (p. 29). A number of studies (such as Hudson, 2007; Smith, 2010; Tillema, Smith & Leshem, 2011) have focused on the value and quality of feedback for pre-service teachers. Tillema et al. (2011) found that in a comparative study between Israel, Norway and Netherlands that pre-service teachers perceived good mentoring as being given feedback and guidance. White (2007) proposed that collaborative supervision is deemed more helpful in changing the pre-service teacher’s behaviors when the feedback is focused and specific.

Feedback can have a positive and negative impact on pre-service teachers’ classroom performances. Thomas and Sondergeld (2015) show that feedback must be timely or it loses its effectiveness. Without timely feedback, pre-service teachers might not be able to recall the teaching processes that need to be improved, thus delaying advancements in the thinking and learning processes. Immediate feedback, on the other hand, allows pre-service teachers to correct mistakes before further ingraining them into their teaching practices as well as it allows them to build upon and apply positive strides when strengths are exemplified in the feedback. Furthermore, positive or negative impact on pre-service teachers’ motivation are related to the feedback given. Hattie and Timperley (2007) suggest that feedback should be robust and used judiciously in order to keep feedback motivating. Also, to make feedback constructive, it should be personal and individualized, thus it needs to be tailored to pre-service teachers’ individual strengths and weakness. Moreover, feedback should not be only detailed enough that pre-service teachers understand their strengths and weakness; it should also be manageable, specific and directly related to assessment criteria.

To empower the impact of feedback on pre-service teachers, university supervisor and cooperating teachers need to liaise. A number of international studies emphasize that the two experts ought to work closely together and collaboratively to assist pre-service teachers become skilled and knowledgeable teachers. In a review of 113 empirical studies conducted by Cohen, Hoz and Kaplan (2013), they found that in Asian and Australian teacher education programs cooperating teachers engage in mentoring the pre-service teachers and assessing their classroom performance according to university guidelines. The university supervisors collaborate with the
cooperating teachers through collecting feedback about the pre-service teacher’s performance and provide professional learning for pre-service teachers. Cohen et al. (2013) also found that in the UK, the cooperating teachers had more collaboration with university supervisors through their taking part in the implementation, design and assessment of the pre-service teachers including providing feedback. Smith (2007) proposed a model that enabled all stakeholders including pre-service teachers, university supervisors and cooperating teachers to collaborate in developing the assessment in Norway. The model focused on aspects of collaboration between the stakeholders: basic knowledge of assessment, defining what to assess, deciding on tools, developing criteria/rubrics, delegating of responsibility, and having moderation and discussion of how to reach agreement when final assessment is undertaken.

Thus, based on the powerful impact of feedback on pre-service teacher’s performance, this study investigates the stakeholders’ understanding and experiences of feedback pertained to assessing the classroom performance of pre-service English language teachers in Oman.

Method

*Interpretive Phenomenology*

Interpretive phenomenology, has been employed for understanding feedback on classroom performance of pre-service English language teachers. It is chosen as a suitable approach for this research because it allows the study to understand human experience by using discursive language underpinning both hermeneutics and phenomenology. Fundamental to the aim of this study are qualitative interpretations and analyses of all stakeholders involved in providing and receiving feedback on classroom performance. Hermeneutic phenomenology provides the research with the best opportunity to ‘give voice’ to all the stakeholders, including cooperating teachers, university supervisors and pre-service teachers as “ironically, pre-service teachers’ voices are rarely used to ascertain whether their teacher education program achieves its goals” (Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006, p.1020). Also, Heidegger (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009) highlighted that an observer/researcher could not remove him/herself from the process of essence-identification because he/she exists within the phenomena and the essence.

Participants and Instruments

The research participants were three pre-service teachers, four university supervisors and three cooperating teachers. Purposive sampling has been utilized by selecting only those participants who satisfy the criterion of being stakeholders with specific roles in each school and institution and who are currently involved in the school-based assessment practices. This is consistent with Patton’s (2002) phenomenological approach that selected participants “make sense of experience and transform experience into consciousness both individually and as a shared meaning” (p.104). Therefore, in this study, the participants were chosen for a specific purpose (i.e. I wanted to include a minimum of three different stakeholders from each school and elicit their experiences and observe the participants who had empirical experience of feedback). Thus, the chosen participants were all stakeholders, namely pre-service teachers, cooperating teachers and university supervisors, who are directly involved, and lived the experience of assessment practices during their professional experience. Table 1 shows the stakeholders in each institution.
Table 1. The distributions of the participants involved across the three participating schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants/institutions</th>
<th>SQU Nizwa university</th>
<th>Rustaq-CAS</th>
<th>Three participating Schools</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-service teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>university supervisors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 (Rustaq has two university supervisors for each pre-service teacher)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperating teachers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Collection and Analysis

Ethics Committee approved the study before data collection began. There are two sets of data in this study namely interviews and observations. The first set of data was collected by interviewing these key stakeholders who were involved in the assessment practices. Interviewing is important in interpretive phenomenology because it allows the experiences of the participants involved in the phenomenon to be revealed. The key stakeholders were interviewed individually to capture the lived experience of participants regarding the phenomenon of assessment practices. Each interview was recorded and immediately transcribed. Then, the interviews were transcribed and analysed using the guidelines of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) provided by Smith et al. (2009).

The second set of data was collected by observing the phenomenon in situ, that means, the assessment process was observed. Also, the feedback sessions that occurred during post-assessment events between the stakeholders was recorded. The aim of this process was to examine the feedback practices among all stakeholders across the three participating schools. With regard to recorded sessions, the language was analyzed using various devices recommended by Fairclough (2001) regarding the turn-taking system, such as controlling topic, enforcing explicitness and interruption to analyse the dialogues (feedback sessions) between pre-service teachers and their assessors as this allowed me to understand the assessment relationship between the stakeholders.

The following section presents the findings of the study. The first part of the section demonstrates the stakeholders’ understanding of feedback through the value of cognitive and effective strategies, timely feedback; emotional impact of feedback and having voice. Then, the section part shows the stakeholders’ practices of feedback in particular the different practices of feedback between university supervisors and cooperating teachers.

Findings

Stakeholders’ Understanding of Feedback

Value of Cognitive and Effective Strategies

The university supervisors and cooperating teachers interviewed recognized the value of cognitive and affective strategies when providing feedback to pre-service teachers. With regard to
the cognitive strategies, they understood the importance of the pre-service teachers’ involvement with the feedback. In the case of the university supervisors, the university supervisor at SQU emphasized that she always encouraged her pre-service teachers to be ‘critical’ and to ‘self-assess’ themselves. She indicated that she employed an ‘open-dialogue’ strategy with her pre-service teachers to self-assess by maintaining:

*I always give them the space to talk about themselves and why they perform in a certain way so that they can self-assess themselves. For example, what are your good points and weak points. Why did they do this task? How can you explain this task to me? We might agree or disagree... (#the university supervisor at SQU)*

Similarly, the university supervisor at Nizwa identified his ‘questioning strategy’ to engage the pre-service teachers in their own self-assessment, by saying:

*I asked her questions like what can you say about your lesson, what are the good things that you did? And, if you are given the same chance to teach, would you follow the same procedures. In this way, she can see by herself the shortcomings of her lessons. (#the university supervisor at Nizwa)*

The same questioning strategy was applied by university supervisors at Rustaq-CAS to engage the pre-service teacher to evaluate her performance. Their justifications for applying the ‘questioning strategy’ were to engage the pre-service teachers in discussion to elicit their reasons for their performance. This is illustrated by the following excerpt,

*Maybe I have written some notes and I understand the things from a different point of view but by asking the pre-service teacher what they thought about their lessons, the pre-service teachers have a logical justification or a different point of view about her teaching tasks. (#the first university supervisor at Rustaq-CAS)*

*Some teaching practices I may see as negative but when I ask and discuss them with the pre-service teachers I will be clearer as I will be able to see the pre-service teacher’s reasons, and her rationale, for that practice. (#the second university supervisor at Rustaq-CAS)*

The same scenario was implemented by cooperating teachers at Nizwa and SQU. Whereas the cooperating teacher of Rustaq-CAS did not mention the value of cognitive strategy, the cooperating teacher at SQU saw the significance of involving the pre-service teacher in the feedback practice. She indicated that she asked the pre-service teacher to reflect after each lesson so that she could avoid making the same mistakes in the following lesson. Similarly, the cooperating teacher at Nizwa, who together with the university supervisor provided feedback, indicated how significant the engagement and involvement of the pre-service teacher was in the feedback practice so that she could ‘think deeply’ about her lesson and come up with ‘alternatives’ to the difficulties she faced in her lesson. She clarified her understanding in the following excerpt:

*I involve the pre-service teacher to try to find an alternative to the difficulties she faced in the lessons and I gave her an opportunity to think deeply about her lesson... by this she will try to discover and recall what she had done during the lesson, what difficulties she had and think of some alternatives. If she fails to tell me how to deal with it, I will try to
help her by asking some questions which will eventually lead her to find a way to overcome that difficulty. (#the cooperating teacher at Nizwa University)

Not only did they recognize the value of cognitive strategies, but also the value of the use of effective strategies when providing feedback. For example, the university supervisors at Nizwa and SQU mentioned that they started the feedback with positive points about the observed lessons. Their justifications for beginning with positive points was to ‘encourage’, ‘build confidence’ and ‘prepare’ the pre-service teachers to listen more to the negative points, and action points, required to improve their lessons.

However, the first university supervisor at Rustaq-CAS indicated that she did not initially start with positive points in the feedback, but rather with the negative points. She articulated the negative effect of this experience on her pre-service teachers, and her need to change her feedback strategy, saying,

I realized from this experience that the pre-service teachers get demotivated by my first negative comments. They like me to give them first, positive reinforcement of what they have done well and I did not pay a lot of attention to this point so I tried towards the end of my last visit to start the feedback with good comments of what they have done in the lesson to encourage them, and then gave them negative points in an indirect, or nice way, to tell them how to improve. That is, I tried to use positive language with them when I give them feedback and I thought it went well after I changed the way of giving feedback. (#the first university supervisor at Rustaq-CAS)

The need for effective strategies when providing feedback was confirmed by the cooperating teachers at Nizwa and SQU. For example, the cooperating teacher at Nizwa indicated that she always started with positive points to ‘encourage’ and the action points to ‘help’ the pre-service teachers in her subsequent lessons. The cooperating teacher at SQU confirmed that “I can’t tell the pre-service teacher you are not good in a bad way, and immediately, because she might hate teaching”. For her, delivering ineffective strategies when providing feedback can have a detrimental effect, possibly causing the pre-service teacher’s ‘hating’ her future career as ‘a teacher’ and demotivating the pre-service teacher’s willingness to make subsequent improvements.

Timely Feedback

The university supervisors and the cooperating teachers indicated that the feedback should be given aptly. However, the university supervisors at Rustaq-CAS institution mentioned the difficulty of always providing timely feedback, explaining that due to the ‘amount of observations’ this sometimes hindered timely feedback. The first university supervisor at Rustaq-CAS said,

I have to observe four pre-service teachers every time I come to school and I don’t have time for feedback or I am rushed during feedback. (#the first university supervisor at Rustaq-CAS)

Above-quotiation shows that the first university supervisor either did not have time for feedback or she was rushed with feedback while the second university supervisor at Rustaq-CAS mentioned that she attempted to provide feedback within 24-48 hours after observing the classroom
performance of the pre-service teacher. However, the second university supervisor found a delay of feedback to be ineffective and added that “it was very difficult as both the pre-service teachers, and myself, have forgotten so many things of the observation”. (# the second university supervisor at Rustaq-CAS)

Emotional Impact of Feedback

Not only university supervisors and cooperating teachers demonstrated their understandings of feedback, but also pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers clearly recognized the importance of the feedback for them and across the three institutions two key features were listed that strongly affected them when receiving feedback. These included: ‘the emotional impact of feedback’; and ‘having a voice’. Each feature of these as recounted by the pre-service teachers is explored in the following paragraphs.

With regard to the emotional impact of feedback, pre-service teachers at SQU and Nizwa University indicated that university supervisors and cooperating teachers provided them with positive feedback. The pre-service teacher at Nizwa described the receiving feedback as ‘helpful’ and ‘improving’. She found it encouraging and clarified this by saying “my assessors did not say something that won’t help me, rather they picked the real things” that she did not do in the class which students needed to practice in their classes. In a similar vein, the pre-service teacher at SQU noted that feedback “says something about my performance” which accordingly increased her confidence to develop and improve her performance.

The pre-service teacher at Rustaq-CAS believed that receiving feedback allowed her to “not to make the same mistakes again in order to improve myself in the next lesson” although initially she had not been provided with positive feedback. She shared her experience of the emotional aspect of listening first to the positive points:

I will be happier if I could listen first to my positive points to encourage and motivate me and then the negative points should be for a positive outcome. I like more the positive points as they really encourage me, for example the cooperating teacher said from the beginning ‘the game for searching for envelope’ was very good. I feel better when I listen to my positive points first as they motivate and encourage me for the next lesson, it gives me more chances to improve myself. (# the pre-service teacher at Rustaq-CAS)

As the above quotation indicates, the pre-service teacher at Rustaq-CAS felt happy about receiving positive feedback frequently from her cooperating teacher and that listening frequently to the positive points of lessons from both the university supervisors and the cooperating teacher were encouraging and motivated her to continually improve. It is more effective than listening to negative feedback, because it increased self-confidence in being able to pursue and achieve performance.

Having Voice

With regard to having a voice, both the pre-service teachers at SQU and Rustaq-CAS, found that having a chance to discuss and clarify any lack of understanding about classroom practice, or if their assessors did not understand the motives for a certain practice or skill, there
was a chance to explain and clarify their teaching practices. Having a voice and being listened to was found so salutary.

However, the pre-service teacher at Nizwa University voiced her concern that her university supervisor sometimes did not listen to her when she defended her performance of certain practices. She provided two examples of when she noticed that her university supervisor did not listen to her. The first example related to applying technology in her classroom. She had brought a video to the topic she was teaching in the class, but the video took a long time to open and be shown. Her university supervisor viewed this as a shortfall in preparation but she was trying to argue that the school system, unlike the university system, does not allow preparing the video before the lesson starts because the classroom is occupied by another teacher beforehand. It is only after the class starts that she can set up the video yet the university supervisor insisted on his argument.

Another example related to the way her students were used to answering her questions by raising their hand and saying ‘teacher’ or ‘Miss’ as an indication of their willingness to answer. However, her university supervisor did not like this behavior and considered it a deficit in classroom management even though it was school policy and that the students did this yet he insisted that it was a problem in classroom management. It implies that the pre-service teacher at Nizwa University is not experiencing a healthy dialogue with her university supervisors which will enable her to learn how to discuss in a professional manner.

Stakeholders’ Practices of Feedback

One of the discourse practices found among the university supervisors across the three institutions involved controlling the dialogue through specifying the nature and purpose of the dialogue. For instance, statements like “let me start and tell you my thoughts and remarks then yours” (# second university supervisor at Rustaq-CAS) and “I have not seen enough lessons so my judgement is not a harsh one at the moment, I give comments and then I wait to see how you improve from one time to the other in your skills” (# the university supervisor at SQU). These statements indicate that the university supervisors are emphatic and didactic. Also, this discursive practice shows that the university supervisors were aiming to judge the pre-service teachers’ performance not aiming for understanding or allowing enough room for the pre-service teachers to have a say about their lessons.

This discourse practice was not found among the cooperating teachers across the three participating schools. Rather, they started their dialogues with statements like, ‘Thank you for your lesson, can you tell me about it or reflect on it?’ (# the cooperating teacher of Rustaq-CAS), ‘Miss …., what do you think of your lesson, how can you reflect on your lesson?’ ( # the cooperating teacher of SQU) and ‘First of all we would like to thank you for hosting us here in your lesson, can you please write three things that you like about your lesson and maybe one thing you are not satisfied about it? (# the cooperating teacher of Nizwa). These statements indicate that the cooperating teachers were not emphatic and aimed at understanding and negotiating with the pre-service teachers.
Another discourse practice found from the turn-talking of the university supervisors’ dialogues was no interruption or little comments from the pre-service teachers. The cooperating teachers’ dialogues, on the other hand, seem to sustain critical and collaborative reflection with the pre-service teachers. The following excerpts are two different examples of the university supervisor’s dialogue and the cooperating teacher’s dialogue at Nizwa institution. The two different excerpts show that the university supervisor’s dialogue tended to be in the form of lecturing-genre whereas the cooperating teacher’s dialogue was a dialogic-one. More explanations are in the excerpts in Table 2.

Table 2. A dialogic-genre and the positive evaluation between the Nizwa cooperating teacher and the pre-service teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excerpt of the cooperating teacher’s dialogue</th>
<th>Excerpt of the University supervisor’s dialogue</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nizwa Cooperative teacher: ..so what are the things you like about the lesson, can you tell us [cooperating teacher and university supervisor] the good things and the things that need to be modified.</td>
<td>University supervisor: The thing that I don’t like in your lesson is asking students to come and write on the board and ask you to correct their work but they didn’t, for example they wrote wrong sentences and you didn’t correct it. So if you ask students to write be careful they may write wrong sentences and if you don’t correct them students will think this is correct and here waste of time. Students might write wrong sentences so I don’t think. So, if you think it is necessary to distribute the work ok let it but let it in flash cards but the most important thing in writing is to let students write in draft and I think when I write something, I write a draft and then I ask others to proofread it because writing without proofreading you can’t reach to a good writing because here you train and teach students to proofread to each other and tell them don’t be afraid of making mistakes, let them write and swap their work and check each other and your role to check with them and finally to write a final draft. so it is difficult you lead your students to learn but to teach them writing it will be difficult so if you ask students to write the rest of paragraphs, they will go and just copy or just make changes….</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-service teacher: maybe I wasted time trying to make the students write the introduction on the board and the aims was to let students have an ideas about the complaint letter because I want them to write the rest of the letter. The rest was probably good because I finished the complete tasks in one lesson and the students seem that they understand what the complaint letter means and what it contains and when do we write it and how to write it.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nizwa Cooperative teacher: so what was the most important thing you like about your lesson?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-service teacher: students understand what the complaint letter is.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nizwa Cooperative teacher: you felt the students understood the complaint letter†.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-service teacher: yeh</td>
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Nizwa Cooperative teacher: and also the procedures of writing the letter right?

Pre-service teacher: yes because they analysed the letter that they have in the book in a good way, for example what it contains, introducing the problem first, what the product, describing the product, describe the problem and the rest.

Nizwa Cooperation teacher: right. you tried your best to make students understand.. try to achieve the aims during your lesson, you activated the group work twice and you time your students while working in group and you got the students to read every element you know I think you try your best to make them understand every point in the lesson….

Pre-service teacher: ok, so I am not supposed to make them write a letter.

The university supervisor at Nizwa University seemed to take control of the dialogue while the response of the pre-service teacher was more of passive in nature. The only statement after a long monologue pronounced by the pre-service teacher was, ‘ok, so I am not supposed to make them [students] write a letter (#pre-service teacher at Nizwa). However, the cooperating teacher’s dialogue at Nizwa University tended to enforce explicitness from the pre-service teacher in order to allow her to clarify and defend her performance. Unsurprisingly, the cooperating teachers’ dialogues, unlike the university supervisors’ dialogue, had a tendency to sustain collaborative and critical reflection with the pre-service teacher until the end of the dialogue. They tended to enforce explicitness so that the pre-service teachers had a voice to say during the feedback dialogue.

Moreover, the cooperating teachers’ conclusions of the dialogue across the three participating schools were always stated like for example ‘summarize what you have said’, ‘what are the things you would like to improve’… (#cooperating teacher of Nizwa) or ‘what are the action points that you need to think of’ or ‘how can you overcome these discussed points?’ (#cooperating teacher of SQU). This shows that the cooperating teachers aim to help improve the pre-service teachers’ performance in future lessons, and assisted them to avoiding making the same mistakes.

Another major discourse practice was found in regard to the gist and essence of the feedback between the university supervisors and the cooperating teachers. Hattie and Timperley (2007) distinguished four levels of feedback: feedback about the task; feedback about the processing of the task; feedback about self-regulation and feedback about the self as a person.
this context, there seems to be a different focus between the university supervisors and the cooperating teachers.

The analysis shows that the university supervisors across the three institutions focused on feedback related to how well a teaching task is performed. The cooperating teachers went beyond the tasks and focused on the processing of the teaching tasks. In other words, their focus was on providing techniques that would help the pre-service teacher to improve their teaching methods as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. The different gist of discursive practices of feedback between the university supervisors and the cooperating teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gist of university supervisors’ feedback focusing on praising pre-service teacher’s task performed</th>
<th>Such as:</th>
<th>Gist of cooperating teachers’ feedback focusing on Techniques of helping the pre-service teachers better teach</th>
<th>Such as:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>‘your introduction is good’, ‘good interaction with students’, ‘confident in taking role of being a guide’, ‘your knowledge of the unit plan is good’, ‘remembering students names is very good’ (# the university supervisor of SQU)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘you did a very good job’, ‘you have a good rapport with students’, ‘you have a good English’ (# university supervisor of Nizwa)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘you made very organized set up of the materials on the board’, ‘you committed some languages lapses’, ‘I like your flash card’, ‘I like your balance between kindness and fairness’, ‘you made very good explanation of the first activity’ (# university supervisor of Rustaq)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘it was better I think to write the remarks on the board to make the task easy for the students’, ‘It would be better to choose one student from each group to search for the envelope’ (# the cooperating teacher of Rustaq)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘it is good you make students to read but also give them the chance to think, explain by themselves. They need to work a little bit independently’, ‘ it is better to relate the lesson to student life like asking them questions such how much do you spend on such things’ (# cooperating teacher of Nizwa)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘you are right and even you can choose a letter for the whole group and then use the...”</td>
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</table>
The university supervisors’ feedback directed at praising a teaching task, such as ‘good interaction with students; ‘good rapport with students; and ‘made very good explanation of first activity’. In addition to that, feedback was holistic; not focusing on particular tasks. On the other hand, the cooperating teachers’ feedback aimed to provide techniques about how to teach better, such as ‘it was better I think to…’. ‘It is better to relate the lesson to…, and ‘it will be better if you can elicit…’.

Discussion

In this section, the findings are discussed in relation to the main research question: How do stakeholders understand and experience feedback when assessing pre-service teacher classroom performance across the three institutions in Oman? And then how feedback in Oman is positioned in relation to literature. With regard to the previous point, SQU implements an effective feedback provided to the pre-service teachers about their classroom performance by the university supervisor and the cooperating teacher. They each gave feedback that the pre-service teacher could use to improve her performance. The cooperating teacher and the university supervisor provided feedback that was timely and user-friendly in terms of its cognitive and effective strategies. Further, based on the observation, each person had a different focus and approach for feedback. Whereas the university supervisor focused on praising the pedagogy, the cooperating teacher focused upon providing techniques to help improve the pre-service teacher’s teaching. Additionally, cooperating teacher’s feedback tended to be less emphatic and having a dialogic-manner. The feedback provided by the cooperating teachers allows pre-service teachers a chance to discuss and negotiate which could ultimately enhance their classroom performance. However, as the data shows of Rustaq-CAS, feedback from the cooperating teacher and the university supervisors seems ineffective in terms of its timing and the quality of feedback in relation to effective strategies. Similar to SQU, both the cooperating teacher and university supervisor had different focus and approach to the implementation of feedback.

Feedback is provided by both the university supervisor and the cooperating teacher at Nizwa University. As mentioned, the data presented shows that the university supervisor and the cooperating teacher collaborated to provide feedback to the pre-service teacher together. Also, similar to SQU and Rustaq-CAS, the feedback had a different focus and approach. Whereas the cooperating teacher’s feedback focused on techniques to improve the pre-service teacher’s performance and was more dialogic in manner, feedback provided by the university supervisor focused on praising the pre-service teacher for task performed and tended to be monologic, emphatic with no interruptions. Furthermore, the pre-service teacher seemed dismayed that her voice was not heard by the university supervisor. This means that pre-service teachers at Nizwa
would not have constructive dialogue with their university supervisor, in contrast with the cooperating teacher, to provide them with the skills in how to engage in professional discourse.

The provision of feedback is found among all the three higher education institutions, however, this current practice shows that effective feedback is more highly regarded by cooperating teachers than university supervisors in the Omani context. This is due to several factors and resonates with a number of international studies in the literature. First, the learning to teach happens in a school context where the cooperating teachers work, and are familiar with the curriculum. The cooperating teachers provide more help and support to the pre-service teachers to improve during the process of assessment, including feedback. Similarly, the international studies (e.g. Hudson, 2007; Hudson & Millwater, 2008; Moody, 2009; Nguyen, 2009; Rozelle & Wilson, 2012) have shown the powerful position of the mentor (cooperating teacher) in providing constructive feedback.

Second, university supervisors come to school for a visit three to four times a semester, which is not sufficient to provide quality feedback about the pre-service teacher’s performance. Finally, yet importantly, university supervisors have a larger number of pre-service teachers to observe and assess per visit, compared to cooperating teachers. This role is similar to the role of supervisors in international countries like Singapore where supervisors are seen as assessors and evaluators of the pre-service teachers’ performance, rather than coaches and mentors who enculturate the pre-service teachers into the profession (Kaphesi, 2013). This argues the case for clearly defining the responsibilities of cooperating teachers and university supervisors. It is highly important that cooperating teachers are empowered to be the main support and source of feedback, while the university supervisors should focus on providing liaison between the institution and school and to collect the feedback about the pre-service teachers’ classroom performance from the cooperating teachers.

Further, feedback is employed throughout Oman’s three higher education institutions. In their meta-analysis, Richards et al. (2017) summarize the features of quality feedback. Of relevance to this study are:

- Feedback must be timely in order for it to be useful;
- Feedback must be about the task rather than students;
- Feedback must be consistent, tailored, and explain not only what students have done poorly, but also what they have done well and why; and
- Feedback must not be generic such as ‘good work’ as that does not explain the reason for the student’s achievement

The results in this study show that not all of the features of quality feedback exist in the Omani context and, in particular, the feedback provided by university supervisors. Along with these features of quality of feedback, this study added to Richards et al. (2017) study and showed two significant features of quality feedback namely the emotional impact of feedback and giving a voice to pre-service teachers. An example of the emotional impact of feedback is provided by the first university supervisor of Rustaq-CAS who perceived negative feedback as deleterious impact on her pre-service teachers. Similarly, the pre-service teacher at Rustaq-CAS highlighted the need
for constructive feedback that aims for support and encouragement. Meanwhile, the results show that the pre-service teacher of Nizwa University, unlike the pre-service teachers of the other institutions, experienced being unheard by her university supervisors. This implies that the pre-service teacher’s dialogue with her university supervisor is not productive; that is, the feedback is not effective. This means that the university supervisors’ understanding and practices of feedback is not of quality in comparison to cooperating teachers’ feedback.

Conclusion

The study aims to find out how stakeholders involved in the phenomenon of assessing classroom performance of pre-service teachers understand and experience feedback. The findings show that feedback is a vital assessment practice that is provided by university supervisors and cooperating teachers to the pre-service teachers across the three institutions in Oman. Though the stakeholders seem to have a mutual understanding of feedback regarding pre-service teachers’ classroom performance, the quality of the cooperating teachers’ feedback outperformed the quality of the university supervisors’ feedback. The discourse practices of the cooperating teachers’ feedback were less emphatic, dialogic and tended to sustain collaboration and critical reflection with pre-service teachers whereas the university supervisors’ feedback were more emphatic and didactic. This cooperating teacher’s quality of feedback helps the pre-service teachers to monitor their learning and improve their teaching. In addition, the findings show that pre-service teachers experienced a need for positive and constructive feedback; and for having a voice from their university supervisors whereas they did not experience these needs from their cooperating teachers.

Thus, it is important for future recommendations to note the findings from the analysis of the feedback practices to improve the assessment system in school-based practicum. Given that the most prominent themes were associated with variations in feedback processes between university supervisors and cooperating teachers, it can be reasonably concluded that the analysis has indicated a need for a consistent and uniform feedback between the stakeholders. It was further identified that this variation has negatively affected pre-service teacher’s agency and identity as teachers to be. It was noted that the feedback given and received at SQU institution can be classified as good feedback practice aligned with international best practices and thus the other institutions in Oman can benefit from such a good experience to heighten the quality of the feedback process provided to pre-service English language teachers.

It is envisaged that findings from this research will provide a map for cooperation and collaboration between the three institutions in Oman to have a first and robust assessment system regarding school-based practicum. Importantly, data analysis and subsequent finding can be applied to identify and tailor the process of given and receiving quality feedback. In so doing, it would be possible to substantially improve the assessment system. Such research process has also identified which feedback practices would be deemed more effective to undertake and would facilitate a greater agency in pre-service teachers and ultimately allow for a fairer and strong assessment system. Given the increasing importance being placed on this field of investigation, it is becoming more difficult to ignore the limitations of this study. Firstly, due to the nature of the study, this article is part of PhD study which encompasses other elements related to assessing classroom performance of pre-service English language teachers in Oman. Thus, this study might...
need to include a larger number of participants to have a fuller understanding of feedback across Oman. To draw firm conclusions about feedback of pre-service teachers’ classroom performance in Oman, it will be of merit for future research to investigate how feedback is understood and practised globally. However, this research has raised the concern for educators and policy makers to rethink about training and providing job descriptions to stakeholders who are responsible of feedback delivery and has emphasized on searching for fine-grounded solutions accordingly.

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Investigating the Use of Internet Applications for Teaching at Higher Educational Level in the Indonesian Context

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Abstract
Regarding the need for lecturers to upgrade their competence in making use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and internet in their teaching practices in 4.0 era as stated in The Teachers and Lecturers Act No.14/2005, this study aims to investigate the use of internet application for teaching students in the university level. More specifically, this study is intended to find out the kinds of internet applications used by lecturers in Universitas Brawijaya in their teaching practices. This study employs a mixed-method resulting in qualitative and quantitative data. Data are collected using questionnaires distributed to 137 young lecturers with an age range of 30-40 years representing 16 faculties at Universitas Brawijaya. Then, it is continued with interviews in the form of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to capture further information related to the use of the applications. The results show that Google Classroom has been used by most of the participants. Then the other kinds of internet applications used include Kahoot.com, Edmodo, Virtual Learning, EdPuzzle, Email, Moodle, WPLMS, Youtube, Google Form, Blog, Turnitin, Quissis, Classmaker, and Schoology. In relation to the limitations of the present study, future researchers are recommended to investigate the implementation of each of the applications to find out its effectiveness in helping students learn the subject-matter being taught. Moreover, further research related to students’ perceptions in the use of the above-mentioned applications is important to be done. Also, investigating the use of internet-based applications for students in different grades and levels of education is still an interesting area to be studied further.

Keywords: higher educational level, internet applications, Indonesian context, lecturers, professional competence

Introduction
Globalization has been a worldwide trend whose flow is unstoppable, including to Indonesia. Accompanied by increasingly sophisticated technological development, the world is now entering the industrial revolution 4.0 era that emphasizes the patterns of the digital economy, artificial intelligence, big data, robotics, etc. or known as the phenomenon of disruptive innovation. Therefore, to face all these challenges, educational quality must be improved continuously in the provision of education. This requires an effort to improve the quality of education, especially in higher educational institutions, given that the students are young adults. People generally carry out their last study in higher education institutions before they enter the work world. The development of times and technology has become one of the causes of changes in student characters. Today students are the millennial generation which will always pose challenges and obstacles in learning and teaching processes. The characteristics of the millennial generation are that they tend to be less concerned about the social conditions around them, such as the political world or the Indonesian economy development. Most millennials only care about boasting a lifestyle of freedom and hedonism, having a vision that is unrealistic and too idealistic. The most important is that they can be stylish (showing off). They were born in the times when color TV, cellphones, and the internet have emerged, so this generation must be very proficient in technology.

This phenomenon is supported by a statement from Ina Liem (Wurinanda, 2016), a woman who serves as CEO of Jurusanku.com, that educators or lecturers must be able to adjust their students’ characteristics. According to her, current students cannot be forced to obey all of their directives. Facing this challenge, teaching in higher education institutions is also demanded to change, including in producing quality lecturers for future generations. Lecturers must find the best teaching ways to make students like what is taught.

To create quality students, lecturers must master 4 competencies. Based on The Teachers and Lecturers Act No.14/2005 (Teacher and Lecturer Act No.14, 2005) in Article 10 Paragraph (1), Teacher competencies referred to in Article 8 cover pedagogical competence, personality competence, social competence, and professional competence obtained through professional education. Lecturers are one of the essential components in the higher education system. The roles, duties, and responsibilities of lecturers are very meaningful to produce quality resources. Lecturers are required to be able to show good performance. Good performance must be supported by competence and professionalism. However, lecturer professionalism is not always directly proportional to work professionalism (Permanasari, Setyaningrum, & Sundari, 2016) stated that the level of lecturer professionalism is generally not optimal.

Another challenge faced in meeting the need of quality lecturers is to recruit the best graduates of higher education institutions to become lecturers, given that in the industrial revolution the 4.0 era, the lecturer profession is increasingly competitive. There are at least five lecturer’s qualifications and competencies needed, including (1) educational competence, referring to Internet of Thing-based competence as a basic skill in this era; (2) competence in research, referring to the competence in building networks to develop sciences, research directions, and achieving international grants; (3) competence for technological commercialization, referring to the competence in bringing groups and students to commercialization with technology for the results of innovation and research; (4) competence in globalization, referring to the competence of
understanding borderless world, adjusting with various culture, and hybrid competence, which is the global competence and excellence in solving national problems; and (5) competence in future strategies, in which the world changes easily and run fast, so lecturers have to possess the competence to predict exactly what will happen in the future along with its strategy by means of joint-lecture, joint-research, joint-publication, joint-lab, staff mobility and rotation, understanding SDG’s and industrial directions, and so on.

Universitas Brawijaya, as an A-accredited campus with the World Class University tagline has just been placed in the 2nd rank in Indonesia based on the 4ICU version and the 6th rank based on the Webometrics version. Lecturers at Universitas Brawijaya have their challenges in learning and teaching activities, one of which is that the students are millennial generation. In this regards, lecturer performance becomes an issue that needs high attention, especially the performance of young lecturers to maintain the achievements of Universitas Brawijaya and, in the future, be able to develop lecturers' professionalism.

The difference between this study and the previous ones regarding the use of IoT in education is that this study focuses on the higher education level while previous studies more focus on secondary education or high school level. This is important since lecturers have higher demands on teaching because students are required to have higher educational qualifications than high school students. Besides, students also have the potential or opportunity to become teaching staff or work in other places according to their field of expertise. Therefore, lecturers need to upgrade their competencies so that they can maximize learning activities to equip students with competencies according to the field of study taken.

**Literature Review**

The ability to manage learning and teaching processes is the ability of lecturers to create an educative communication atmosphere between lecturers and students including cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects, as an effort to learn something based on planning up to the evaluation of follow-up stages to achieve the teaching objectives. To create quality students, educators must master 4 competencies. Law No. 14 of 2005 concerning (Undang-Undang Nomor 14, 2005) Teachers and Lecturers, in Article 10 Paragraph (1) states that: “Teacher competencies referred to in Article 8 cover pedagogical competence, personality competence, social competence, and professional competence obtained through professional education.” (14, 2005)

One of the four competencies focused on this research is professional competence. Professional competence is the ability possessed by lecturers on mastery of learning material widely and deeply. It is one matter that enables lecturers to guide students in meeting the national standards of competency and education. Here are the components of professional competence.

1. Mastering scientific materials, concepts, and thought patterns that support lessons being taught
2. Mastering competency standards and basic competencies of subjects or areas of development being taught.
3. Developing learning materials on an ongoing basis by taking reflective actions.
4. Utilizing Communication and Information Technology (ICT) for communication and self-development

As explained previously, today there is a demand for a paradigm shift in learning from the traditional model towards a new model, namely the 4.0 era. However, reality shows that the practice of learning tends to apply more traditional than new learning strategies. This seems to be closely related to low professionalism. With the phenomenon of the gap between formerly lecturers and today lecturers in terms of the type of students, in which today students are included in the millennial generation, appropriate learning media is highly needed.

According to Pribadi (Pribadi, 2004), learning media are something that can bring information and messages from the sender or source of information to the recipient or learner. Learning media is a tool that serves to convey learning messages. The more learning objectives achieved with the help of learning media indicate the better quality of the media. (Ena, 2011) proposed six criteria for assessing interactive learning media, namely a) *Ease of navigation*, a program must be designed as simple as possible so that students do not need to learn computer first for using it as interactive learning media; b) *The content of cognition*, interactive learning must contain cognition or knowledge matching with the expected objectives of learning; c) *Knowledge and information presentation*, knowledge or information must be delivered or presented correctly; d) *Media integration*, media must be designed in such a way that it can integrate aspects and skills students must learn; e) *Aesthetics*, interactive learning, to attract students’ interest, must be presented artistically. Therefore, aesthetics is also a criterion that must receive important attention; and f) *Overall function*, the interactive learning program developed must provide the learning desired by students so that students feel to have learned something when they finish experiencing the learning program.

There are two types of IoT-based learning model according to Surjono (2008) that covers simple internet-based learning which contains a collection of learning materials contained in a web server with additional communication forums via e-mail or mailing lists and integrated learning through an e-learning portal containing various learning objects enriched with multimedia and equipped with academic information system, evaluations, communication, discussions, and various education tools. The implementation of internet-based learning can be included in these categories, which can be between the two or even the combination of several components of the two.

The implementation of e-learning (internet-based learning) is expected to make students very flexible in choosing the time and place of study since they do not have to come somewhere at a certain time. On another side, lecturers (instructors) can update the learning materials at any time and anywhere. In terms of contents, learning materials can also be made very flexible, starting from text-based lecture materials to those loaded with multimedia components. Distributed learning refers to learning where instructors, students, and learning materials are located in different locations so that students can learn anytime and anywhere.

Based on the definition and implementation of e-learning above, it can be obtained that e-learning has some characteristics. The first is utilizing computers as a learning media. The learning
process in and outside the classroom involves electronic technology. Computers as one of the results of technological advancement can replace the use of conventional media. The second is utilizing computer network technology. Computers are designed to facilitate the interaction between lecturers and students, hoped to provide good learning and teaching processes as in the classroom. The process of interaction in a computer whose network has been designed also still applies even though the learning process occurs in the classroom, given the teaching and learning activities in the classroom certainly requires two-way communication between lecturers and students. The third is using self-learning materials stored in computers so that they can be accessed by lecturers and students anytime and anywhere if they need it. The four is requiring mentors or lecturers. E-learning, however, still needs lecturers, not eliminating or replacing the role of lecturers in the teaching and learning process. The presence of e-learning is only as learning media, nothing less and nothing more. Lecturers’ teaching materials increase in the teaching process using e-learning, which initially only focuses on educating and teaching about lecture materials and now expands to guide students in e-learning operations.

Research Questions
This study aims to examine the extent to which lecturers at Universitas Brawijaya as a world-class university can develop their professional competence to implement the Internet of Things through teaching and learning media used to support their teaching practices. Regarding this, the research question of the present study is formulated as follows: (1) How frequent are lecturers at Universitas Brawijaya make use of internet to support their teaching practices? And (2) what kinds of internet applications have been used by lecturers in Universitas Brawijaya in their teaching practices?

Method
This research used a survey method with a cross-sectional design because its objective was to describe what kinds of internet applications which have been used by lecturers at Universitas Brawijaya. This objective was best achieved by using survey research whose purpose is to describe trends, opinions, attitudes, behavior, or characteristics of a population (Creswell, 2012). There are six basic stages of conducting survey research (Ary et al., 2010). The six stages are planning, defining population, sampling, constructing instruments, conducting the survey, and processing the data as shown in Figure 1.

![Diagram of survey research stages](image)

Figure 1. Six stages in conducting survey research based on Ary et al. (2010, p 379)

Researchers start with research questions which according to the researchers can be most precisely answered by the survey method (Ary et al., 2010). Furthermore, in conducting surveys, researchers need to determine whether they want to collect data on attitudes, opinions, or beliefs of a
population at one point of time using a cross-sectional design or to study individuals over time using a longitudinal design (Ary et al., 2010; Creswell, 2012). The cross-sectional survey design was suitable to be used in this research because this research aimed to describe what kinds of internet applications which have been used by young lecturers at Universitas Brawijaya.

The second stage is to define the population. One of the most important questions to be faced by survey researchers is: how large is the population covered by the survey? (Nunan, 1992). The term ‘population’ is used to refer to all groups of individuals to whom the research findings apply (Ary et al., 2010). This is a group of individuals who have one characteristic distinguishing them from other groups (Creswell, 2012). The population in this research covered young lecturers from 16 faculties in Brawijaya University with an age range of 30 to 40 years old.

Then, the sampling stage is carried out to follow up on the population definition. Sampling is done when it is difficult or even impossible for researchers to collect data from the entire population (Nunan, 1992). Sample, a smaller portion of the population (Ary et al., 2010), refers to individuals studied by researchers and obtained from the target population (individuals in a population where a researcher can obtain data) (Creswell, 2012). The sampling in this research was done by choosing 8 up to 9 lecturer representatives from each faculty.

Data Collection and Instruments

This study involves 137 lecturers at Universitas Brawijaya. The research instruments used are questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaires are forms used in survey design filled in by participants involved in research and returned to the researcher. Participants provide basic personal or demographic information and choose answers to questions given. However, an interview survey is a form in which the researcher records the answers given by participants in the research. In an interview, a researcher asks questions from the interview guide, listen to the participants’ responses or observe their behavior, and record the responses to the survey (Creswell, 2012). In this research, both instruments (questionnaires and interview guides) were used to collect data about the use of internet-based learning media in the classroom.

The questionnaire in this research consisted of two parts. In the first part of the questionnaire, there were three items designed to obtain information about the respondent’s name, the period of teaching experience, and the study program in which the respondent taught. Meanwhile, the second part questioned on what media have been used and how active the use was, followed with optional responses set for the respondents using a Likert scale. Thus, all individuals answered the questions by choosing the optional responses provided, and this allowed the researchers to examine responses convincingly, encode responses or assign numerical values, and analyze data statistically (Creswell, 2012). The advantage of this type of question items is that points can be assigned to various responses so that measures of central tendencies, variability, and the equivalent can be calculated (Ary et al., 2010).

Furthermore, interviews were conducted with several respondents selected using purposive sampling to get information from each of the 16 faculties generated from the questionnaire represented. In this interview, the researchers developed a survey instrument, gathered a small group of people who could answer questions, and then recorded their comments.
on the instrument (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, the interview guidelines were developed as survey instruments in this research where several respondents would be interviewed and their responses would be recorded and noted. The interview activity was made in the Forum Group Discussion.

**Data Analysis**

This step includes data coding, statistical analysis, result interpretation, and finding reporting (Ary et al., 2010). Data processing in this research began with coding the answered questionnaires and the interview results, analyzing the reliability of the questionnaire results statistically using Cronbach's Alpha values, calculating scores to get overall and item-based calculation results. The item-based calculation aimed to describe what media have been used by respondents in carrying out their work as lecturers by analyzing items on a questionnaire scale in detail. Therefore, according to respondents' responses, the percentage of each medium was calculated and categorized. Then, all data obtained from the questionnaires and interviews were interpreted to conclusions as research findings. Finally, the findings were then reported descriptively.

**Results**

*Frequency of Using Internet to Support Teaching Practices of Lecturers at Universitas Brawijaya*

![Bar Chart](image)

**Figure 2.** Frequency of using internet to support teaching practices of lecturers at Universitas Brawijaya

The distribution of the data related to the frequency of making use of the internet in the participants teaching practices. It can be seen 86 of the participants (62.7%) have often made use of the internet to help their teaching practices. Then 27 of them (19.7%) state that they seldom use the internet in their daily teaching activities. Next, 15 of them (10.94%) declare that they always use the internet during the teaching and learning activities. Lastly, there are 9 of the participant (6.6%) who say that they never use the internet for their teaching practices.
When being interviewed further, those who say that they often use the internet for their teaching practice state that the internet helps them a lot in selecting materials, sharing the materials, sending assignments and having an online discussion with their students. Furthermore, those who say that they always use the internet to support their teaching and learning activities because they have online materials that need to be accessed by the students for the learning activities. Thus, the internet has become a compulsory supporting medium for the participants and the students to achieve the teaching and learning objectives. Also, most of the assignments are sent and collected via online. However, this does not mean that there is no face-to-face activities in the class. There are still activities in class in which students’ attendance will be recorded weekly. Next, the participants who say that they never use the internet say that it is because they mostly use modules and handbooks in their teaching. Also, most of the activities in class are in the form of practicum.

Kinds of Internet Applications Used by Lecturers of Universitas Brawijaya in Their Teaching Practices

As what can be seen in Table 1, there are 20 kinds of internet applications that have been used by lecturers at Universitas Brawijaya in their teaching practices. There are top five applications that are used frequently to be noted, namely Google Classroom (50 lecturers), Kahoot.com (21 lecturers), Edmodo (12 lecturers), Virtua Learning (11 lecturers) and Email (10 lecturers). The rationale of using the applications vary from the suitability with the subject-matter being taught, kinds of assignments, simple usage, and familiarity of the applications. They further state

Result of Interview about the Use of Internet Applications

As a result of the interview, those who use Google Classroom and Edmodo state that these applications provide complete features that help them a lot in sharing materials, sending assignments, giving announcements, giving feedback, checking assignments and having an online discussion. Then, the ones who use Kahoot.com say that this application is exciting for the students when it comes to multiple-choice games. For the lectures who teach English, the game is usually design for grammar and vocabulary exercises. Virtual Learning application has also made students more interested in giving more attention to the subject matter being discussed. Then Email application is used for sending materials, collecting students’ assignments, and giving feedback.

The other applications as listed in Table 1 are also used for a number of functions and considerations. Moodle is used as the first LMS which is familiar for the participants. Next, WPLMS is used because it is user-friendly and contains a lot of features that can be used to support the teaching and learning activities. Then YouTube is mostly used for downloading sources, uploading assignments and having discussions. Then Google Form is used for assignments and questionnaires related to the evaluation of the classroom activities. Also, lecturers’ blogs are used to deliver materials, announcements as well as assignments. Turnitin is also famous to be used for checking similarity level of students’ work to avoid plagiarism. Next, Quissis is used for having progress report for each chapter of the materials being learned. Then Classmaker is used for examination. Next, Schoology is used because its interface is almost similar with social media, so it is attractive for the students.
Investigating the Use of Internet Applications for Teaching

Asri, Irmawati & Dewi

Table 1. *Kinds of internet applications used by lecturers of Universitas Brawijaya in their teaching practices*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kinds of Internet Applications</th>
<th>Number of Lecturers Using the Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Google Classroom</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kahoot.com</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmodo</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual Learning</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google doc</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youtube</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moodle</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnitin</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quissis</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Padlet</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edpuzzle</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WPLMS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trello</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classmaker</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAG</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slido</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schoology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexiquiz</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion**

As what has been stated previously, most of the participants have often used internet to support their teaching and learning activities. This is in accordance with the result of a study conducted by Irmawati, Widiati & Cahyono (2017) that internet-based activities have been done by professional teachers to help them develop their pedagogical competence. This is also in line with what has been stated by Gómez, Huete, Hoyos, Perez, & Grigori (2013) that the implementation of internet-based activities in teaching and learning can give a number of benefits for lecturers and students. They can have more interactive communication because it is borderless. Also, the so-called distributed learning can be applied because students and lecturers can still have their teaching and learning activities regardless of where they are and in more flexible time.

Additionally, the participants’ answers regarding the high frequency in using the internet in the teaching practice also have indicated that their students have positive responses. This is in line with a study done by Charles and Issifu (2015) in investigating the use of ICT for teaching and learning activities in Ghana which has shown that students have positive perceptions in the use of ICT to support their learning process. Irmawati, Widiati & Cahyono (2017) also further state that the use of the internet in the teaching and learning activities can make the students more interested in learning the target language or the subject matter being taught.
Then the result related to kinds of internet application which have been used by the participants has supported previous studies concerning the usage of particular application in the context of teaching English. The results of a study done by Cakrawati (2017) indicated that the majority of participants considered the use of Edmodo or Quipper in English teaching and learning is effective and efficient in terms of time. Although slow-speed internet is considered to be one of the difficulties in using Edmodo and Quipper, most of the participants agreed that the online learning platforms can help them in practicing language skills, acquiring new vocabularies, and improving their understanding on the contents of the lesson.

A number of considerations and functions in using kinds of internet applications in the present study are also in the same vein with what has been dan by Gorra and Bhati (2015). They state that the most observed positive functions of using internet-platform activities are instant messaging through chatting, lesson inquiry about assignments, sending and receiving e-mails, research through surfing the net including data gathering by downloading files and sharing cultural experiences with others through the internet. Moreover, a study conducted by Saptani (2017) involving three English teachers in Semarang reveal that using Quipper School allows teacher and students to have more interaction and motivation in teaching and learning activities. Also, Wallace (2014) and Manowong (2016) have stated that the online learning platforms allow teachers to create and share materials to support students’ learning as well as to provide learning tasks to help them in practicing the language. The accessible platforms encourage students to learn in any location and at any time via computer, tablets, or smartphones. This has strengthened the fact that lecturers and students are able to get a lot of advantages when making use of internet applications to support their teaching and learning activities.

Conclusion

In the context of higher education level, it is found out that a lot of the lecturers of Universitas Brawijaya have made use of the internet to support daily teaching practices. Out of twenty kinds of internet applications that are used, there are top five applications that are mostly used by the lecturers namely Google Classroom, Kahoot.co, Edmodo, Virtual Learning and Email. A number of functions of using the applications which have encouraged them to use the applications are noted, such as for sharing materials, sending assignments, giving feedback, posting an announcement, having online discussions and more interaction, giving tests or quizzes, as well as having fun while learning through games.

However, the present study has limitations to be noted. First, this study focuses on mapping kinds of internet applications used at higher educational levels. There is a need to study more about which internet application is more effective to be used in a particular context. Thus, future researchers are greatly suggested to investigate the effectiveness of using particular applications in a particular context to contribute more to the body of knowledge related to TEFL in the Indonesian context. Next, since this study involves the lecturers from Universitas Brawijaya, future studies a bigger number of universities are still important to be done. Thus, a bigger scope will provide clearer mapping regarding the use of internet applications in the context of higher education level.
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References


Syntactic Analysis of Sentence Adverbials Observed in the Victorian Novel *Jane Eyre*

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**Abstract**
The sentence structure complexity and clause positioning (Staveley, 2013) represent the striking features of the writing style of the 19-th century British fiction writers. The present syntactic study brings detailed quantitative and qualitative syntactic analyses of peripheral sentence elements, sentence (stance) adverbials, occurring in the Victorian novel *Jane Eyre* (1847), and offers their classification into style and content disjuncts. As the latter ones are generally employed by fiction in the novels’ dialogues and main characters’ reflections (Biber, 1999), the research questions focus predominantly on their function and frequency of use. Content disjuncts help to express the possibility or the doubt of the utterance and explain the outcome of the actions and events happening in the story. The research outcomes have confirmed that content disjuncts considerably contribute to understanding the writing style of Charlotte Brontë. This phenomenon can be further studied and developed in the syntactic analyses of other remarkable 19th century novels and novelists. The research results will find their application not only in the theory and practice of syntax but also in the process of teaching/learning English as a foreign language.

**Keywords:** content disjuncts, *Jane Eyre*, literary linguistics, the language of fiction, sentence adverbials, syntactic analysis

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Introduction
Language is the medium of literary texts, and to understand regularities in the formal aspects of literary texts (Hundarenko, 2019), literary linguistics research explores symmetries in the linguistic form and how the literary form exploits the linguistic form. Fabb (1997) explains: “Formal linguistic analysis of language can focus on how linguistic form is exploited in literary form” (p. 9). What is more, employing literature in the process of language acquisition undoubtedly brings positive results to the class (Chamkha & Drid, 2019). As syntax represents the maximal realization of linguistic form, governing whole sentences, its rules are more readily accessible to introspection. Syntax also facilitates the creative aspect of human language and the recursive and combinatorial abilities of utterance production (Chomsky, 1971). Syntactic expressive means (enumeration, asyndeton, polysyndeton, detached construction, ellipsis, inversion, etc.) possess a strong potential to create desired stylistic effects within an utterance (Lacková, 2012). The syntax is, therefore, the most important aspect of linguistic form to the creative use of language, so it may lead us to a safe assumption that it has a critical part to play in linguistic studies of literature. In the present study, we syntactically analyze peripheral sentence elements (=sentential adverbials) found and observed in the novel Jane Eyre.

Adverbials as sentence elements
Adverbials are constructions that modify the entire sentence or clause (Murcia & Freeman, 1999). Diessel (2005) adds that they represent highly movable units, and their position in the sentence plays a crucial role in interpreting their meaning. Thus, adverbials can be considered as vitally important in terms of intelligibility, which is a profoundly significant aspect of communication (Metruk, 2018a; Metruk, 2018b). As regards sentential adverbials, Espinal (1991) states: “Disjunct constituents are units of information linguistically dissociated from the proposition with which they have to be interpreted at the moment of utterance processing, yet they contribute to the final interpretation of the whole utterance.” (p. 735) According to Rafajlovičová (2004), disjuncts are optional additions to a clause expressing the attitude of the speaker/writer towards the content of the message. Unlike adjuncts, they are more loosely attached to the clause, more mobile but they are not a part of the predicate. Davidson (2003) adds that since disjuncts are less closely related to the rest of the sentence than adjuncts are, they are often separated off by commas. Comparing to Brinton (2000), disjuncts are sentence adverbs modifying the entire subject (S), not just a verb phrase (VP). Quirk et al. (1985) note that it is not the form of the disjuncts that makes them different from adjuncts or subjuncts nor is it the positions in which the adverbials are put. Disjunct adverbials appear to be attached to sentences by syntactic relations, based on graphological and tonic representations (Steward, 2008).

Quirk et al. (1985) further explain that disjuncts have a superior role as compared with the sentence elements. They are syntactically more separated, and in some cases, they are superordinate. Also, they seem to have a scope that extends over the sentence as a whole. What is more, Rafajlovičová (2004) claims that disjuncts are usually placed before or after sentence elements, between commas or parenthetically, while adjuncts are typically placed after the verb. Considering phonological property, Espinal (1991) mentions that disjuncts are independent grammatical constituents and do not participate in syntactic processes that take place within the sentence. He adds: “They are not subcategorized by verbs” (p. 735). Phonetically, disjuncts are
associated with an intonational unit independent of the one corresponding to the sentence in which they occur.

**Disjuncts and their semantic and syntactic roles and features**

Biber et al. (1999) provide eight major areas of meaning that the stance adverbials (=disjuncts) convey – doubt and certainty, actuality and reality, source of knowledge, limitation, viewpoint or perspective, imprecision, attitude, and style. In comparison, Alexander (1997) states the following semantic properties of disjuncts:

1. I do not want you to repeat this: *between ourselves, in strict confidence.*
2. It is just as I expected: *characteristically, logically, typically.*

As Biber et al. (1999) claim, disjuncts are realized by several syntactic forms: single word adverb, adverb phrase, prepositional phrase, noun phrase, finite clause and non-finite clause. Comparing Espinal (1991), she communicates that a wide variety of constituents bear no apparent syntactic relationship to the sentences in which they are included. She differentiates between disjunct appositive relatives, disjunct adjectival phrases, disjunct adverbial clauses and combined disjuncts. Regarding syntactic features of disjuncts, Quirk et al. (1985) specify that content disjuncts appear freely with questions in clauses. Nearly all content disjuncts realized by adverbs appear in any position in a direct or indirect question, although most of them cannot perform with imperatives. Style disjuncts appear with imperatives, even in *I* position, and they occur freely in direct and indirect questions, even initially. Moreover, disjuncts occur in finite dependent clauses.

**Types of disjuncts**

Quirk et al. (1985) divide disjuncts into style (modality and manner; respect) and content (degree of truth; value judgment) ones. Rafajlovičová (2004) suggests slight term variations with content disjuncts (relating to certainty and relating to evaluation). Biber et al. (1999) label disjuncts as *stance adverbials* and distinguish epistemic stance adverbials (judgement about certainty, reliability, and limitations), attitude adverbials (attitude or value judgment) and style adverbials (the manner of speaking).

Schreiber (1972) states that style disjuncts derive from a distinct intermediate functional type – manner adverb, which itself derives from a higher predicate. Style disjuncts of modality and manner are carried out by prepositional phrases and by clauses (e.g., *in short* and *putting it bluntly*). Respect disjuncts are realized by longer phrases or by clauses, thus making more explicit the respect in which a comment is being expressed (e.g., *if you understand me and with respect*). It may be stated that because-clauses, if-clauses, since-clauses are also respect style disjuncts. As well, Quirk et al. (1985) highlight that when a speaker wishes to emphasize that he/she alone is the authority, a style disjunct may be reinforced by another, even though a listener may find the co-occurrence redundant or egotistical.

Content disjuncts concentrate on the actual content and truth conditions of an utterance. Comment on the content of an utterance is of two kinds and is expressed by a wide range of adverb phrases, clauses and prepositional phrases. Content disjuncts of value judgment or evaluation
disjuncts show an attitude to an utterance through evaluation (Rafajlovičová, 2004). Eastwood (2000) confirms that content disjuncts are used to make an evaluation or comment on what we are saying. Content disjuncts of degree of truth comment on the truth value of what is said, firmly supporting it, expressing doubt and posing contingencies such as conditions or reasons. Quirk et al. (1985) categorize the following groups of content conjuncts: expressing conviction as a direct claim or an appeal to general perception, expressing a degree of doubt and stating the sense in which the speaker judges what he says to be true or false with reference to the reality or lack of reality in what is said. According to them, hypothetical clauses belong to content disjuncts on which closely reasoned discourse depends and adverbs with participle base in –ing are the most productive class of adverbs as content disjuncts.

Biber et al. (1999) state that stance adverbials are to be found across all registers and add that fiction marks the most common adverbials – really and perhaps. Adverbials of doubt and certainty (perhaps and probably) mark in possible conversation explanations, the outcome of events, future actions, and doubt or certainty. Fiction employs them in dialogues to imitate conversation and to give descriptions through a character’s eyes rather than by an omniscient narrator. Adverbials of actuality (actually and really) are applied in dialogues or characters’ reflections on states and events.

The writing style of Charlotte Brontë
In the 19th century English, the change on all levels of the linguistic organization is apparent in terms of spelling and sound, syntax, and meaning. Mugglestone (2012) states that in the context of grammar, one dominant change is the rise of progressive passive, the decline of subjunctive after if and unless, use of got and an infinitive split. Regarding new words in the vocabulary, there is an extensive usage of fashionable French words as well as polysyllabic and scholarly coinages marking the language of science. O’Gorman (2002) declares that the transformation of Victorian language derived from urbanization, technology, travel, and new opportunities for communication. Victorian novelists concentrated on multi-plot form, allusions, self-consciousness in narrative, and plot unity. The crucial characteristics of Charlotte Brontë’s writing style is the syntax of the Victorian era and sentence complexity. With a closer look, the difference in syntax between the 19th century and Modern Standard English is in clausal positioning, which is not unreadable but might cause issues (Staveley, 2013). Charlotte Brontë frequently uses mostly historical present in her novels. When reading Jane Eyre, we can observe the rise in emotional tension and a new departure in the story. Aitro (2011) finds out that the author’s writing style is generally educated, complex, and filled with emotion. Most of the sentences contain various adjectives and sensual images. Thus, the reader can identify with Jane Eyre through the complex sentence structure. Syntactically, as Laying the Foundation (2004) marks, Charlotte Brontë uses each type of sentence construction. However, she never uses the periodic sentence even though the story is full of surprise and mystery. Her syntax does not create additional tension. As far as the natural order of a sentence is concerned, Charlotte Brontë constructs sentences so that the subject comes before the predicate. With a closer look at Jane Eyre, at first, readers understand the heroine’s feelings; then they understand why she behaves in a particular way (Laying the Foundation, 2004). Regarding passive constructions, the author uses passive voice as the projection of the subject into the object. These verbal qualities represent the difference between the style of the Age of Reason and the style of romance (Lodge, 2009). In comparison to previously stated features, an inverted order of a
sentence is used by Charlotte Brontë to create an emphatic or rhythmic effect. Another strategy is antimetabole, i.e., sentence strategy in which the arrangement of ideas in the second clause is a reversal of the first clause (Laying the Foundation, 2004). Jones (2016) claims that much of what happens in the novel is conveyed by dialogue. Brontë presents dialogues in a way to increase the realism of conversation by including a local effect. Peters (1991) adds that she parodies conventional forms of a narrative and involves a form of rhetorical exaggeration into the narrative discourse and dialogue to make an implicit statement about discourse.

Research problem and research hypotheses
The novel Jane Eyre has been chosen as a research sample primarily for the purpose to point out to complex sentences, typical for Charlotte Brontë’s writing style, which are very likely to be shaped by different types of disjuncts applied in the 19th century Romanticism. The issue under research is dedicated to the second edition and is respectfully inscribed by the author. The book was published by the Vintage Classics Library, providing the Vintage catalog of classics publishers. It comprises 38 chapters and two volumes having 545 pages. In the research process, we were closely studying all the sentences containing disjuncts. These were subsequently collected and classified into main categories and subcategories, based on the theory described by Quirk et al. (1985). Based on the theoretical findings, we have formulated three research hypotheses. All three of them were formulated in agreement with Biber et al. (1999) factual theory.

H1: Content disjuncts appear in the language used by Charlotte Brontë in Jane Eyre more often than style disjuncts.

The first hypothesis was chosen based on the fact that content disjuncts focus on the true conditions and certain content of the utterance as well as provide an evaluation of the whole declaration. Jane Eyre fits in the genre of fiction where content disjuncts are quite common in comparison with style disjuncts, which are likely to be found in a higher amount in the conversation than any other register. In the language of fiction, content disjuncts are mostly used to show doubt or the possibility of the utterance.

H2: The language of Charlotte Brontë used in Jane Eyre is significant by the preference of content disjuncts of the degree of truth.

Fiction has the highest frequencies of the most common adverbials, such as really and perhaps. These disjuncts belong to the group of so-called content disjuncts. The disjunct really states the sense in which the speaker judges the content of the utterance to be true or false. In fiction, really is used in dialogues or in characters’ reflections on states and events. The disjunct perhaps conveys a certain degree of doubt of a speaker. Moreover, the disjunct probably is applied in fiction in dialogues to imitate conversation and to provide descriptions through the character’s eyes rather than by an omniscient narrator.

H3: Disjuncts of source of knowledge and imprecision mark only slight occurrence in the language used by Charlotte Brontë in Jane Eyre.

Disjuncts of source of knowledge as according to are more frequently used in the news than in fiction since they reflect the emphasis. They also represent a source of knowledge – from specific
names or publications to issues identified by their location. Disjuncts of imprecision as *like, kind of, sort of* are not common in fiction; people employ them in daily conversation.

**Research interpretation**

The total amount of 197 disjuncts was found in the novel *Jane Eyre*. We classified them into style disjuncts and content disjuncts and also to their subcategories – style disjuncts of modality and manner, style disjuncts of respect, content disjuncts of value judgment and content disjuncts of degree of truth. The style disjuncts occurred in the novel 18 times compared to content disjuncts appearing in the novel 179 times.

Regarding the style disjuncts, we distinguished style disjuncts of modality and manner and style disjuncts of respect. Out of the total number of 18 style disjuncts, there were six style disjuncts of modality and manner. Style disjuncts of respect were detected twelve times. Table 1 and Table 2 present the occurrence, range, amount and percentage of style disjuncts of modality and manner and style disjuncts of respect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occurrence</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>very low (0 &lt; Oc ≤ 1)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low (1 &lt; Oc ≤ 8)</td>
<td>2-8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>67 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high (8 &lt; Oc ≤ 17)</td>
<td>9-17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very high (Oc &gt; 17)</td>
<td>18-59</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. The occurrence of style disjuncts of respect in Jane Eyre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occurrence</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>very low (0 &lt; Oc ≤ 1)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low (1 &lt; Oc ≤ 8)</td>
<td>2-8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>67 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high (8 &lt; Oc ≤ 17)</td>
<td>9-17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very high (Oc &gt;17)</td>
<td>18-59</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next step was the classification of content disjuncts into their subcategories – content disjuncts of degree of truth and content disjuncts of value judgment based on the overall number of 179 content disjuncts. Content disjuncts of degree of truth were observed 124 times (69 % of the total number of content disjuncts), while content disjuncts of value judgment occurred 55 times (31 % of the total amount).

The subcategory of content disjuncts of value judgment contains 55 disjuncts. Table 3 and Table 4 refer to the occurrence, range, amount, and percentage of content disjuncts of value judgment and content disjuncts of degree of truth.

Table 3. The occurrence of content disjuncts of value judgment in Jane Eyre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occurrence</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>very low (0 &lt; Oc ≤ 1)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low (1 &lt; Oc ≤ 8)</td>
<td>2-8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high (8 &lt; Oc ≤ 17)</td>
<td>9-17</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>56 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very high (Oc &gt;17)</td>
<td>18-59</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. The occurrence of content disjuncts of degree of truth in Jane Eyre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occurrence</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>very low (0 &lt; Oc ≤ 1)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low (1 &lt; Oc ≤ 8)</td>
<td>2-8</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high (8 &lt; Oc ≤ 17)</td>
<td>9-17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very high (Oc &gt;17)</td>
<td>18-59</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td></td>
<td>124</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After studying the obtained research data, we conclude that the first hypothesis has been confirmed. Content disjuncts focusing on the true conditions of the utterance appear in the language used by Charlotte Brontë in *Jane Eyre* much more often than style disjuncts. In a closer look, we have marked 179 content disjuncts in comparison to 18 style disjuncts. Content disjuncts are typical for the language of fiction, unlike style disjuncts, which are preferably used in the conversation.

Regarding the results of our empirical research, the second hypothesis has also been accepted. The language of Charlotte Brontë used in *Jane Eyre* is significant by the preference of content disjuncts of degree of truth. Our analysis showed 124 content disjuncts of degree of truth set against 55 content disjuncts of value judgment. The findings uncovered the most frequently used disjunct *indeed*, which appeared 59 times. Furthermore, the disjunct *perhaps* arose 27 times. To contrast Biber et al. (1999) theory to our research outcome, we have not found any disjunct *really*. Thus, we claim that the preferred subcategory of disjuncts used by Charlotte Brontë is that of content disjuncts of degree of truth since the disjuncts *perhaps* and *indeed*, which belong to this group, had the highest occurrence from all 197 observed disjuncts throughout the novel.

The third hypothesis has been proved as well. Disjuncts of source of knowledge and imprecision mark only a slight occurrence in the language used by Charlotte Brontë in *Jane Eyre*. Charlotte Brontë used the disjunct *according to* only once throughout the novel. Furthermore, the disjuncts *like*, *kind of* and *sort of* did not appear at all. We conclude that disjuncts of source of knowledge and imprecision are not likely to be used in *Jane Eyre*. 
Conclusion
We hope that the present study will be helpful for students who study the English language and who are concerned with English syntax since it might help them fully comprehend another linguistic phenomenon. The research results can function as authentic language material for the university lecturers during their syntax courses as well as secondary school teachers during their English language seminars. We believe that the present study will be attractive and impressive for a new generation of learners since it analyses a well-known and popular literary work. Finally, we would like to point out to the fact that teaching English (as a foreign or second language) through literature is another valuable and attractive way how we can develop the learners’ language. We, as language teachers, can considerably enhance emotional and intellectual interaction between the students (readers of the literary texts) and the literary texts and encourage them to take into consideration specific language elements occurring in the discussed sources and subsequently practice them in the classroom.

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References


Identifying Students’ Self-perceived Multiple Intelligence Preferences: the Case of Students from Heilongjiang International University, China

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Abstract
Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory assumes that people have a full range of intelligences, and individuals differ. Although there have been many studies conducted related to MI, there are still questions that need answers in the context of students who are learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in China. Many teachers believe that identifying these intelligences has a significant impact on students learning skills. Identifying these intelligences, however, is not accessible if observation or identification comes from the teachers. Thus, the aim of this study was to identify Chinese college students’ self-perceived MI and check the differences between male and females students’ self-perceived intelligences. There were 359 Heilongjiang International University (HIU) students who participated in this study. The 35-item MI questionnaire was adopted to collect the data. The findings indicated that both male and female HIU students had a high self-perceived Musical Intelligence. Moreover, there were differences in terms of their self-perceived MI with three intelligences that male HIU students self-perceived are higher than the females. These are mathematical-logical intelligence, body-kinesthetic intelligence and interpersonal intelligence. The findings are followed by some recommendations for teaching and learning.

Key Words: Human Intelligence, learning abilities, MI Chinese context, multiple intelligences, self-perceived Multiple Intelligence

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Introduction
Many very successful people in life were judged to be failures at school. Brilliant scientists, writers, musicians, sports-people, artists, religious and political leaders were once judged according to a very narrow definition of what constitutes intelligence.

Intelligence is a mixture of several abilities that are all of great value in life. It would be ridiculous to think that intelligence could be measured on a single scale. People are intelligent in different ways and possess a set of intelligences, not just one type or level of intelligence.

Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) state that teachers who recognize the multiple intelligences of their students acknowledge that students bring with them specific and unique strengths, which are not taken into consideration by many teachers in the classroom situations, and activities can be categorized and used in the classroom according to students’ intelligence.

Multiple intelligences (MI) are part of a person’s make-up that could be hard to determine. There is no precise assessment that can provide a comprehensive survey of students’ multiple intelligences besides observation (Armstrong, 2008). My argument is that, for university students, the most likely first step to identify or know their MI is to do the self-perceived survey of their multiple intelligences as they likely know their intelligence better than those who observe them.

Students at HIU are pre-intermediate in their learning abilities and in need of improvement. Teachers at HIU are looking for ways to increase classroom teaching efficiency.

This study is an attempt to identify HIU students’ MI to help researchers or teachers create activities to provide opportunities for them to process information based on their distinct intelligence to develop their learning ability.

Literature review
A Theory of Multiple Intelligences and its criticism
In the 80s, an American Psychologist Howard Gardner proposed a theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) (Gardner, 1983). He aimed to challenge basic human intelligences, named linguistic, mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic interpersonal and intrapersonal. This theory introduced a pluralistic view of the mind, recognizing different facets of human knowledge or ability manifested by individuals. Though his original paper, he identified seven intelligences only. As his research progressed, he added more intelligences named “naturalistic intelligence” and “emotional intelligence” (Armstrong, 2008 as cited in Derakhshan & Faribi, 2015, p. 63). Based on these intelligences, Gardner grouped these into three domains, which are the analytical, introspective and interactive domains and serve as organizers of the intelligences to understand how these work. (McKenzie, 2002, p. 156).

Intelligences are defined as general cognitive problem-solving abilities. It is a mental ability that involves perceiving, analyzing, reasoning, learning, critical thinking, and so on (Colom, Karama, Jung, & Haier, 2010). People’s intelligences can be changed, developed, and grew to a certain level over time (Darling-Hammond, Flook, Cook-Harvey, Brigid, & Osher, 2019).
Gardner (2011) mentioned that learners’ MI could be an advantage in the educational settings, as this allows the program to design different activities that suit a particular learner. Also, as students will likely learn areas that he/she desires, acquisition of knowledge can be realized easily because a specific student has already possessed the intelligence that he/she needs. According to McKenzie (2002, p. 156), the MI model is a learner-based philosophy that is emphasizing the multiple dimensions of human intelligences. Hence, teachers who recognize the multiple intelligences of their students are likely to help them bring out their specific, unique strengths and preferences (Colom, Karama, Jung, & Haier, 2010; Gardner, 2011; Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2011). As Gardner (1999, 2011) argued, students would be better educated by a broader vision of education in which teachers use different methodologies, exercises and activities to reach all students and not just to focus on those who excel in linguistic and logical intelligence (Ibnian & Hadban, 2013; Rohaniyah, 2017). Many educators have begun to recognize that students have unique differences and started to modify teaching methods that cater to students with multiple intelligences, though identifying them is still a challenge as each intelligence has a unique development order in a person’s different stages (Gardner, 2011).

The Eight MI posited by Gardner in 1983 (cited in Armstrong, 2008):

1. Linguistic intelligence is an ability to use language effectively, either spoken or written. Individuals who have this intelligence tend to be sensitive to the meaning and words orders and embody skills of memorization, expression, explanation, or persuasion.
2. Logical-Mathematical intelligence is the ability to use numbers effectively, which is often addressed as scientific thinking (Gardner, 1993). Individuals who have this intelligence tend to be sensitive to the patterns, symmetry, logic, and aesthetics of mathematics.
3. Visual-spatial intelligence is the ability to perceive and represent the visual-spatial world accurately and transform visual-spatial ideas into imaginative and expressive creations. Individuals who have this intelligence tend to interpret and graphically represent visual or spatial ideas (Gardner, 2011).
4. Musical intelligence is the ability to understand and develop musical techniques and to respond emotionally to music. It includes the skills to interpret musical forms and ideas to create imaginative and expressive performances and compositions.
5. Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence is the ability to use the body skillfully and handle objects skillfully. Individuals who are high in Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence tend to have skills to express emotion through body movements, and critique the actions of the body.
6. Interpersonal intelligence is the ability to understand people and relationships, which includes the skills to communicate clearly what needs to be done, use empathy, help others, solve problems, discriminate, and interpret among different kinds of interpersonal clues.
7. Naturalistic intelligence is the ability to process information regarding nature, which includes individuals who are likely to do well in careers and can contribute towards sustainable management and conservation of environment.
8. Intrapersonal intelligence is the ability to reflect on one’s inner moods, intuitions, and the temperament to create or express a personal view. People with this intelligence tend to be sensitive to self-perception and control.

Gardner (1993, p. 23) argued that “all humans possess certain core abilities in each of the intelligences,” so certain individuals have more potential in particular intelligences.
argumentation is supported by Marques & Dhiman (2018), as they also claimed that people exhibit several intelligences, not just one. Some intelligences arise at an early age of a person, such as the logical-mathematical and musical intelligences, while others can be developed gradually (Gardner, 2011).

Nevertheless, there are various criticisms found about MI. According to the critics, the intelligences are perceived as fundamental abilities or cognitive processes that are known and acknowledged by educators. Others claimed that general intelligence, such as critical thinking, reflectiveness, or memory, does exist and this theory fails to acknowledge the importance of general intelligence. Gardner notes that the evidence he found suggests that MI is not a content-independent knowledge base, and this is still open to debate because no definitive evidence supports the argument. Furthermore, critics think that the intelligences which Gardner labeled in his study are part of a person’s aptitude. Additionally, they argue that MI is culturally embedded; therefore, the only way to distinguished this is when a person encounters tasks that are not familiar to them. Others also asserted that MI, as an approach to learning, might sound ideal but impractical. Accordingly, Gardner affirmed that MI needs to be conducted and tested in the fields of biology and cognitive science before it is put into practice (Peariso, 2008, p.11). Thus, this suggests that Gardner himself is one of MI critics. Some critics also claimed that intelligences are what commonly called “gifts or talents” (Gardner (1983, 1993) agrees but would want linguistic and logical-mathematical ability to be labeled as talents, rather than being elevated for no particular reason (Gardner, 2011).

For many years, many studies have been conducted, and empirical evidence continues to mount Multiple Intelligences support for the theory. Certainly, the theory may be falsified, but the evidence suggests that multiple intelligences exist within each individual (Armstrong, 2008; Gardner, 1993, 2011; Hoerr, 2000). Despite the different issues regarding subjectivity, problematic definition, and lack of empirical research, MI approach becomes a hot topic in different areas in education, which includes English language teaching.

**Multiple intelligences and English language teaching and learning**

Many scholars (Jones, 2017; Luo, 2018; Spirovska, 2013) believe that MI can be integrated into English language teaching and learning, as this helps as a building block for English acquisition, enhancement of all intelligences, and an alternative for providing different assessment to help students further improve their academic achievements (Gardner, 2011; Luo, 2018). According to them, acknowledging multiple intelligences and using them as a tool to organize teaching and learning methods could help to avoid the “one size fits all” teachers’ mentality to develop students’ learning abilities (Jones, 2017; Spirovska, 2013). Integrating different intelligences such as linguistic intelligence, musical intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, visual-spatial intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence is beneficial to students simply because each intelligence has its strength. For instance, promoting linguistic intelligence can be beneficial to students in developing their oral and written communication. Musical intelligence can be useful in developing students’ vocabulary skills and even pronunciation, as musical intelligence might be able to foster students’ critical or logical thinking (Gardner 2011). As for visual-spatial intelligence, information technology provides different learning resources that are useful to students learning. Visual is another way to help learners develop their language, especially English abilities.
Accordingly, Spirovskas (2013) argued that MI has different benefits in the English language classroom. However, teachers should adopt a student-centered approach to teaching and learning and employ a dynamic and non-conventional way of teaching. In this manner, students will be able to bring out the best of their capacities and abilities (Zhang, 2017). Consequently, when learners exhibit different abilities, teachers should know how to adapt, create and innovate different types of activities that could match their strengths and learning styles (Massanet-Oliver, 2018, p.16). By doing so, multiple intelligences can be a good tool to develop a better understanding and appreciation of students’ individual preferences about learning and to raise awareness in students’ individuality (Spirovskas, 2013, p.6). Knowing which intelligences help a learner better, teachers can help students work on the areas where they have found difficulties and exploit what they are good at. Creating different activities that are effective and engaging, therefore, is likely to benefit students since these activities will prevent boredom (Luo & Huang; 2019; Sedov, 2019), which is the reason why, in English language teaching and learning, a non-conventional classroom and teachers who are not afraid to innovate are likely to benefit the MI approach.

Collaborative learning focuses on a student-centered approach, so sharing ideas is one of the strengths of MI once implemented in the English language classroom. Teachers play a significant role in students’ learning process when implementing the MI approach to teaching. Hence, teachers should not focus on the failures of their students but their strengths and abilities so that students will be motivated to engage in the class (Shearer, 2020).

This study answers two questions:
1. What are HIU students’ Self-perceived Multiple Intelligence preferences?
2. What are the differences between the male and female students at HIU in terms of their Self-perceived Multiple Intelligence Preferences?

Participants

The participants of the study were the first and second year Chinese undergraduate students at HIU. The total sample of participants consisted of 359 students of different majors (80 male and 279 female). The level of their proficiency is pre-intermediate. The study was carried out in the academic year 2019.

All the participants were volunteered and purposively sampled from freshmen and sophomore students at HIU, because they have at least two years’ studying at HIU which would allow teachers or researchers at HIU to do further treatments.

Instruments

A 35-item multiple intelligences questionnaire was downloaded (https://www.businessballs.com/self-awareness/howard-gardners-multiple-intelligences/) and adopted to identify HIU students’ self-perceived Multiple Intelligences. The questionnaire covered seven parts, each part including five questions representing one self-perceived MI. To complete the 35-item Likert questions, students were asked to read each item and select their self-perceived MI level. It took an average of 15 minutes to answer the questionnaire. The 5 Likert Scale scaling was employed, ranging from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree. Cronbach alpha was used to
determine the reliability of the questionnaire. Also, the instrument was piloted to other students who were not part of this study.

The reliability value of the questionnaire is .917 (above 0.90), which indicates that the questionnaire is reliable. Also, the construct validity of the items and underlying variables were determined using questionnaire items correlation value.

The CFI value is .765, NFI is .677, and IFI is .768, which is acceptable in this study. And RMSEA is .069, which meets the standard of below .08.

Table 1
Correlation value of each question with the intelligence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MI Preference</th>
<th>Question N. &amp; Correlation Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q3 (.687*) Q6(.604*) Q10(.682*) Q14(.590*) Q30(.622*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q26(653*) Q23(.618*) Q18(.684*) Q15(.542*) Q13(.664*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q1(.448*) Q2(.762*) Q5(.760*) Q24(.783*) Q33(.794*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q25(.785*) Q21(.577*) Q16(.680*) Q7(.778*) Q4(.720*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q9(.637*) Q11(.673*) Q12(.582*) Q22(.656*) Q29(.677*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q35(.651*) Q32(.676*) Q31(.649*) Q20(.656*) Q8(.607*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q17(.626*) Q19(.600*) Q27(.653*) Q28(.564*) Q34(.632*)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant Correlation at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

As the correlation value of each item is at 0.01 level (2-tailed), meaning this is significant; thus, the validity of the questionnaire was achieved.

Findings and discussion

To find out HIU students’ self-perceived Multiple Intelligences, descriptive statistics were used by finding the mean value between males and females, which is followed by identifying the similarities and differences between males and females MI. These will be presented in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of Mean Value of Each Multiple Intelligence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MI Type</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
<th>Minimum Score</th>
<th>Maximum Score</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14.45</td>
<td>3.140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13.46</td>
<td>3.190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15.66</td>
<td>3.909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodily-kinesthetic</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13.62</td>
<td>3.587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual-Spatial</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>3.042</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table 2, the mean score of each multiple intelligence, the mean scores are M=13 to 16 with the highest score of M=15.66 for Musical intelligence, the only MI type that scores above 15 (60% of the total 25), which is followed by interpersonal, linguistic, intrapersonal, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, and logical-mathematical. With the M=15.66 and SD=3.909, the indication is that students’ self-perceived MI is dominated by Musical Intelligence. As students’ learning tends to be dominated by Grammar Translation or Audio-lingual, perhaps integrating this intelligence to help them develop vocabulary acquisition could be helpful. According to Gardner, music can be used in an educational context to express ideas and can be developed through exploration and exploitation of the oral-aural channel. (Gardner, 2011, p.129 cited in Massanet-Oliver, 2018, p. 12)

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of Multiple Intelligences of Males and Females

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MI Types</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>14.91</td>
<td>3.691</td>
<td>.413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>female</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>14.31</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>.336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical*</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>14.60</td>
<td>3.814</td>
<td>.426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>female</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>12.86</td>
<td>2.755</td>
<td>.308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>16.70</td>
<td>4.268</td>
<td>.477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>female</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>15.75</td>
<td>3.866</td>
<td>.432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodily-kinesthetic*</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>15.10</td>
<td>4.289</td>
<td>.480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>female</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>12.93</td>
<td>2.814</td>
<td>.315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual-spatial</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>14.41</td>
<td>3.679</td>
<td>.411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>female</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>13.86</td>
<td>2.727</td>
<td>.305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal*</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>15.64</td>
<td>4.098</td>
<td>.458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>female</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>13.94</td>
<td>2.678</td>
<td>.299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>14.64</td>
<td>3.739</td>
<td>.418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>female</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>14.24</td>
<td>2.466</td>
<td>.276</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant Difference at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

To identify HIU students’ self-perceived MI differences between male and female students, 80 males and 80 female students were randomly chosen from the data and tested. Table 3 illustrated that male students’ self-perceived MI is higher than females in all seven intelligences. Among seven intelligences, male students indicated that their highest self-perceived MI is Musical intelligence, and their lowest self-perceived intelligence is Visual-spatial intelligence with the lowest self-perceived MI of M= 14.41. Similarly, female students highest self-perceived MI was Musical intelligences with M=15.75 and the lowest self-perceived MI is Logical Intelligence with M=12.86.

The Standard Deviation (SD) of MI among male students is also higher than female students. As is illustrated, the highest MI SD among male students is Bodily-kinesthetic
Intelligence with SD=4.289, while the female students’ is Musical Intelligence with SD=3.866. Among the intelligences the Visual-Spatial intelligence was the lowest among male students with SD= 3.679, while the female students showed that Intrapersonal Intelligence was the lowest with SD=2.466.

It is also indicated that both male and female students have high self-perceived Musical intelligence while their other self-perceived MI varies.

Interestingly, the findings found that there are significant differences between male and female MI in terms of the three MI, the logical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence and interpersonal intelligence where the males always show high in these three intelligences. According to Gardner (2011), people who are high in logical-mathematical are thought to be good with abstract entities of numbers. Also, these individuals tend to question and answer their own limits by exploring, analyzing, categorizing and working in different ways (Gardner, 2011; Spirovska, 2013). Nonetheless, people who are high in bodily-kinesthetic intelligence tend to use non-verbal communication or body language often to communicate. Whereas, interpersonal intelligence involves the moods in communication or how a person interacts with others. According to Gardner (2011), people who are high in interpersonal intelligence tend to have a good relationship with others. They are good at teamwork and they are willing to learn and exchange feedback. They also tend to express themselves and discuss their ideas clearly with others (Gardner, 2011).

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this study is to identify the self-perceived MI preferences of Chinese students at Heilongjiang International University, China to provide teachers with a better understanding of their students to help them develop their learning abilities by creating materials and activities that provide learners with opportunities to process information based on their distinct intelligence.

From the findings presented, we can see that HIU students are relatively higher in Musical, Interpersonal, Linguistic and Intrapersonal intelligences, than Visual-spatial, Bodily-Kinesthetic and logical intelligences.

Furthermore, the findings also indicated that male and female HIU students differ in the sequence of their self-perceived multiple intelligence preferences. Male students’ MI sequences are Musical, Interpersonal, Bodily-kinesthetic, Linguistic, Intrapersonal, Logical, and Visual-spatial. Female students’ MI sequences are Musical, Linguistic, Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Visual-spatial, Bodily-kinesthetic, and Logical. From the differences, we can see that Musical Intelligence ranks first in both male and female students, but the other six MI are completely different in terms of sequence.

HIU students have different self-perceived intelligence preferences. Thus some recommendations are presented.
First, HIU teachers are recommended to use integrated strategies and instructional activities providing students with activities which suit their abilities that optimize their opportunities to develop these intelligences. Hence, information processes could be easier. As MI theory provides a platform to help students’ learning, integrated strategies and instructional activities are likely to cater to the different needs of students in terms of intelligence profiles, learning styles and learning preferences. By doing so, students’ successful and effective learning processes might be easy. Redefining teachers or educators’ role has a tendency to help students to be more engaged and motivated. Since, the relationship between intelligences and teaching and learning processes are viewed as a fundamental element in planning students learning activities, promoting higher academic performance, learner success and lifelong learning, educators therefore need to acknowledge that there are different independent abilities learners have, which are important prerequisites to language education.

Second, English learning education should be viewed as the cultivation and development of students’ knowledge. Therefore, creating an education which fit every student can provide equal opportunities for development and highlight the diversity, periodicity, and directionality of students’ development. Teachers and educators therefore are supposed to pay attention to students’ strengths instead of failure. Understanding the individuality of students and perhaps personalizing instruction to maximize their achievement and life development should be some of the criteria in designing materials and teaching methods.

Third, as multiple intelligences represent a key component of students’ success, teachers should develop course materials or teaching methods that address the needs of students based on the intelligences they possess to encourage academic success and promote an effective learning experience, for example, by using content-based or task-based approach as teaching methods. Providing a holistic and collaborative way of learning might be able to bring out the best among learners as they can use their individual strengths to help each other. Letting students learn authentically by using their personal talents and interest might create a more active and involved classroom. Providing students a space to do what they do best might motivate them to show their domain intelligence and build self-esteem.

To take advantage of the usefulness of multiple intelligences in the English classroom, a few recommendations were discussed. Integrating the approach of MI in a non-conventional and a student-centered classroom might help teachers and learners to understand that a learner does not need all multiple intelligences to be a proficient student. Instead, teachers should know their students’ strengths and shape his/her other intelligences gradually by integrating those in teaching lessons.

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References


A Pragmatic Analysis of Islam-related Terminologies in Selected Eastern and Western Mass Media

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Abstract
The mass media are blamed for constructing a negative image of Islam through the use of Islam-related terms in reporting terrorism. It is presumed that when Islam-related terms are used without regard to their original connotations, they are likely to lose their original meanings and begin to take on altered meanings created by the media. Therefore, this study aims to explore the use of Islam-related terminologies in selected eastern and western mass media outlets in relation to their semantic and linguistic interpretations. The study employed a qualitative approach in which content analysis was used. Using purposive sampling, The Jordan Times and Al-Jazeera were chosen from the eastern Arab world while The BBC and The Guardian were chosen from the western media. A total of 368 news articles focusing on Islam and Muslims were collected from the selected news media outlets using internet-based search from March 2018 until October 2019. The findings showed significant differences ($P = 0.000/P < 0.05$) exist between the selected eastern and western mass media outlets in using Islam-related terminologies. The terms are used more frequently in the western media outlets than in the eastern media outlets. Further analysis of the findings revealed that the selected media outlets use Islam-related terminologies, such as “Islamist” and “Jihadist”, in negative contexts. The use of Islam-related terminologies in the selected media outlets could be influential in making the audience to perceive Islam as a religion of terrorism. The negative use of Islam-related terms could be minimized through training of journalists on news coverage of religion, provision of proper guidelines on religious reporting and ensuring that these guidelines are strictly followed. It was envisaged that this study would be useful to the media outlets, particularly in the process of news gathering, production, and dissemination.

Keywords: Islam, Media discourse, online news, pragmatic analysis, terminologies, terrorism

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Introduction

The use of Islam-related terminologies in news coverage of Islam has become a contentious issue amongst scholars, researchers, and religious experts (Mohideen, & Mohideen, 2008; Reynolds, 2015; Hassan, Azmi, & Abubakar, 2017). The problem associated with the use of Islam-related terms in the media arises when expressions are used without regard to their original connotations. In this situation, the terms lose their original meanings and begin to take on altered meanings created by the media. This is particularly critical and consequential in the mass media discourse and perceptions of Islam and Muslims in the audience mindsets (Reynolds, 2015). According to Shadid and van Koningsveld (2002), terminologies are nowadays used to describe movements with Islamic religious designations. The terms are used in the media mostly in articles focusing on Islam and Muslims (Ameli et al., 2007). In fact, the use of Islam-related terminologies in negative contexts may reinforce negative stereotypes and prejudices against Muslims (Ameli, Marandi, Ahmed, Kara, & Merali, 2007).

In any case, after the 9/11 attacks, the media paid much attention on Islam-related news with various coined terms such as “Islamic terrorism”, “Islamic fanaticism”, “Muslim extremists” (Mohideen & Mohideen, 2008; Nurullah, 2010; Ridouani, 2011). These kinds of terminologies constitute part of media texts with the tendency to associate Islam with terrorism depending largely on the manner in which the news story is constructed (Hassan, Azmi, & Abdullahi, 2020). As a result of the distortion of words’ meaning, taking into consideration the news context, the media reinforce stereotypes and negative images of Islam (Moore et al., 2008; Reynolds, 2015; Hassan et al., 2017). This problem arises when the media use Islam-related terms in negative context without considering their original connotations. In this situation, the terms lose their original connotations and begin to take on altered meanings created by the media.

In essence, previous studies established that the language used in news coverage of Islam is mostly distorted as a result of the media’s choice of words to describe Islam and Muslims (e.g. Allen, 2012; Hassan et al., 2017; Moore, Mason, & Lewis, 2008). Most of these studies were conducted in the western countries, particularly the US and the UK (e.g. Allen, 2012; Moore et al., 2008) while very few relevant studies focused on the media in Muslim-majority nations (e.g. Hassan et al., 2017). None of the previous studies compared between the eastern and the western mass media in relation to the use of Islam-related terms. Therefore, this study focuses on the use of controversial Islam-related terminologies in the eastern and the western mass media discourse on terrorism. Specifically, this study aims to address the following research questions.

Q1 What are the differences between the eastern and the selected western mass media in using Islam-related terminologies?
Q2 How do the eastern and the western mass media use Islam-related terminologies of terrorism in terms of context and connotation?

News Coverage of Islam in the Media

There has been a considerable increase in scientific publications about news coverage of Islam. A number of studies have investigated the construction of Muslims’ identities in the media (Samaie & Malmir, 2017; Bleich & van der Veen, 2018; Bleich, Souffrant, Stabler, der Veen, & Maurits, 2018; Nickerson, 2019). Most of the studies illustrated that the media tend to associate
Islam with terrorism, and the images as well as discourses relating to Islam and Muslims in the mass media tend to be negative (Powell, 2018; Nickerson, 2019). Sultan (2016) noted that considerable literature is available to indicate that the media construct reality by presenting a mass-mediated view through negative representation. Such representation is “tinged with negative signifiers with the global media’s predominantly negative portrayal of Islam and Muslims” (p. 1). The negative representation, as reported in the previous studies, is sharply reflected in the media discourse. For example, Samaie and Malmir (2017) explored the pervasive representation of Islam and Muslims in a 670,000-word corpus of US news media stories published between 2001 and 2015. The findings indicated that, in general, Islam and Muslims are associated with violence and portrayed as “radical Islamists and Islamic militants” (p. 7).

Similarly, Baker, Gabrielatos, and McEnery (2013) examined the patterns of representation around the word “Muslim” in a 143-million-word corpus of British newspaper articles published between 1998 and 2009. The analysis showed that ethnic/national identity, characterizing/differentiating attributes, conflict, culture, religion, and group/organizations were referenced. The ‘conflict’ category was found to be lexically rich, containing many word types. Muslim world and Muslim community were found to be used to collectivize Muslims, “both emphasizing their sameness to each other and their difference to the West” (p. 255). Muslims were also represented as easily offended, alienated, and in conflict with non-Muslims.

Relatively, the representation of Islam and Muslims in the news media coverage “focuses on presenting adherents of the Islamic faith as being at odds with Western culture and values” (Ewart, Cherney, & Murphy, 2017, p. 3). This kind of representation may create tension in the society. The media portray Muslims as sympathetic to terrorists, economically backward and conservative (Ewart et al., 2017). Using computer-assisted, lexicon-based analysis, Bleich and van der Veen (2018) comparatively investigated whether Muslims portrayed more negatively than other religious groups and explored the factors associated with the negative portrayal of Islam in the US media. According to the findings, the average tone of articles about Muslims is considerably more negative compared to the other groups. The negative tone is most strongly associated with stories about extremism and events in foreign settings.

Nurullah (2010) argued that the US media focus on the negative depiction of Islam and Muslims by associating them with violence and terrorism for “a few accounts of individuals who commit suicide bombings in the name of Islam” (p. 1043). According to the author, an important point in the account of the negative representation of Muslims in the media started after the 9/11 attacks, where Islam has widely been associated with violence and terrorism while Muslims are portrayed as terrorists. According to Shadid and van Koningsveld (2002), the western media contribute to the negative image of Islam and Muslims through the choice of content and news construction in their articles. Thus, portraying all Muslims as fundamentalists in the media might lead to an image that could generally be recognized and accepted by the audience. Allen (2012) concluded that “the media reinforce the notion that Islam is profoundly different from and a serious threat to the West” (p. 11).

Furthermore, Sultan (2016) noted that the media “construct reality by presenting a mass mediated view through framing, shaping and portrayal” (p. 1). A study conducted by Powell (2018)
noted that, in media representation of Islam and Muslims, thematic framing exists which results in a situation of media coverage of terrorism that is different for acts of terror committed by Muslims than by non-Muslims. This pattern associates Islam with terrorism, and hence creating a fear of the “other”. Saeed (2007) also argued that British Muslims are portrayed as an ‘alien other’ in the media. This misrepresentation can be associated with the development of Islamophobia that has its roots in cultural representations of the ‘other’. Saeed further argued that the treatment of British Muslims and Islam follows the themes of ‘deviance’ and ‘un-Britishness’. In actual fact, the media present negative images of Muslims and Islam.

Powell’s study examined 11 terrorist incidents from 2011 to 2016, to determine if any changes in media coverage of terrorism have occurred in a climate of increased awareness of Islamophobia. The study found that the media continue to frame domestic terrorism as isolated incidents of troubled individuals, and “Islamic” terrorism as a larger problem from Muslims connected to international terror groups. This kind of “unequal reporting increases viewership while simultaneously allowing current perceptions about Islam and terrorism to continue” (Nickerson 2019, p. 547). Jahedi, Abdullah, and Mukundan (2014) also noted that the dominant mass media tend to marginalize the ‘Other’ and misrepresent the events regarding Islam and Muslims.

Nickerson (2019) ascertained whether the media reinforce a false synonym between Muslims and terrorism. Specifically, the study focused on news framing bias and how this bias impacts the portrayal of terrorism and Muslims through politically and emotionally charged discourse. Nickerson considered terrorist events in France and Turkey, analyzing the U.S media’s portrayal of these events to uncover what elements journalists select, emphasize, and deemphasize in countries with predominantly Muslim and non-Muslim populations. The study found that “news media framing utilizes biased, negative imagery, portraying the events in these countries in a way that reinforces current prejudices against Muslims, even when Muslims are themselves the victims” (p. 547).

A few studies focused specifically on the use of terms in Islam-related news (e.g. Allen, 2012; Hassan et al., 2017; Moore, Mason, & Lewis, 2008). These studies found that Islam-related terms are mostly used in a negative context, which might create negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims. For example, Moore et al. (2008) studied the language used in British media in relation to Islam and Muslims. The study found that the language used about British Muslims reflects negative or problematic contexts. According to the study, “the most common nouns used in relation to British Muslims were terrorist, extremist, Islamist, suicide bomber and militant with very few positive nouns (such as ‘scholar’)” (p. 3). The findings further showed that the most common adjectives used were radical, fanatical, fundamentalist, extremist and militant, portraying more threatening versions of Islam than to moderate Islam. Indeed, the media make more references to radical Muslims than moderate Muslims (Allen, 2012).

Terms such as “terrorist”, “fundamentalist” and “blood-thirsty” are over-generally used terminologies ascribed to Muslims (Nurullah, 2010; Ridouani, 2011). According to Mohideen and Mohideen (2008), expressions such as “Islamic terrorism”, “Islamic fanaticism”, “Muslim extremists”, “Islamist and political Islam” have been pejoratively used in the media. In addition,
words and phrases constitute part of texts which convey messages and ideas. In this regard, Hassan, et al. (2020) argued that “the media’s tendency to associate Islam with terrorism depends largely on the manner in which the news story is constructed” (p. 173). Reynolds (2015) found that negative words and phrases are significantly used in news coverage of Islam and Muslims. As a result of the distortion of words’ meaning, the media reinforce stereotypes and negative images of Islam.

Previous studies highlight a number of consistent themes, showing that the nature of some news media reporting has reinforced stereotypical representations of Islam and has portrayed Muslims as different, strange, threatening and inferior. Very few studies have examined Muslims’ reactions to the negative representation of Islam in the mass media. For instance, Ewart et al. (2017) explored the attitudes of Muslims to news media coverage of Islam and Muslims by drawing on data from focus group discussions conducted with Australian Muslims. The findings revealed that Australian Muslims are highly critical of news media coverage of Islam and Muslims and express concern about the divisiveness that such portrayal can have for the society. Studies focusing directly on Muslims’ responses to news stories about Muslims and Islam have identified that attitudes toward news coverage of Islam tend to be negative (Ewart et al., 2017).

Similarly, very few studies reported positive coverage of Islam in the media. For example, Hassan and Sabli (2018) focused on how Islamic teachings are portrayed in non-Islamic films. The study found that the representation of Islamic teachings in films has been explained through the depiction of performing prayers, reading Quran, covering Aurah and kindness towards parents. The study showed that non-Islamic films play a role of highlighting positive images and teachings of Islam for the benefit of the society. Another study assessed more than 800,000 articles between 1996 and 2016 in a range of British, American, Canadian, and Australian newspapers (Bleich et al., 2018). The findings showed that articles touching upon devotion in Islam are not negative at all. In essence, if the media “strive to provide a more balanced portrayal of Muslims and Islam within their pages, they may seek opportunities to include more frequent mentions of Muslim devotion” (Bleich et al., 2018, p. 247).

In sum, previous research on the news coverage of Islam has generally found evidence for negative bias. Generalizations and stereotypes were the commonly identified problems with news coverage of Islam, which result in the association of Islam and Muslims with terrorism coupled with repeated negative labelling of Muslims. A meta-analysis conducted by Ahmed and Matthes (2017) found that a large majority of studies on media discourse on Islam covered western countries and there is a lack of comparative research in this research area. Therefore, this study investigates the controversial Islam-related terminologies in mass media discourse on terrorism, focusing on the eastern and the western mass media.

**Theoretical Approach**

This study is guided by Halliday’s Systematic Functional Linguistic (SFL) theory. SFL “studies the functional and situational organization of language in the social context” (Halliday & Hasan, 1985, p. 11). Thus, the theory presumes that language is inseparable from texts while cultural and social contexts of discourse affect the linguistic interpretations. SFL enables researchers and linguists to analyze written or spoken discourses. In SFL, the core element
interpretation is meaning rather than the structure and every act of language is an act of meaning (Halliday, 2013). Halliday’s SFL theory has been used to interpret various texts in relation to social and political contexts (Sharififar & Rahimi, 2015). Some studies used this theory to investigate the media portrayal of Islam in general (Jahedi et al., 2014; Farhat, 2016) while studies focusing on Islam-related terms employed news framing analysis (Hassan et al., 2017). This study considered SFL because Islam-related terminologies could be best understood in context since words and context are inseparable.

The functional aspect of language cannot be neglected as it is an essential element for understanding language and its implications. Function is interpreted not just in relation “the use of language but as a fundamental property of the language itself, something that is basic to the evolution of semantic system” (Halliday & Hasan, 1985, p. 17). Language in SLF is “a semiotic system” (p. 12) specified to humans. System and function are fundamental elements of language in SFL theory. The system entailed two distinctive properties: 1) syntactic relations of word combinations and their order; and 2) paradigmatic relations that focus on word choice. The multi-options of words are chosen to produce a well-organized and meaningful discourse that serves purposively the required goals. These words, phrases, and clauses generate sentences, paragraphs, and texts which convey messages and ideas.

SFL theory presumes that meanings imply choice, the components of language make meanings and that various settings and contexts influence meanings and may reshape people’s thoughts and their final judgments of a certain topic. In media discourse on terrorism, phrases such as “Islamic extremist” or “Islamic violence” are understood differently (Hassan et al., 2017). SFL theory views languages as establishing “social semiotic” frameworks affected by the social, physical, cognitive, interpersonal, situational and cultural context (Haratyan, 2011). These functions are categorized under three meta-functions: ideational semantic, relational semantic and textual semantic:

1. The ideational meaning is concerned with establishing grammatical resources to construe and interpret the inner and outer experience of the world. A clause is the representative part of this experience that helps to draw a mental image of reality under six processes (Halliday, 2004): material, mental, relational, behavioral, verbal, and existential.
2. Relational meaning is associated with the relationship between the speaker(s) and the addressee(s). It is used to establish the speaker’s role and attitude in the speech situation and the relationship with others under the mood and modality systems (Almurashi, 2016).
3. The textual meaning is concerned with the creation of text with the existence of both ideational and relational meanings to describe its theme structure in written and spoken discourses.

Since language is inseparable from texts (Halliday, 2013) and forms an integral part of news construction (Hassan et al., 2017), communication researchers use content analysis to study media messages. Content analysis allows researchers to systematically analyze news contents and enables familiarity with texts as well as provides valid inferences from the texts ((Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).
Methodology

This study employed content analysis to systematically explore a more detailed picture of how Islam-related terminologies are used in eastern and western mass media discourse on terrorism. Content analysis is recognized as a useful and well-established approach particularly in analyzing news products (MacNamara, 2005; Arthur, 2012; Willnat, Weaver, & Choi, 2013). Though the initial stage of data collection and coding represents qualitative approach, the data were systematically quantified and analyzed (Winter, 2000).

Data Collection

Islam-related articles were collected from the eastern and the western mass media. Using purposive sampling technique, one broadcast media outlet and one print media outlet were chosen from each region respectively. BBC and The Guardian represent the western media while The Jordan Times and Al-Jazeera represent the eastern mass media. Only Islam-related articles published in the selected newspapers between March 2018 and October 2019 were selected and analyzed. The articles were chosen based on headlines and texts using internet-based search from the websites of the respective media outlets. To search for relevant articles, “Islam” and “Muslims” were used as keywords. On the basis of this research considerations, units of analysis represent Islam-related terminologies from the selected newspapers, consisting of single expressions of words and compound words. This was done to explore how Islam-related terms are used in the selected media outlets.

Coding and Data Analysis

Coding is the process of converting raw data into usable data through identification of concepts or ideas that share some common features (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). In this study, the selected articles were carefully read to identify Islam-related terminologies. A total of 20 different terms were identified. Subsequently, the frequency of these terms was obtained separately using AntConc software which is commonly used for linguistic analysis. The linguistic interpretation involves choice of lexical words (both single or compound) and their contexts of use. In addition, the findings are discussed using the SFL theory as a key theoretical procedure (Halliday & Hasan, 1985; Haratyan, 2011; Halliday, 2013).

Findings

The selected media outlets produced a large number of related articles (368) within the period of data collection. The eastern media (Aljazeera and The Jordan Times) published 109 Islam-related articles while the western media (BBC and The Guardian) published 259. The overall articles were considered during the process of identifying the Islam-related terminologies, which were subsequently analyzed based on frequency and connotations RQ1 asks “what are the difference between the eastern and the western mass media in using Islam-related terminologies?” Table One tabulates these differences.

Table 1. Frequency of Islam-related terminologies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Terminology</th>
<th>Eastern media Freq. (%)</th>
<th>Western media Freq. (%)</th>
<th>Total Freq. (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Islamist</td>
<td>6(30.0)</td>
<td>83(48.0)</td>
<td>89(46.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table One, a total of 193 different Islam-related terms are used in the selected mass media. Significant differences ($P < 0.05$) exist between the selected eastern and western mass media outlets in using Islam-related terms. The terms are used eight times more in the western media (173) than in the eastern media (20). A total of nine different terminologies, including Islamic extremist, Islamic militancy, and Islamic extremism appeared only in the western mass media. Nevertheless, only three terms – Islamic movement, Islamic incarnations, and Muslim attackers – appeared only in the eastern media. After the 9/11 attacks in the United States, Islam-related terminologies of terrorism became increasingly used in the media, mostly focusing on violence, murder, and massacres. Though there are a series of processes involved in news production, journalists play the most significant role and have a great responsibility for the frequent use of these Islam-related terms (Hassan et al., 2017). According to the findings of Reynolds (2015), negative phrases are significantly used in news coverage of Islam and Muslims.

It is also clear from Table One that the most frequently used Islam-related terminologies in the chosen articles are “Islamist” and “Jihadist”. The term “Islamist” which appeared 89 times in the overall articles, represents the most commonly used Islam-related terminology in the selected media. The term constitutes almost half (46.1%) of the overall terminologies used in the selected eastern and western mass media. Logically, the findings reveal that the term is more commonly used in the western media (48%) than in the eastern media (30%). Similarly, Hassan et al. (2017) found that the most commonly used terms in non-western media are “Islamist”, “militants”, and “radical Islam”. These terms may imply negative connotations in the audience’s mind-sets and

### Table One: Frequencies of Islam-related Terminologies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Eastern Media</th>
<th>Western Media</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jihadist</td>
<td>1(5.0)</td>
<td>42(24.3)</td>
<td>43(22.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jihad</td>
<td>4(20.0)</td>
<td>12(7.0)</td>
<td>16(8.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allahu Akbar</td>
<td>2(10.0)</td>
<td>7(4.0)</td>
<td>9(4.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Extremist</td>
<td>0(0.0)</td>
<td>4(2.3)</td>
<td>4(2.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic militancy</td>
<td>0(0.0)</td>
<td>4(2.3)</td>
<td>4(2.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic extremism</td>
<td>0(0.0)</td>
<td>4(2.3)</td>
<td>4(2.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim extremist</td>
<td>1(5.0)</td>
<td>3(1.7)</td>
<td>4(2.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical Islam</td>
<td>1(5.0)</td>
<td>2(1.2)</td>
<td>3(1.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic group</td>
<td>0(0.0)</td>
<td>2(1.2)</td>
<td>2(1.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic terror</td>
<td>0(0.0)</td>
<td>2(1.2)</td>
<td>2(1.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic terrorism</td>
<td>0(0.0)</td>
<td>2(1.2)</td>
<td>2(1.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic militant</td>
<td>0(0.0)</td>
<td>2(1.2)</td>
<td>2(1.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim terrorist</td>
<td>1(5.0)</td>
<td>1(0.6)</td>
<td>2(1.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic movement</td>
<td>2(10.0)</td>
<td>0(0.0)</td>
<td>2(1.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic ideology</td>
<td>0(0.0)</td>
<td>1(0.6)</td>
<td>1(0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic incarnations</td>
<td>1(5.0)</td>
<td>0(0.0)</td>
<td>1(0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic militant activity</td>
<td>0(0.0)</td>
<td>1(0.6)</td>
<td>1(0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic radicalization</td>
<td>0(0.0)</td>
<td>1(0.6)</td>
<td>1(0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim attackers</td>
<td>1(5.0)</td>
<td>0(0.0)</td>
<td>1(0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20(100)</strong></td>
<td><strong>173(100)</strong></td>
<td><strong>193(100)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$P = 0.000$ ($P < 0.05$)
carry different interpretations. Textual analysis requires analyzing the language functions used in the texts to examine their meanings in contexts. RQ2 asks “how do the eastern and the western mass media use Islam-related terminologies in terms of context and connotation? Figure 1 depicts how the selected media use Islam-related terminologies.

![Figure 1](image.png)

Figure 1. Context of Islam-related terminologies

As depicted in Figure One, the most frequently used Islamic-related terminology “Islamist” is used alongside extremism, terrorism, violence, and militancy. This indicates that the selected media outlets use Islam-related terms in negative contexts and connotations. Accordingly, the term “Islamist” itself connotes “terrorism” as used in the selected news articles. This is because, in the selected articles, Islamists are likely to be mentioned in the context of terrorism. For example, on 4th June 2018, BBC reports “security services expect the threat from Islamist terror to remain at its current heightened level of "severe" for at least another two years” (Terror strategy, 2018, p. 3). Another report in The Guardian stated that “a global Islamist extremist movement that continues to pose a significant threat” (Burke, 2019, p. 1). These reports indicate that the word “Islamist” is mostly used in place of “terrorist” in the selected media outlets. These findings are consistent with most of the previous studies (Mohideen & Mohideen, 2008; Reynolds, 2015). Words are used to reveal the feelings or attitudes of a writer (Hasits, 2007).

On 3rd June 2018, The Guardian reported “Britain faces a severe threat from Islamist terrorism” (Press Association, 2018, p. 1). This kind of expression might create the impression that Islam is a threat to peace. Similarly, Mohideen and Mohideen (2008) found that words such as “Islamic terrorism” have been pejoratively used in the media. Studies have conceptually defined media as indirectly having an influence on audience perceptions of Islam through the use of Islam-related terms (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Theodore, 2003; Hassan et al., 2017). The power of using adjectives can never be underestimated. They could be used either consciously or unconsciously. If used unconsciously, adjectives could change the intended meaning into a different connotation. For example, when the adjective “Islamic” is used with the noun “terrorism”, the act of terror is associated with Islam, and thereby it indirectly creates a negative image of Islam.
From the above-mentioned considerations, it appears that Islam-related terminologies are powerful enough to generate different interpretations in the audience mind-sets.

Another issue is related to the inappropriate use of the term “Allahu Akbar”. This term which is considered holy amongst the Muslims is mostly perceived as an ‘evil word’ especially by the non-Muslims. For example, consider what Al-Jazeera quoted from the Chinese political declaration “The White Paper” “They screamed the evil words of ‘getting into heaven by martyrdom with jihad’ (China says, 2019, p. 3). This expression is emotionally negative and has the tendency of generating hatred rather than promoting peace. According to Hassan et al. (2017), “The manner in which language is utilized in media discourse on Islam needs serious attention” (p. 237). Similarly, Moore et al. (2008) found that the language used in reporting Islam reflects negative or problematic contexts.

It should be noted some words are used neutrally in the selected articles by identifying the perpetrators by their names or nationality other than religion. Examples of such neutral expressions used in the selected articles include the news reported by Al-Jazeera on 27th April 2019, stating that “police hunted for people linked to Mohamed Hashim Mohamed Zahran, who has been named as the ringleader of the Easter Sunday bombings” (Relatives of suicide, 2019, p. 2). The same newspaper identified terrorist groups by their names “a man was killed in a rampage that police said was inspired by the Islamic State and the Levant group (Australia police, 2018, p. 1)”. In the above statements, the verbs “said” is used to attribute the information to the police as a news source. This is probably because the writers tried to objective in the news writing process. These findings are consistent with a few studies that found positive or neutral portrayal of Islam and Muslims in the media (Bleich et al., 2018; Hassan & Sabli, 2018).

Discussion of Findings
This study has compared the use of Islam-related terminologies in the eastern and the western mass media using content analysis, as a research method, and Halliday’s SFL theory. As presumed by SFL theory, language serves as a social semiotic system and any act of communication involves choices (Halliday, 2003; Halliday, 2004; Feng, 2008). Based on this central theoretical principle, the present study investigated the use of Islam-related terminologies in the eastern and the western mass media discourse on terrorism. This is because, as postulated by the theory, the choice of words and context as well as language construction in Islam-related news depend mainly on the decisions of journalists and editors. Because language is functional (Halliday, 2004), making linguistic choices of words and expressions could play an important role in manipulating Islam-related news either intentionally or unintentionally.

The findings of this study showed that Islam-related terminologies used in the eastern and the western mass media discourse on terrorism are used in negative context. This could be seen in using adjectives such as ‘Islamic’, ‘Jihadist’, and ‘Islamist’ to describe the terrorists. This is consistent with the findings reported in the previous studies (Mohideen, & Mohideen, 2008; Moore et al., 2008; Allen, 2012; Hassan et al., 2017). Mohideen and Mohideen (2008) found that many offensive terms, such as fascist, fanatical, radical, hardline, militant Islam co-occur before “Islam”. The word “Muslim” is used after “militant” and before “terrorists” as in “militant Muslims and Muslim terrorists”. Based on the assumptions of SFL Theory, writers are responsible for the choice
of words in their communication with the audience (Halliday, 2004), and therefore journalists and editors could be held responsible for the negative use of Islam-related terms in news coverage of Islam.

The negative use of Islam-related terminologies is related to word choice based on the journalists’ personal judgment or prejudices which could be influential in the process of news writing and construction. Gradually, the negative use of Islam-related terms results in negative perception of Islam. According to Mohideen and Mohideen (2008), expressions such as “Islamic terrorism”, “Islamic fanaticism”, “Muslim extremists”, “Islamist and political Islam” have been pejoratively used in the media. The most frequently used words to describe Muslims in the media include “terrorist”, “extremist”, “Islamist”, “fundamentalist” and “militant” (Moore et al., 2008; Nurullah, 2010; Ridouani, 2011). These words are critical in Islam-related news construction because “one of the major factors that contribute to the media’s negative portrayal of Islam is their selection of words to describe Muslims” (Hassan et al, 2020, p. 167).

This study could advance the public’s understanding of the media representation of Islam and Muslims by paying particular attention to the use of controversial Islam-related terminologies in the media. A large majority of studies on media discourse on Islam focused on the western media per se and there is a lack of comparative research in this research area (Ahmed & Matthes, 2017) while very few relevant studies focused on the media in Muslim-majority nations (Hassan et al., 2017). Another contribution lies in the application of Halliday’s SFL theory, which offers an opportunity to study this phenomenon with particular attention to media language and interactional discourse (Halliday, 2004).

Language and religion form the three domains of any society as they are concerned with the context and aims of human existence (Pratt, 2006). These inseparable domains are stretched together to establish a system of life for nations. The righteous expressive language is used to convince people of religious teachings and political limits. This is because language does not only encompass words and sentences but also consists of interactional discourse (Halliday, 1978). Unfortunately, the mass media, with their dynamic influence, use Islam-related terms in a negative context (Hassan et al., 2017). As a result, the image of Islam tends to be negatively framed in the media. In sum, the findings reported in this study demonstrated that Islam-related terminologies are negatively used in the eastern and the western mass media discourse on terrorism. Based on the assumption of SFL theory, journalists could be held responsible for the negative use of Islam-related terms in news coverage of Islam. This is because the negative use of Islam-related terminologies is related to word choice based on the journalists’ personal judgments.

Conclusion

This study investigated the use of Islam-related terminologies in the eastern and the western mass media discourse on terrorism. To the best of the researchers’ knowledge, this study serves as the first attempt to adopt SFL theory to specifically investigate the phenomenon of Islam-related terms in relation to news coverage of Islam. It was found that significant differences exist between the selected mass media outlets in using Islam-related terminologies. The most frequently used Islam-related terminologies in the chosen mass media are “Islamist” and “Jihadist”. These terms were found to be used mostly in negative contexts. As used in the chosen media, the term “Islamist”
A Pragmatic Analysis of Islam-related Terminologies

Younes, Hassan & Azmi

is used alongside extremism, terrorism, violence, and militancy. Halliday’s SFL theory, which guided this study, offers an opportunity to study this phenomenon based on the assumptions that any act of communication involves choices, text is inseparable from context, and language does not only encompass words and sentences but also consists of interactional discourse (Halliday, 2004).

In addition, journalists and editors bear great responsibility for the negative use of Islam-related terminologies. Though news articles generally follow a sequence of editing processes, at times, copies pass through almost unchanged and finally published. The negative use of Islam-related terms could be minimized through training of journalists on the coverage of religious news, provision of proper guidelines on covering issues involving religion and ensuring that the guidelines are strictly followed. Institutions concerned with journalism education should also give consideration to how they can develop a comprehensive curriculum on religious literacy in their programs. In fact, if the mass media are properly regulated in matters concerning religion, peace and harmony are likely to be promoted.

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References


Promoting Students’ Intercultural Communicative Competence through English Literary Texts: Students’ Attitudes and Teachers’ Challenges

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Abstract
The focal aim of the current paper is to take an in-depth look at the effect of the English culture on foreign language learners. In this regard, the researchers inquire about how intercultural communication affects English as a foreign language (EFL) students during the process of learning English literary texts carrying aspects of the target culture. This study, thus, endeavours at shedding light on students’ attitudes towards some aspects of the English culture when studying literary texts. It also intends at scrutinizing teachers’ strategies in teaching culture through literature; referring to their active roles in fostering intercultural awareness and Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) among their learners. To do so, the researchers collected data through a questionnaire addressed to forty first-year Master students of Literature and Civilization in the department of English at Tlemcen University supported by an interview with teachers of literature. The findings revealed that most students exhibit negative attitudes towards some aspects of the English culture when studying literature. Their responses demonstrate that they are unaware and ignore the differences between cultures i.e., they are not culturally competent enough to avoid intercultural clash within various lectures of literature. The results also showed that teachers peacefully attempt to provide the appropriate teaching techniques and strategies to integrate teaching culture through literary texts to foster tolerance and empathy with speakers’ target language, identity, and culture.

Keywords: Literary Texts, English culture, Communicative Competence, Foreign language students, Attitudes.

DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol11no2.7
1. Introduction

Monocultural individuals are almost limited in number, with the rapid and accelerating emergence of multicultural societies, mainly due to interpersonal and, thus, intercultural communication. Hence, language and culture, as two primordial key-concepts, can no more be subject to one particular discipline; a person’s belief and vision is more and more getting larger under the notion of “global community.” This has, indeed, led to the emergence of multicultural individuals and communities as well. This matter peacefully invites teachers of EFL learners to diagnose the possibility of a systematic and careful conciliation between the English culture and different languages within an interdisciplinary approach, which may narrow the scope of divergences and help in promoting students’ Intercultural Communicative Competence.

This approach aims at shedding light on students’ attitudes towards some aspects of the target culture when studying literary texts and on teachers’ strategies in teaching culture through literature, referring to their useful roles in fostering intercultural awareness and ICC among EFL students. In this vein, two significant research sub-questions have been formulated:

1. When teaching English literature, what attitudes do students display towards aspects of the target culture?
2. What possible solutions can students be supplied with to avoid such an intercultural clash?

In an attempt to find answers to the raised research questions, the following hypotheses have been put forward:

1. Students may display negative attitudes towards some aspects of the English culture when studying literature due to their low level of ICC and non-awareness and ignorance of the differences between cultures.
2. Literature teachers can play a vital role in ICC teaching to both spread tolerance and empathy through adopting adequate strategies to peacefully integrate teaching culture through literature.

In this investigation, the researchers relied on both quantitative and qualitative research instruments, in addition to a brief overview of the similar key concepts, which are thought to be helpful in the data analysis and interpretation.

2. Related Literature Overview
   a. Cultural Awareness and Communication

Culture, from an anthropological standpoint, refers to the full range of learned human behavior patterns, including knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, customs, and habits acquired by speakers in a society (Tylor, 1871). Getting insight into others’ cultures within this globalized world needs that one should be tolerant and empathetic so that a successful cross-cultural communication would occur. Foreign language students are not, unfortunately, bicultural as they spend years learning the target language far from the members of its society and without living actually in that culture. They are, then, incapable of communicating effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations (Deardorff, 2006; Chen & Starosta, 1999). This fact is obviously
embodied in the negative attitudes they display towards the others’ aspects of culture because they are not culturally competent enough to avoid the intercultural clash.

For the previously stated disaccord, ICC, thus, has been endorsed by many prominent educational organizations worldwide (ACTFL, 2006; Council of Europe, 2001; UNESCO, 2009). Moreover, due to the abundant use of English as a global language to communicate with other people coming from various cultural backgrounds, the necessity of integrating culture in language teaching in general, and teaching English in particular, gained much interest around the world. Consequently, ICC and cultural awareness have been widely recommended to “help learners to interact with speakers of other languages on equal terms, and to be aware of their own identities and those of their interlocutors.” (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002, p.7). This implies that developing cultural awareness aids in effective communication. In this respect, many educators and scholars, such as Agar (1994) and Kramcsh (2000), emphasized on the fact that ICC has become an integral component in EFL classroom, and that culture is conceived as “the very core of language teaching”. (p. 8)

b. ICC and EFL Teaching

It is widely recognized in the language teaching profession that learners need not just knowledge and mastery in the grammar of a language, but also the capacity to use that language in socially and culturally appropriate ways Byram, et al. (2002, P. 7). This was the chief innovation of ‘communicative language teaching’. In this essence, language instructors have always been mediators between cultures as the culture of the users of the target language has not to be eliminated or denied in the EFL teaching and learning processes. As a reaction to previous approaches, Communicative Language Teaching, as stated in Hymes’ theory in 1972, aims at developing learners’ capacities at using the target language effectively and fluently (Hymes, 1972, p. 60; Brown, D. 2000, p. 246). This approach emphasizes on enhancing communicative competence as the prime goal of language teaching and, thus, introduces the 'Intercultural Dimension' into the aims of language teaching.

The 'intercultural dimension' in language teaching aims to develop learners as intercultural speakers or mediators who can engage with complexity and multiple identities, and to avoid the stereotyping which accompanies perceiving someone through a single identity. Intercultural communication must be built based on the respect of others’ identities. Therefore, language teaching following an intercultural dimension promotes learners to acquire the linguistic competence needed to communicate in speaking in front of interlocutors and writing in appropriate ways. It also ensures a mutual understanding among people of different languages and social identities, values, beliefs, and behaviors.

3. Research Design and Methodology
a. Sampling

The data come from a sample of forty students of first-year Master level from the English department at Tlemcen University, Algeria. The students’ specialty was English Literature, of course, as the last is the researchers’ primary fieldwork. The students’ age ranges from 21 to 24 years old mixed in terms of gender. Moreover, twelve English language teachers of literature have been selected from the same university and department.
b. Research Instruments

The current research work relies mostly on quantitative and qualitative research tools for data collection. The data needed in this fieldwork are collected utilizing questionnaires and interviews, which are used to elicit data explicitly from the informants. Two research tools are used to yield more valid and authentic data. In this investigation, questionnaires are addressed to students to test the first hypothesis. It consists of six questions that are mixed. Both close-ended and open-ended questions are used. It is outlined to evoke the students’ attitudes towards some aspects of the English culture on the one hand. The interview, on the other hand, is conducted with teachers. It is devoted to checking the second hypothesis. Its primary purpose is to examine the possible solutions and strategies used by teachers for avoiding such an intercultural clash in EFL classrooms. It consists of two main parts. The first part contributes to providing teacher’s personal information, particularly; their gender, degree, as well as period of their teaching experience. The second part, however, attempts to explore affluent details about how EFL learners can develop ICC, taking into account teachers’ strategies to promote ICC among learners.

c. Data Presentation and Analysis

In this section, the results are systematically exposed. They are treated both quantitatively and qualitatively to validate our research hypotheses

- **Questionnaire: Students’ Attitudes towards the English culture**

  Q1: How many years have you been studying English? And how do you evaluate your level in English?

  When the students were asked about how many years they have been studying English, their responses ranged from ten to thirteen years. Whereas when asked to evaluate their level in this language, the following results have been gathered:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Bad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

  Q2: Why did you choose English to be studied at university?
  The central answers turn around the following statements:
  - English is the world gate.
  - I love English literature.
  - It is my favorite foreign language.
  - I was excellent at it at school.
  - I need it for work or when traveling abroad.

  Q3: Is it essential to learn the English culture? Why?
  When the informants were asked whether it is essential to learn English or not, the following answers are given:
Table 2. Importance Degree of Learning the English Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>57.5%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the answers ranged between ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree.’ When they were asked why, they presented these justifications:

- It is something good to learn about others’ cultures and customs.
- It helps to learn more about the language and how to use it according to specific situations.
- It is vital to have an overview about international culture.
- Living in a globalized world, language becomes a weapon to stand in front of the wonders and to keep up with the world’s civilization. Nowadays, it is crucial to learn English.
- Because language and culture are correlated, one cannot fully understand the English idioms without knowing the English literature. I believe that language and culture are complementary.

Q4: Do you have a module within your studies that helps you get the English culture?
The majority of the students (88%) said ‘yes,’ whereas only 12% answered ‘no.’ The modules cited by them are as follows: civilization, literature, oral expression, American studies, in addition to cultural studies.

Q5: To what extent do literary texts help you to develop your cultural awareness?
This question has been answered by only 63% of the informants. The other informants, however, proposed no answer. The suggested responses can appear below:

- Literary texts help us to know more about the cultural background of each era we deal with and for me, it is the vivid representation of culture.
- They really provide a strong basis for various ideologies for different cultures.
- They help a lot because they represent a specific vision and image about specific areas and specific group of people.
- To understand cultural boundaries within a literary text, one must be aware of the different disciplines in literature. However, while reading, we capture some cultural nuances that widen your way of thinking.

Q6: Have you ever had any negative attitudes about certain aspects of culture in lectures of literature? If yes, cite about what?

When the informants were asked about having any negative attitudes towards certain aspects of culture in literature lectures, 20% of the students did not answer. They said neither ‘yes’ nor ‘no.’ 28.5% of the respondents said ‘no’ while 51.5% of them stated ‘yes.’ Those who said ’yes’, they were asked to cite about what. Redundantly their answers can appear in the statements below:

- Some cultures are known for racism and discrimination towards a specific group of people.
• In some lectures that we have dealt with, we have noticed some harmful aspects like rationalism in the European culture as well as the difference between social classes and customs in society.
• Sometimes, I disagree with some messages and themes conveyed by some literary works. I usually embrace what makes sense to me.
• Sometimes it is negative when we study a specific period or literary period that contains many rules and aspects that should be followed to give a particular shape to a culture based on the literary period.

• Interview: Teachers’ Strategies to avoid the intercultural clash

Q1: To what extent do you support integrating English culture in ELT classrooms?

Answering these questions, the teachers proposed the following responses:
• Indeed, integrating the English culture helps understand the context of the poem, for example. It also clarifies better the interpretation of the text as meant by the author.
• I fully support including Anglo-Saxon culture and even English-Speaking African and Asian cultures for students of English language.
• Culture and language are two sides of the same coin. They are intertwined. I do actively support teaching the cultural load of language.
• Insist the maximum to integrate English culture in EFL classrooms because to master any language, you should learn it in its real context.

Q2: While teaching some aspects of culture, how do you find your students’ reactions?

• Students are interested and eager to know about them.
• It depends on their knowledge about it; sometimes, they react usually. Other times, they are astonished and ask questions.
• They react positively, especially when we tackle love stories as Shakespearian’s sonnet. Whereas, I feel them lost when tackling religious ones as Milton’s Paradise Most and Regained.
• EFL students enjoy uncovering the different aspects of the target culture.
• Students nowadays are widely aware of differences in culture and quite familiar with Western cultures.

Q3: While teaching some literary texts, have you ever encountered an intercultural clash?

When the participants were asked if they ever encountered an intercultural clash while teaching some literary texts, all teachers (100%) said ‘Yes.’ When they were asked to explain about what and why, the following responses have been found:

• Just recently, I am confronted with alien texts about the LGBT community, and this causes aggravated annoyance.
• Students are shocked about women’s position in the dark ages in Britain because Muslim women lived a better life at that time. Things about witchcraft also shock them.
• When it concerns questions of faith and religion, especially when dealing with sexual topics. This is because some students assume that getting insight into the target culture may threaten their identity.
• Texts like Shakespeare’s plays, Othello, Antony, and Cleopatra give a negative aspect to non-European characters.

Q4: Do you give your learners the right to talk about their cross-cultural viewpoints?
Yes
No
All the teachers stated ‘yes’.

Q5: Do you think that your students are intercultural competent enough to avoid cross-cultural clash?
Yes
No
In this question, 58.33% of the teachers said ‘Yes’, 33.33% said ‘No.’ While the rest of them (8.34%) confirmed that it depends on the students’ preferences and background.

Q6: What level of cross-cultural awareness is needed for an EFL learner to develop Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)?
• Students should be encouraged to develop critical thinking and not take stereotypes for granted.
• Students need advanced levels of intercultural communicative competence to avoid and handle culture shock.
• At least, a basic one will help them to avoid cultural clashes.

Q7: What materials/techniques do you opt for to teach ICC?
The primary materials and techniques cited by the teachers are films, videos, virtual seminars with native students, literary texts, songs, excerpts and quotes from cultural criticism or history books as well as online documents.

Q8: What guidelines should be taken into account to promote ICC among your learners?
• Open-mindedness.
• To expose more to the target culture.
4. Discussion of the Main Results

The present paper provided us a closer picture about the effect of the target culture on foreign language students. The findings revealed that the majority of first-year master students have negative attitudes towards some aspects of the English culture when studying literature. Their responses explain clearly that they are unaware of and ignore the differences between cultures. They are, in fact, not culturally competent enough to avoid intercultural clash within various sessions of literature.

Meanwhile, teachers usually attempt to look for the appropriate solutions and strategies to avoid such intercultural clash. Teachers are, indeed, a very active component in the classroom. They should adopt suitable peaceful techniques and procedures to integrate teaching culture through literature. They should teach their learners to be more tolerant and empathetic when interacting directly or indirectly with speakers of other languages, identities, or cultures. Thus, it can be said that enhancing cultural awareness helps the process of teaching the English language effectively and promotes students’ ICC deeply.

5. Conclusion

The intercultural dimension in teaching foreign languages has become a primordial concern for both teachers and students to communicate appropriately and effectively in intercultural contact contexts. This dimension puts much emphasis on effective cross-cultural communication that is based on the acquisition of ICC. To wrap this study up, the issue of acquiring ICC among EFL learners remains a sensitive topic that needs further future research. As the researchers suggested, students must develop a sense of tolerance and acceptance of others’ cultures, so their attitudes have to be changed so that they can avoid the intercultural clash. Teachers in general, and Literature Teachers, in particular, are required to play an active role in promoting and fostering their learners’ ICC through the adoption of suitable techniques, guidelines, and strategies to integrate culture in language teaching.

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References
Preparatory Learners’ Perspectives of Learner Autonomy in the Saudi Context

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Abstract
Learner autonomy is a developing concept that has been the focal point of number of research papers investigating language learning. It has been under investigation by number of scholars and researchers over the years, the concept of learner autonomy has been supported by number of researchers, others attempted to prove that it does not fit all learners of different backgrounds. In this research paper, the focus is mainly on learners’ perspectives of learner autonomy, what do they know? To what extent the students understand the concept of learner autonomy? Developing autonomous learners is an area that needs to be explained. There are limited studies conducted in the Saudi context therefore, this study investigates Preparatory year female EFL students’ perspectives of learner autonomy in the Saudi context. Moreover, it examines whether the learners have the knowledge and the competence to develop their learning. The perspectives and views of 150 learners were collected using a questionnaire. The study follows a mixed methods approach. The reviewed literature showed that implications of learner autonomy reflected positively on learners (Burkert & Schwienhorst. 2008; Han, 2015). The main findings of this study revealed that students participated in this study had negative perspective of learner autonomy.

Keywords: Autonomous learning, EFL learners’ perspective, Learner Autonomy, Saudi context

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1. Introduction

It is crucial to develop or select a language learning concept that enables learners to take responsibility of their own learning. Teachers can only be part of the process not a source that learners would depend entirely on. Literature has presented number of pedagogical approaches to help improve the language learning process, however it mostly focused on techniques and strategies that teachers need to adopt or apply. On the other hand, learner autonomy is a concept that shifts the focus towards learners more. It supports the idea that learners should take part and responsibility in their own learning. Holec (1979), is known to be the father of learner autonomy. Holec (1979,1981). was one of the very first researchers to believe in the concept and established number of published work to support and promote learner autonomy.

Constant change in the field of language learning and developing new approaches and concepts have always been the focus of researchers and scholars everywhere. However, the focus has always been on teachers and how can they support learners and improve the language learning process. Learner autonomy shifts this attention and focus toward learners and how much of the learning responsibility are they willing to take upon themselves. It examines learners’ knowledge, perspectives and challenges that they may face when adopting such concept. It is based on the notion that language learners develop their abilities individually, therefore they need to put the effort to achieve what they aim to achieve on their own. Researchers believed in the positive effect of adopting a learning concept such as learner autonomy (Little, 1995; Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Asmari, 2013). Other studies provided results to support and promote learner autonomy such as (e.g., Camilleri, 1999; Candy, 1991; Al Arabai, 2017).

With all of this support in literature, it is still considered a new concept for Saudi learners as they believe strongly in teachers’ role more than their own (Ho & Crookall, 1995). Therefore, there is a gap in literature for this particular context. The problem of the research study is the limitation in literature in the field of learner autonomy specifically in the Arab context. Therefore, examining learners’ perspectives, knowledge and challenges is the main focus of this study. Acknowledging the importance of learners’ roles in promoting learner autonomous is the objective of this study, it aims to examine learners' knowledge of learner autonomy in the current situation. It also aims to explore learners’ perspectives of learner autonomy and the challenges they may face. Therefore, the research study attempts to answer two questions, what are the. Factors that may prevent students from being autonomous learners. Also, what is the learners’ knowledge of learner autonomy.

2. Theoretical background

There are number of published studies that investigated learner autonomy such as (Holec, 1981; Little, 1998; Bensons a& Voller, 2014; Smith, 2008; La Ganza, 2008). Most of these studies attempted to present a clear characteristics of learner autonomy is. The definition of the concept is based entirely on the notion that learners take part in the learning process and become responsible of their own learning. In the late 90s, researchers such as Little attempted to expand the concept of learner autonomy and approach it as a modern language learning method that has a positive effect on learners (Little,1998). Furthermore, in his book Teaching Modern Languages Little explains that in order to help learners become effective communicators and
language speakers they need to develop a certain level of autonomy. It is important for autonomous learners to have self-confidence and a high level of independency.

Learner autonomy is a rising concept in the field of language learning, therefore number of researchers have presented the concept under a variety of terms such as self-direction, self-access, distance learning, self-instruction and out of class learning (Schmenk, 2005&Smith, 2008, La Ganza, 2008).

2.1 Theoretical Basis of Learner Autonomy
The theoretical basis of learner autonomy is summarized under two main theories which are constructivism and socio-cultural theory. Both theories were introduced to establish the fact that learners take part in the language learning process. In fact, both theories indicate that learners should take responsibility of their own language learning. In 1971, John Piaget first introduced the theory of constructivism 60 years ago. Piaget defines the theory as knowledge being constructed therefore, this theory has an adaptive function. Similarly, in the socio-cultural theory Dang (2010) states that “the highest level of learner autonomy should be still described via dialogic negotiations and interactions with the immediate situation. “This occurs normally in social situations where learners engage in number of different situations that enables them to construct linguistic knowledge.

2.2 Resources for implementing autonomous learning in the language classroom
Few of studies have discussed resources that promote learner autonomy to EFL learners. However, finding resources that suit the learner's needs and objectives can help in achieving high levels of autonomy. Therefore, technology is one of the most popular learning sources in recent years. In second language learning field, technology is also a buzz word that was linked to learner autonomy. Since 1999, there was a number of research studies that focused on using technology as a learning resource (Reinders & White, 2016). Reinders and White (2016) investigated the relationship between learner autonomy and technology and how it can improve learner autonomy in language education. In their findings, they revealed that “Technological changes are placing new tools and options in the hands of learners, available to them in the context of their own lives”(p.143). Therefore, it is safe to say that technology plays an important role in enhancing EFL learners' abilities to learn.

There are various technology tools that learners can use in SL/FL learning (Warschauer &Meskill, 2000). Some technologies can provide learners with feedback and self-assessment tools, which can strongly support their autonomous learning abilities. As Moore (1972) suggested, computer-assisted instruction as part of the resources for this section where learners are able to access feedback, interaction and monitor their own progress. Other researchers have focused their studies specifically on the importance of computer-assisted language learning by exploring web 2.0 tools that encourage learner autonomy in language learning. As Lee (2011) states, "the advent of Web 2.0 technologies (wikis, blogs, podcasting) brings new dimensions to online learning. Blogs, for example, [can be] used in various ways depending on their pedagogical purposes" (p. 87). Computer-assisted learning is a portal to many Web 2.0 tools, which can be incorporated into language pedagogy.
2.3 Learners’ readiness for autonomous language learning

Research studies have focused on learners' abilities to learn independently (Cubukcu 2009). Benson (2013) believes that by focusing on developing EFL learner's abilities to learn, the autonomous learning takes place first by focusing on developing EFL learner's abilities to learn, autonomous learning naturally. He argues that to acquire a language the learner needs to be attentive in selecting the needed input. Benson (2013) asserts that attention is the pre-condition of acquisition and effective language learning begins with the learner takes control over input and selects what to learn. Therefore, when learners pay attention to input, this is the first step towards autonomous learning. Also, by implementing suitable programs (self-learning and instruction software or a practical program designed for language development), we can help increase EFL learners’ autonomous development. EFL learners often lack the knowledge of how and when to use resources (Internet, TV, radio, and books) to improve their language acquisition. Richards (2010) asserts that the internet, technology and the media and the use of English in face-to-face, as well as virtual social networks, provide greater opportunities for meaningful and authentic language use that are available in the classroom.

2.4 Learners' role in learner autonomy

The main purpose of implementing learner autonomy into English learning classrooms is to allow EFL learners more space to take learning initiatives. Most popular teaching method to do so is task-based learning where learners take part in the learning process by completing a given task (Sercu, 2002). Setting the class for autonomous learning to take place is part of the teacher's role. However, previous research studies have shown a number of strategies learners can adapt to develop more as autonomous EFL learners.

According to previous research studies, there are various language learning strategies EFL learners can adopt and practice to achieve high levels of autonomy. Reinders (2010) suggests stages that learners go through to establish learner autonomy. First of all, learners need to start by identifying their learning needs, which can be identified through past experiences and language use difficulties. Another strategy is setting goals; learners need to set learning goals to enhance the learning experience. Selecting resources may be important for learners to achieve better learning results and higher levels of learner autonomy (Phan & Alrashidi, 2016). Language use and experimenting are also highly encouraged to raise the level of learner autonomy. In a research study conducted by Munir (2015) at Saints University in Malaysia, the researcher investigated learners' knowledge of autonomous language learning through interviewing a focus group. Results generated a number of themes from students' comments that represent language learning strategies such as learning using the internet, social learning, entertainment and English materials that involve reading in English and grammar exercises.

I. Learner autonomy and challenges learners may face

In a research study conducted in Thailand, Reinders (2014) explains the difficulties he faced while attempting to encourage autonomous learning among his Thai students. He asserts on a number of factors leading to these challenges, such as limited exposure to the English language, as it is taught as a foreign language. Since students were only exposed to the L2 two hours a week and did not use it outside the classroom, they lacked the desire to engage in autonomous learning activities outside the classroom (Khan, 2011). Another difficulty in adopting autonomous learning
strategies is that learners often depend heavily on the teacher. This dependence means that students do not actively seek other resources for language learning and perceive the teacher as the main - and sometimes the only – resource of knowledge. Dang’s (2010) study revealed that students continued to be attached to traditional learning practices such as memorization. He asserts that even when provided with resources and programs such as books, audios, and autonomous learning programs to support them, students continued to seek their teachers’ help as the main source of language knowledge.

Methodology
3.1 Participants
The participants of this study were 150 female EFL learners at the English Language Institute (ELI), King Abdul-Aziz University (KAU) in the city of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. All participated learners were studying English language at different levels in the foundation year program. The taught levels are introductory, beginner, pre-intermediate and intermediate level. Majority of the female participants are between the ages of 18-22 years old.

3.2 Research Design
This research is deliberately directed utilizing a descriptive research plan that expects to introduce important findings to all the more likely comprehend EFL students’ learning, knowledge and difficulties. Likewise, to show an outline of the present circumstance of learner autonomy on language learning.

Therefore, quantitative and qualitative research methods where used to analyze the data attentively. Both methods are important to present valuable and accurate findings (Hancock, Ockleford, & Windridge 2009)

3.3 Data Collection Procedures
Main Study
The questionnaire used to collect data from learners was adapted from a research study "Readiness for autonomy: investigating learners' beliefs" conducted by Cotterall (1995) in Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. The data of the questionnaire was automatically exported to a MS® Excel file that was later exported to a SPSS® statistical analysis software.

Instrumentation
The instrument of this study was a survey with a Likert-scale and an open-ended questionnaire. The learners’ questionnaire consists of 20 questions, 18 Likert-scale questions categorized into six groups and two open-ended questions. The 18 Likert-scale statements were analyzed using SPSS®. The second part of the questionnaire contained two open-ended questions that were analyzed using thematic analysis.

3.4 Results
What are the factors that may prevent students from being autonomous learners?
For the first research question, which was: What are the factors that may prevent students from being autonomous learners?
The results are presented in table 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.
Table 1. Students' responses to the effect of the teacher’s role on learner autonomy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>5 Strongly Agree</th>
<th>4 Agree</th>
<th>3 Neither Or N/A</th>
<th>2 Disagree</th>
<th>1 Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1- I like the teacher to offer help to me</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2- I like the teacher to tell me what my difficulties are</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3- I like the teacher to tell me how long I should spend on an activity</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4- The teacher should always explain why we are doing an activity in class</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5- I like the teacher to tell me what to do</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of the first section-investigating teachers’ role in learner-autonomy showed that majority of the participants rely on their teachers to help them with language learning. Hence, this suggests that learners are not ready to initiate inquiries and perceive the teachers as the main source of language learning. Responses to statements A1 and A2 indicate that there is a strong agreement on finding the teacher’s help essential to them to learn the language. Also, the participants revealed that the teacher plays an important role in highlighting their weaknesses and difficulties. Participants are agreeing to statement A2, showing that learners find it difficult to identify their own weaknesses and they are not able to point out their difficulties in language learning on their own. The results are in agreement with the findings of a research study conducted by Huang (2016) at National Chengchi University in Taiwan. In the research findings, the researcher revealed that with the help of a self-assessment/self-feedback task given by the teacher, learners came to discover that their expectation on their performance deviated from their initial expectations and there was an element of surprise. This indicates that EFL learners find it difficult to assess their progress on their own.

With regards to the responses of statements A3 and A4, the researcher infers that majority of the participating students believe that they need the teacher’s instruction and guidance throughout a given activity. Also, the participants’ responses revealed that not only do they need the teacher’s instruction, but they also need the teacher to specify the time needed to complete that activity. This shows that students are very dependent on the teacher. Therefore, they have a very low level of autonomous language learning. This is in agreement with a research study conducted by Finch in 2000, which emphasized the importance of teacher’s roles in providing guidance and help. Similar findings were reported in Alrabai’s (2017) research study which was conducted at King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia. In his study, Alrabai investigated the level of learner’s learning responsibility. In the findings of the research, results reported that only 6.3% of the participants believed it’s their sole-responsibility to progress in language learning. However, the majority of students (75.2%) appeared to have a notion of shared responsibility between themselves and their teachers in this regard. In response to the last statements A5, the majority of
students also find it highly important that the teacher tells them what to do throughout the class. This indicates that students might have low self-dependence, language barrier and they would not put the effort to search or seek the information by themselves consequently leading to poor autonomous learning skills.

Table 2. Students' responses to the effect of feedback on learner autonomy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>5 Strongly Agree</th>
<th>4 Agree</th>
<th>3 Neither Or N/A</th>
<th>2 Disagree</th>
<th>1 Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1- I find it helpful for the teacher to give me regular tests</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2- I need the teacher to tell me how I am progressing</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3- It is important for me to be able to see the progress I make</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results revealed that a large number of students believe that feedback is very important for them to be able to identify their progress. These results are in agreement with other research studies such as Cotterall (2000). In her research, the author highlights feedback as one of the main principles of the language learning process. However, a large number of participant’s responses to statements B1 and B2 agreed to the importance of feedback associated with teachers, which is considered an external source of feedback. According to previous literature (Debaere, Wenderoth, Sunaert, Van Hecke, & Swinnen, 2003), there are two main types of feedback internal and external. External feedback is the type that is considered against learner autonomy, due to the fact it occurs with the assistance of the teacher. However, internal feedback is related directly to autonomy. Thus, learners can access internal feedback without the help of the teacher. Participants’ response to statement B1 and B2 show that students rely on the teacher for feedback and they lack the knowledge and the training of how to reflect on their own performance. This attributes to a low level of autonomous learning.

On the other hand, statement B3 investigates internal sources of feedback such as computer-assisted feedback, which contributes to learner autonomy (Moore, 1972). Therefore, the statement is more related to the students’ role in using feedback. The highest percentage of students’ responses (61%) was in statement B3. This is evidence that students are interested in monitoring their own progress, which suggests that students are willing to take responsibility for their own learning. However, the results also suggest that they lack the assistance and guidance to do so.

Table 3. Students' responses to learner independence and its relation to on learner autonomy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>5 Strongly Agree</th>
<th>4 Agree</th>
<th>3 Neither Or N/A</th>
<th>2 Disagree</th>
<th>1 Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1- I have a clear idea of what I need the English language for</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results show that Saudi learners are to some extent aware of their language needs, which is one of the essential elements of learner autonomy. If learners are able to identify their needs, they will be able to set goals and objectives for their language learning process. These findings are compatible with Wulf, Chiviacowsky and Cardozo (2014) in which allowing learners to make decisions and identifying their needs can affect their learning independence. Majority of the students (65%) agreed to statement C1, suggesting that Saudi learners are able to identify their language needs. Results of statement C2 also reported a large number of students (56%) declaring that they prefer trying new learning strategies on their own. Both statements (C1 and C2) results indicate that Saudi learners are ready to accept learner autonomy as a language learning method or concept. Although a few students disagreed with both statements, however, the majority agreed. This suggests that Saudi learners are accepting the shift of responsibility from teachers to learners. According to previous literature, there is a number of reasons for this acceptance. With time, English language in Saudi Arabia developed certain social and economic benefits. Saudi learners have started to rationalize language learning for similar reasons (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). Realizing that they had to maximize language learning, learners in their answers to this section revealed an interest and positive attitude towards autonomous learning and that learner independent is not considered as a factor that hinders students from adopting autonomous learning skills and strategies. Hence, this also shows that EFL Saudi learners showed more interest in autonomous learning shifting the learning responsibility to learners more than the teachers.

Results of statement C3 reported that Saudi learners are aware that learning the English language is different from learning other subjects. The acknowledgment of English language is different from other subjects suggests that Saudi learners are aware of language learning strategies, which adds to their autonomous language learning knowledge (Oxford, 2008).

Table 4. Students' responses to the effect of learner confidence in study ability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Neither Or N/A</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1- I know how to study languages well</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2- I know how to study another subject well</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing the results of statement D1 and D2, it is suggested that a larger number (81%) of Saudi learners showed a high level of certainty of how to study other subjects. However, comparing that to their knowledge of how to study languages, students showed less confidence in their abilities. Munir (2015) also revealed similar results in a research study that investigated
learners’ confidence. In the findings the researcher suggested that learners’ confidence can improve due to different reasons and under different circumstances. These results indicate that Saudi learners are still in need of learner training to develop their autonomous language learning skills in order from them to take more responsibility for their own learning (Haughton & Dickinson, 1988). Teachers play an important role in training students to become more autonomous EFL learners. Al-Asmari (2013) conducted in Taif University a research study, by examining teachers’ perspectives of learner autonomy and Saudi learners' current situation. He concluded that by implementing learner autonomy into their classrooms, students become less dependent on the teacher. According to the researcher's findings, teachers can train and develop students' knowledge of how to study language through autonomous learning classwork such as peer work, group work and deciding on learning topics. Therefore, the level of students' knowledge of how to study a language is, in this case, considered a hinder to their autonomous language learning development.

Table 5. Students' responses to the effect of past language learning Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>5 Strongly Agree</th>
<th>4 Agree</th>
<th>3 Neither Or N/A</th>
<th>2 Disagree</th>
<th>1 Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E1- I have been successful in language learning in the past</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2- I have my own ways of testing how much I have learned</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of statement E1 showed that the majority of students (48%) believe that they did not have a successful language learning experience in the past. Learners past experiences indicate how much knowledge of language learning they have accumulated over the years. Developing successful learning experiences can motivate and enhance learners' autonomous learning ability. According to Cotterall (1995) "autonomous learners use their experience of attempting tasks, employing strategies and solving problems to develop their understanding of how language learning works" (p.6). Therefore, developing language learning knowledge from past experiences can help achieve a higher level of autonomy. In this case, the results show otherwise as mentioned above the majority of Saudi learners disagreed with the statement asserting on having unsuccessful language learning experiences in the past.

Results of statement E2 shows that 55% of students believe that they have their own ways of testing how much they have learned. This percentage is not parallel with the results of statement E1, which showed the learners lack of language learning knowledge from past experiences. Therefore, not developing the language learning knowledge needed contributes to the lack of self-assessment knowledge. Both statements are related therefore results of statement E2 are not in alignment with E1 which indicates the possibility of a case confusion.
Table 6. Students' responses to the effect of learners' approach to studying

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>5 Strongly Agree</th>
<th>4 Agree</th>
<th>3 Neither Or N/A</th>
<th>2 Disagree</th>
<th>1 Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1-I study English in the same way as I study other subjects</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2-Talking to the teacher about my progress is embarrassing for me</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3-I monitor my progress regularly</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results show that students' approach to studying is not certain. Responses to statement F1 indicates that majority of students are aware that studying English is different from other subjects. This shows that students understand that language learning knowledge is different and that it acquires specific training. As mentioned before in statements D1 and D2, students have shown awareness of the differences between learning English and other subjects. However, this may or may not be linked to learner autonomy learning concept.

In response to statement 2, students revealed a hindrance towards their communication with their teacher. A large number of students found it difficult and embarrassing to talk to the teachers about their language performance. However, in response to statement F3, the majority of students (68%) agreed that they monitor their own progress. This indicates that learners are willing to take the responsibility of monitoring their own progress. However, this does not mean that they fully comprehend how to do so. On the other hand, it is also safe to say that not all autonomous learners communicate easily with their teacher regarding their progress. However, this communication is a necessary component of successful learning behavior.

Table 7. Results of students' response and comment analysis on what they know about learner autonomy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>No. of participants</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Independent learning</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>39 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Technology and media</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Group learning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Other</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results reported that majority of the students (46%), the responses were ambiguous and uncertain of what learner autonomy is. As shown in table 7, these uncertain comments were labeled other. Some participants presented their opinion or a declaration of not knowing what learner autonomy is. This is a high percentage comparing to the other themes generated from students' comments. Participant no.85 stated 'It’s better than learning in the university." Another participant
no.103 also stated "I don’t know. This high percentage may indicate a low level of learner autonomy among Saudi learners, which also may indicate that learners are not familiar with different learning concepts. The lack of knowledge of different language learning concepts may be attributed to a number of reasons that were mentioned in previous research. In a study conducted by Khan (2011), King Abdul-Aziz University Community College, Jeddah. The researcher reported in the findings that Saudi learners might not seek to learn English language or to improve their learning for a number of possible reasons. First, Saudi learners are not exposed to SL, and another issue is that majority of learners fall into the case of comparing and contrasting the foreign language items with those of their mother-tongue. All which may contribute to the lack of language learning knowledge or motive to learn using different concepts such as learner autonomy.

Also, a satisfying percentage of 39% of the participants referred to learner autonomy as a type of independent learning. Participant no.41 stated "learners depend on themselves in learning a language and learning how to study it and also depend on themselves in seeking information." Participants no.6 agreed stating 'I know that all of the efforts are on the student and the teacher only gives main ideas and the rest is for the learners to understand.' This is in agreement with a research study that was conducted by Macaskill and Denovan (2011). The researchers argue that it is not easy to define autonomous learning. Therefore, some terms were established in the literature referring back to learner autonomy such as self-directed learning, self-access learning, and independent learning. The argument made by the researcher is that learner autonomy may be defined as the learner's capabilities that enable them to become autonomous learners. The researcher also referred to autonomous learning as independent learning to point out that it is not about the method of learning, it is more about the learners’ independence in making learning choices and decisions as well as taking responsibility of their own learning.

The second theme generated by learners was that autonomous learning could be developed using technology and media. A total of 14% of the participants agreed that using technology in language learning may help them become autonomous learners. This finding is in agreement with the results of the research study that was conducted by Lai, Shum, and Tian in 2014 which emphasized the role of technology and media in encouraging learner autonomy. Participant no.32 stated 'Learning a language through the internet or watching videos to learn the rules and the English accent. Personally, I try to learn the British accent through autonomous learning.' This is in agreement with previous literature published by Warschauer and Meskill in 2000. The researchers stated in their book ‘Technology and Second Language Teaching,’ that "appropriate use of technology allows for a more thorough integration of language, content, and culture than ever before and also provides students unprecedented opportunities for both collaborative and autonomous learning" (p.316). However, the study that was conducted in Saudi Arabia by Alshmrany and Wilkinson in 2014, revealed an underuse of the internet and IT services in the Saudi educational system. This could contribute to the lack of learner independence or learner autonomous awareness to some extent.

The third theme also generated from the students’ comments was group learning. A few students mentioned group work in comparison to teachers' comments. Only 1% of the students believe that group work may be related to learner autonomy. Participants no.44 commented...
"Autonomous learning is better for learners if they have the will to learn or with groups.' Another comment, participant no.66 stated "developing oneself in the English language at home and review with the teacher or with my group in terms of pronunciation and writing." This is in disagreement with a study that was conducted by Chan, Sparatt and Humphreys (2002) in Hong Kong University. The researchers reported that students did not show evidence of autonomous learning in teacher assigned group work. The researchers also reported disagreement with previous literature expectations that students learn well autonomously and collaboratively in group work.

These results show that there is no guarantee that Saudi learners will develop and learn autonomously in group work. Learners viewing learner autonomy as group work may not be accurate and applicable to all Saudi learners.

To analyze item 20, a criterion was established, which is the second open-ended question given to the participants “Are you familiar with autonomous learning strategies?”. This question provided the learners with a yes or a no option, and the participants were asked to explain their answer. Students’ responses were analyzed based on the established criteria to specifically code the results into categories that were generated from the students' responses and comments.

**Figure 1. Students' responses to item-20**

**Table 9. Summary of students' responses to item 20 (Yes/ No)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>84.7</td>
<td>84.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Analysis

Majority of the participants responded with no. This indicates that a large number of Saudi learners believe that they are not familiar with autonomous learning strategies or how to adopt such a concept. This is in agreement with the findings or a previously mentioned research study by Kumaravadivelu (1991). In his findings, the researcher believed that learners are not ready for autonomous learning for number of reasons such as lack of knowledge and teacher authority. The results are in agreement with a research study that was conducted by Shahsavari, (2014) in the Islamic Azad University, Iran. The researcher examined learner autonomy perceptions in both teachers and students. In the research findings, the results showed that teachers believe that their students did not understand the importance of autonomous learning to their language development. Therefore, a low level of autonomy was reported, and the students may not have understood the concept or adopted any of the autonomous language learning strategies. In addition, the researcher reported an important notion that may have contributed to the students' resistance, which is that most learners in the Middle East are still attached to the idea that the teacher is the only source of language or knowledge.

Few students mentioned in their comments certain ideas that are relevant to some extent to autonomous learning. Table 10 shows the numbers and percentages in each section including the students’ comments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Technology</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Books</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Study skills</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Practice and memorization</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Other</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result of the analysis shows that most students, (147 out of 151) who answered this question, have no knowledge of learner-autonomy strategies or how to use them (see table no.10). For example, participant no.134 commented "yes, it has to be through something I love to do because language is not like any other course it’s all about learning the culture" and participant no.126 stated "no I need someone to teach me and motivate me and before everything if I like something I would be good at it". However, only a few students showed some knowledge of learner autonomy. According to a research study conducted by Scott, Furnell, Murphy, and Gulder (2014), in the United Kingdom, advanced learners usually show a high level of learner autonomy. Considering the level of the participants, it is safe to say that a low level of learner autonomy was expected. Therefore, participants showed little knowledge of learner autonomy. Hence, this result indicates that Saudi language learners are in need for further training on autonomous language learning.
Although a few students showed to some extent knowledge of what learner autonomy is, the percentage was very low in generated categories when in comparison to the previous results where the majority (91%) mentioned other irrelative comments. Only 5% mentioned learning through technology as a learner autonomy strategy for example participant no.139 commented: “yes, learning from websites or Twitter and Instagram or YouTube.” Also, participant no.129 stated, “Yes, fun programs and videos and movies in English.” This is in agreement with the study conducted by Baturay & Yukselturk in 2015. Also, a very low percentage namely, 1% were generated from students' comments for both themes, study skills and learning from books. For example, participant no.130 commented on study skills “yes, listening to English conversations and writing in English” and participant no.70 commented on using books stating “yes, reading and searching and practice, watching movies in English”.

Only 2% mentioned practice and memorization as a learner autonomy strategy. For example, participant no.46 commented, “yes, applying the rules, practice, memorize words.” Similarly, participant no.56 commented, “Yes, memorize words and then use them in context and understand how to form sentences through grammar.” Student’s stating that practice and memorization were part of learner autonomy strategy show that Saudi learners are still in favor of traditional learning strategies. Memorization, practice through repetition and drills are more related to grammar translation teaching method, also known as the classical method. Grammar translation method is known for the lack of communicative learning where learners are able to practice what they have learned through communicative situations without actually using the language. According to Al-Seghayer (2014), he states that "English learners receive little exposure to communicative situations which, in turn, leads to poor results of the overall teaching-learning activities." Therefore, the generated theme of memorization and practice may not be classified as a learner autonomy learning strategy.

5. Discussion and Conclusion
The primary aim of this research study is to investigate Saudi learners’ perspectives of learner autonomy. Specifically, preparatory year EFL learners of all four levels. The study aimed to explore learners’ knowledge of learner autonomy as well as the factors that may prevent Saudi learners from being autonomous EFL learners. Also, what are the factors that make it challenging for learners to adopt LA. After reviewing the relevant literature, there are several conclusions which can be drawn. First, it is indicated in the literature that learner autonomy is still considered a rising concept in language learning and teaching field. Although there were successful cases of learner autonomy around the world, there is no evidence of any successful cases in Saudi Arabia. The research study revealed challenging factors that were stated by EFL learners. These factors may have contributed to the low level of autonomous language learning in Saudi Arabia. Looking closely to the research findings of learners’ knowledge of learner autonomy, it can be seen that the findings of this study are parallel with the earlier research studies about learner autonomy from the perspective of the learners. Considering the results of this study, it is safe to say that Saudi learners still lack professional training to understand how much responsibility they can take in their own language learning process. Furthermore, some Saudi students showed readiness for autonomous language learning, however, one of the biggest challenges is their understanding of the concept. If we examined the findings closely, we could infer that students still believe that they are very dependent on the teacher, which is not a new finding as it is illustrated in the earlier
literature. Saudi learners still strongly believe that it is the teachers’ responsibility and that their role is not of importance.

Second, this study reports a number of challenging factors that were revealed by students. Also, learners revealed that one of their biggest challenges was the knowledge of learner autonomy. Saudi learners stated that they are still very dependent on the teacher even in sitting their learning goals. They also stated that they lack the knowledge of how to study language although they were aware it is different from studying other courses. Finally, after reviewing the findings, the researcher reveals that Saudi language learners are still in need for professional training to develop as autonomous language learners. Also, learners need to be aware of student role in the learning process as this concept is still ambiguous to them. In conclusion, this research study is an attempt to contribute to add to the field of learner autonomy which is a new language learning concept that is in need of further research specifically in the Saudi context. It is also an attempt to contribute to the international literature in the field of learner autonomy.

6. Limitation of the Study
This study may not be summed up to different countries but rather it could be summed up and connected to neighboring countries which have comparable foundation and culture. It is likewise constrained to female English students in the preparatory year program. Getting to male members' information was troublesome because of the laws and traditions of Saudi Arabia along these lines, this investigation was restricted to female members as it were.

7. Implications of the study and Suggestions for Further Research
The findings of this research study can help expand on the concept of learner autonomy. This study reveals important findings regarding learners and their role in the process of autonomous learning. Most importantly it reveals learners' perspectives as well as the current situation of learner autonomy in Saudi Arabia, which suggests low levels of autonomy among learners. Furthered research is advised to investigate other areas of learner autonomy on different samples such as male participants and varying levels of learners. Finally, further studies on promoting and raising awareness of learner autonomy are highly encouraged.

Acknowledgments We would like to sincerely thank Mr. Abdulrahman Asiri for his continuous support and, the ELI research participants for their cooperation, without whom this research was not possible.

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References


A. APPENDIX
Below are a number of statements regarding learner autonomy in language learning, also known as independent learning Please read each one and indicate to what extent you (as a language learner) agree or disagree with each one. Please write your answer for questions 4 and 5.

Learners' Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>5 Strongly Agree</th>
<th>4 Agree</th>
<th>3 Neither Or N/A</th>
<th>2 Disagree</th>
<th>1 Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. I like the teacher to offer help to me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I like the teacher to tell me what my</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>difficulties are</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Arab World English Journal
www.awej.org
ISSN: 2229-9327
2. Role of feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>5 Strongly Agree</th>
<th>4 Agree</th>
<th>3 Neither Or N/A</th>
<th>2 Disagree</th>
<th>1 Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. I find it helpful for the teacher to give me regular tests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I need the teacher to tell me how I am progressing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. It is important for me to be able to see the progress I make</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Learner independence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>5 Strongly Agree</th>
<th>4 Agree</th>
<th>3 Neither Or N/A</th>
<th>2 Disagree</th>
<th>1 Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. I have a clear idea of what I need English language for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I like trying new learning strategies by myself</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Learning a language is very different from learning other subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Learner confidence in study ability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>5 Strongly Agree</th>
<th>4 Agree</th>
<th>3 Neither Or N/A</th>
<th>2 Disagree</th>
<th>1 Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. I know how to study languages well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I know how to study another subject well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Experience of language learning
1. What do you know about autonomous language learning?

2. Are you familiar with autonomous learning strategies?
   - [ ] Yes, explain
   - [ ] No

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>5 Strongly Agree</th>
<th>4 Agree</th>
<th>3 Neither Or N/A</th>
<th>2 Disagree</th>
<th>1 Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. I study English in the same way as I study other subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Talking to the teacher about my progress is embarrassing for me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. I monitor my progress regularly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Approach to studying

1. What do you know about autonomous language learning?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

2. Are you familiar with autonomous learning strategies?
   - [ ] Yes, explain
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   - [ ] No

   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
A Functional Analysis of the Thematic Organization in Electrical Engineering Research Article Introductions Written in English By Native and Saudi Scholars: A Comparative Study

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Abstract
The study of the Research Article (RA) genre has been dominated by genre analysis and corpus linguistics focusing on rhetorical moves and, or lexicogrammar, with little attention to the level of the message and the realization of different types of Theme and progression patterns. To the best of our knowledge, there is a lack of comparative studies investigating similarities/differences in the use of theme in electrical engineering RA Introductions written by native English-speaking (NES) scholars and non-native English-speaking (NNES) Saudi scholars. We address this gap using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach to analyze the texture of electrical engineering RA Introduction sections written by NES scholars and NNES Saudi scholars from a message perspective. The research questions aimed to quantitatively and qualitatively investigate (1) Theme types, (2) thematic markedness, and (3) thematic progression patterns in the two data sets. After reviewing comparative research on message structure, we analyzed 117 RA Introductions written by experienced NES/NNES authors. The results accord with research comparing thematic organization in native English scholars’ writings and those from cultural background other than Arabic. The findings showed that NESs’ and Saudi NNESs’ introductions overlap at a clause level, but they start to diverge beyond the clause. This study provides a good starting point for understanding NNES Saudi scholars’ use of underexplored linguistic items. The results of the current study offer insights for academic writing instruction and material developers.

Keywords: comparative study, engineering research articles, functional analysis, native and Saudi scholars, thematic organization.

Introduction

The study of the Research Article (RA) genre has been dominated by the theoretical and methodological approaches of genre analysis (Kanoksilapatham, 2015; Kuteeva & McGrath, 2013; Loi & Evans, 2010; Ozturk, 2007; Ruiying & Allison, 2004; Stoller & Robinson, 2013; Tessuto, 2015) and corpus linguistics (Esfandiari & Barbary, 2017; Gilmore & Millar, 2018; Le & Harrington, 2015; Pan, Reppen, & Biber, 2016), with little work employing Halliday’s (2014) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach in the analysis of thematic choices in RAs.

One major resource for maintaining cohesiveness in a long stretch of discourse is thematic progression (TP) patterns, where sentences build on one another to create global unity in the text (Daneš, 1974). TP patterns are identified by the sequencing of Theme/Rheme in a text (Fries, 1995). The Theme/Rheme contrast offers a great analytical tool to investigate the local/international message in RAs as reflected in empirical research on thematization in RAs (Ebrahimi, 2016; Jalilifar, 2010; Leong, 2015, 2016; Leong, Toh, & Chin, 2018; Lorés, 2004). However, these studies have examined thematization in the context of cross-disciplinary differences (Ebrahimi, 2016; Leong, 2016), generic structure analysis (Leong, 2015; Lorés, 2004; Mozaheb, Saeidi, & Ahangari, 2014), and similarities/differences between local and international journals (Jalilifar, 2010; Shokri, 2016). What remains unexplored are the similarities/differences between Native English Speaking (NES) scholars’ and Non-Native English Speaking (NNES) Saudi scholars’ use of Theme in electrical engineering RA introductions. The present study could provide invaluable insights for novice NNES authors. Annual publication output in Saudi Arabia has outpaced many other Middle East countries, as it has been immensely influenced by the support of the Saudi Ministry of Education to scientific research productivity and the government investment in research development (Al-Ohali and Shin, 2013). The analysis of this output by Al-Ohali and Shin (2013) revealed that the most significant amount of international publications in Saudi Arabia is in scientific fields, such as medical sciences, engineering, chemistry, biological sciences, physics, and mathematics. With the increase in the number of English RAs written by Saudi scholars, an increasing need for scrutinizing their writing quality in this particular genre has developed. It is pertinent to examine and compare the use of Theme in electrical engineering RA introductions written by Saudi scholars with their native counterparts since the study may offer pedagogical insights for NNES Saudi scholars in particular or for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teaching in the Arab world in general. This study aimed to investigate quantitative/qualitative significant similarities/differences in electrical engineering RA introductions written by NES scholars and NNES Saudi scholars in the following aspects: 1) topical Themes; 2) textual Themes; 3) interpersonal Themes; 4) Theme markedness; and 5) TP patterns.

This study intends to answer the following research questions:
1- Are there any similarities/differences in the use of types of theme in the published electrical engineering RA introductions that were written by NES scholars and NNES Saudi scholars?
2- Are there any similarities/differences in the use of TP patterns in the published electrical engineering RA introductions that were written by NES scholars and NNES Saudi scholars?
3- Are there any similarities/differences in the use of thematic markedness in the published electrical engineering RA introductions that were written by NES scholars and NNES Saudi scholars?
4- Are there any statistically significant differences in the use of theme types, thematic markedness, and TP patterns in the published electrical engineering RA introductions that were written by NES scholars and NNES Saudi scholars?

**Literature Review**

As this paper aims to investigate the use of Theme in NES/NNES scholars’ engineering RAs, we first provide an overview of Theme and Information Structure systems.

**Systemic Functional Linguistics**

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is based on a functional approach to language, adopting the view that linguistic choices are inseparable from the communicative and cultural contexts of their use (Halliday, 2014). This approach maintains that language serves three functions: experiential meanings represented by our talk about our experience of the world, interpersonal meanings represented by the interactive features of discourse, and textual meanings that create contextualized messages, thereby enabling and organizing such representations and interpersonal relations through language. An analysis of the textual metafunction of a text, therefore, can reveal its organization. One of the main structural systems within the textual metafunction is Theme, discussed next.

Theme and Rheme choices maintain cohesion within a clause. Theme is “the element that serves as the point of departure of the message; it is that which locates and orients the clause within its context” (Halliday, 2014, p. 89). Thus, while Theme is the initial element(s) of a clause, Rheme is “the part in which the theme is developed” (Halliday, 2014, p. 89). Whereas Theme in English is always clause-initial, Rheme occurs later in a clause: Clause-final position makes Rheme/New information more prominent, while a logical sequencing of information is guaranteed by starting the clause with Theme/Given information. This suggests that Theme overlaps with Given information, Rheme with New information. Since the two information structure elements Given/New are marked off by tonic prominence (or pitch contour), Theme/Given and Rheme/New do not necessarily conflate with each other (Halliday, 2014). Theme is defined and identified structurally, through position, in English (plus functionally, by thematic prominence).

Theme is divided into three types: topical (i.e., experiential), interpersonal, and textual. The topical Theme is obligatory and is realized by three experiential elements. Unlike the topical Theme, both the interpersonal and textual Themes are optional. It is also important to note that interpersonal Themes convey a writer’s stance, while textual Themes develop grammatical and logico-semantic links within and beyond a clause (Halliday, 2014).

A further classification of thematic choices is the unmarked/marked contrast. The unmarked Theme is the typical way of starting the message of a clause, while the marked Theme is the atypical choice rarely employed by writers. At a clause level, the unmarked theme in declaratives is grammatically realized by Subject and in marked cases by fronted Complements and Circumstantial Adjuncts (Halliday, 2014). While complements are realized by a nominal/adjectival group and have the potential to be Subjects but they are not, Circumstantial Adjuncts are realized by an adverbial and prepositional group/phrase (Halliday, 2014). One function of marked Themes is announcing a change of topic, guiding readers through the text and
showing them how to interpret the ideas being presented (Mauranen, 1996). Marked Themes then have a facilitative effect as they render the message unambiguous by setting the scene for the clause carrying that message.

Besides establishing cohesion within the clause, Theme-Rheme can develop cohesion beyond the clause. Theme-Rheme patterns contribute to maintaining a naturally flowing text in three possible ways. One is through linear (or zig-zag/sequential) development in which the Rheme of one clause is introduced as the Theme of the following clause. Developing ideas in a linearly sequenced manner is preferred in the RA genre to construct an argument (Banks, 2008). Scholars choose to present ideas in this way to create a text that seems to flow logically. A second TP pattern is the reiteration of the same Theme in following themes, while the Rhemes change. Maintaining the same element as the Theme of more than one clause develops a topic-focused text. A strong topical focus characterizes persuasive discourse, building on the same topic to convince the reader about the point being raised (Hawes, 2015). A third TP pattern is the split Rheme (or multiple-Theme/fan pattern). It is when the Rheme, mostly of a paragraph-initial clause, carries more than one idea which is then developed one by one in subsequent Themes.

**Previous Theme studies**

A number of studies compared the use of thematic choices and TP patterns by native English learners with those found in non-native writers’ texts (Aronsson, 2005; Hasselgård, 2009; Hawes, 2015; Hawes & Thomas, 2012; Leong, 2007; Park & Nam, 2015; Wei, 2013). A common finding of these learner-focused studies is the under-, over-, or misuse of Theme choices and TP patterns. Unlike these student writer-focused studies, the present study deals with NNES scholars’ use of thematic structure in RAs compared to NES scholars.

Several studies have analyzed NNES expert authors’ use of thematic choices and TP patterns. SFL researchers have examined NNES authors’ use of Theme in media texts (Lu, 2002; Potter, 2016) and textbooks (Jalilifar & Montazeri, 2017; McCabe, 1999). Another genre that has received attention, though with diverse focus, in SFL-based research is RAs. While early research on thematic structure in RAs examined cross-linguistic influences by comparing NES/NNES scholars’ thematic choices in published RAs (Mauranen, 1996; Mirahayuni, 2002; Ventola & Mauranen, 1991), the attention has gradually turned to topics such as variation within RA sections (Leong, Toh, & Chin, 2018; Martinez, 2003), RA generic thematic structure (Leong, 2015; Leong, Toh, & Chin, 2018; Lorés, 2004), similarities/differences in local/international journals (Jalilifar, 2010; Shokri, 2016), and RA cross-disciplinary differences (Ebrahimi, 2016; Heng & Ebrahimi, 2012; Leong, 2016; Shokri, 2016). In investigating cross-disciplinary differences, Ebrahimi’s (2016) study of the textual organization of Theme in RA abstracts from four disciplines (Applied Linguistics, Economics, Agriculture and Applied Physics) revealed disciplinary differences in the use of theme types and patterns. This indicates that a discipline’s requirements influence the choice of a particular Theme type or pattern. Mirahayuni (2002) investigated 652 independent and complex clauses from 10 RA Introductions on education written by NES scholars and NNES Indonesian scholars and found that 16% of the total clause-Themes comprised marked Themes in native and non-native English. Constant and linear TP patterns were the most frequently occurring patterns in the two data sets. Whereas constant TP pattern was the most dominant in NES scholars’ introduction (38.6%), linear TP was the most dominant in NNES Indonesian scholars’ (44%) texts.
Nevertheless, it is hard to uncover the reasons underlying the discrepancy since the number of texts is limited. However, these findings were contradicted by a recent study by Jalilifar (2010) that compared Theme choices and TP in 16 applied linguistics RAs written by Iranians in a local journal with a comparable number of RAs published in an international journal. It was found that the writers in the two journals in the same field used similar Theme types and progression patterns. The discrepancy between these studies is due to Jalilifar’s (2010) comparison of NNES writers to a group identified by their writing contribution (i.e., international journal authors) rather than NES authors, suggesting that information on first language (L1) background should be reported in comparative studies to eliminate such discrepancies. To the best of our knowledge, there is a lack of comparative studies investigating similarities/differences in the use of theme in electrical engineering RA Introductions written by NES scholars and non-native English-speaking NNES Saudi scholars.

It is pertinent to investigate if there are any variations in the use of types of Themes and TP patterns in electrical engineering RA introductions written by NES and NNES scholars. The motivation for the present investigation arose from a number of methodological concerns in RA research and from works on thematic structure in NNES writing. First, as stated in the introduction, research on RAs is dominated by genre/corpus linguistics methodologies, with little work applying SFL. Second, most reviewed SFL studies of Theme have concentrated on NNES student/novice writings, neglecting texts written by experienced writers. The need for more research on Theme in a variety of writers/texts has been raised by Forey and Sampson (2017), suggesting the present study. Third, previous comparative studies of Theme did not control or explicitly state contextual factors that might confound the results, such as matched level of writing expertise (Mirahayuni, 2002; Ventola & Mauranen, 1991), information on the L1 background of the compared groups (Jalilifar, 2010), publication context, i.e. local/international journals (Jalilifar, 2010; Mirahayuni, 2002), and topic similarity (Jalilifar, 2010; Mirahayuni, 2002; Ventola & Mauranen, 1991). A comparative study controlling these factors is expected to reveal more accurately any similarities/differences between NNES scholars’ use of TP patterns and their NES counterparts. Fourth, few studies have examined thematic structure in texts produced by NNES authors from an Arabic L1 background, highlighting the need to examine the English writings of Arabic speakers. To address the gaps identified in mainstream RA research and related works on Theme, this study adopted an SFL-based approach to compare English RAs written by Arabic scholars in refereed journals in the field of electrical engineering with a matched set written by NES scholars.

**Methodology**

**Unit of Analysis**

The unit of analysis in this study is the T-unit (an independent clause plus one or more dependent clauses). A T-unit is defined as “a clause complex which contains one main independent clause together with all the hypotactic clauses which are dependent on it” (Fries, 1995, p. 318). Thus we will be having two T-units if a sentence includes two independent clauses. Following the recommendations of Forey and Sampson (2017) and McCabe (1999), the choice of the unit of analysis was determined by the aim of the study and the corpus type. As one major purpose of the study is to investigate TP patterns, given that it has been theoretically established that the T-unit is the optimal unit for capturing such patterns, the T-unit was chosen. The choice was also prompted by the fact that previous studies of thematic development in RAs selected the T-unit as
their unit of analysis (Ebrahimi, 2016; Jalilifar, 2010; Leong, 2015; Leong, Toh, & Chin, 2018; Williams, 2009).

Recognition of Theme and Delimitations

The recognition of Theme is not always straightforward as there are issues in the delimitation of theme, such as the cases of marked and multiple ideational elements (or topical Themes) in clause complexes: What counts as Theme? Where Theme stops and where Rheme begins? The position taken by several scholars (Davies, 1988a, 1988b; Hasan & Fries, 1995; McGregor, 1992) is adopted in the present study since the unit of analysis is the T-unit rather than the clause. Such analysis renders the method of development of the message clearer as the clause identifies the point of departure (Theme). These scholars agree that the point of departure does not necessarily conflate what is being talked about (topic/Given information) when recognizing a Theme. For example, the adverbial clause in table one is the Theme of the clause complex:

Table 1. Example of Theme in a complex clause

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Since the existing statistical UWB CMs</th>
<th>do not incorporate the effect of the antenna,</th>
<th>the present study considers the possibility of extending the existing wideband directional models to UWB systems. (IET Communications, 4/1, 2010)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Rheme</td>
<td>Theme Rheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Rheme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Hasan and Fries (1995) “everything up to and including the element Subject is Theme so long as there is no marked Topical Theme” (p. xxxvi). Thus, the Subject is excluded in the case of marked Topical Theme since Theme has a MOOD function other than Subject. Also, the clause “while many have used rule-of-thumb approximations” in the following example has the textual functions of marked topical Theme, the interpersonal function of Adjunct and the ideational function of temporal Circumstance.

“While many have used rule-of-thumb approximations, [Theme] the present paper shows from the theory … [Rheme].” (International Journal of Microwave & Wireless Technologies, 2016)

Theme is realized by the elements preceding the grammatical subject. The identification of Theme depends on the position of the dependent clause in the complex T-unit. If it occurs initially, the entire clause is considered the Theme; if the independent clause occurs initially, the grammatical subject is the Theme.

Following Thompson (2004), anticipatory it and the projecting clause are treated as interpersonal projections (or thematized comments) of a writer’s claims. The dummy it and
the projecting clause in “it is necessary” are annotated as Theme in the following example since the method of development will be obscured if only it is selected: “it is necessary to find alternative energy sources to overcome the continuous energy consumption increase in the last decade.” Thompson (2004) states that thematized comment “serves to set up as the starting point of the message the speaker’s own comment” (p. 157).

**TP Criteria**

Two conditions are necessary for establishing a TP link. First, a Theme of one clause must share propositional content with (a) preceding Themes/Rhemes or (b) subsequent Themes through any of the four semantic relations listed in Table 2. These semantic relations aid in recognizing propositional similarity across Themes of neighboring clauses, facilitating the identification of a TP pattern. Second, the Theme of one clause should pick up information from a maximum distance of two clauses away. In other words, a TP pattern is set up if and only if information found in two clauses placed above or below a Theme is picked up by that Theme. Meeting these two conditions can ensure a more systematic approach to the analysis of TP patterns.

**Table 2. Reiteration forms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reiteration forms</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repetition</td>
<td>There’s a boy climbing along the rafters. Those rafters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Near-)synonymy</td>
<td>Those beams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superordinate</td>
<td>Those timbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General word</td>
<td>Those things</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note 1.** Adapted from Halliday & Hasan (1976, pp. 279-281)

**The Corpus**

The corpus comprises 117 Introduction sections (84,752 words) of scientific papers published by NES/NNES scholars (Table 3) in the field of electrical engineering (Appendix 1). T-units were calculated using Ai and Lu’s (2010) Web-based L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer (Single Mode). The following keywords were used to search for the RAs: cellular networks, communication systems, MIMO communication, mobile communication, radio communication, wireless and mobile communications, wireless digital communication, wireless sensor Network.

**Table 3. Key statistics of the corpus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Articles</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>T-units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NES authors</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>42,390</td>
<td>2442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNES authors</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>42,362</td>
<td>2550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>84,752</td>
<td>4992</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The field of electrical engineering was chosen because it is the second highest field in Saudi Arabia in terms of the number of international publications (Al-Ohani & Shin, 2013). The focus on one field is necessary to control discipline-based Theme differences, as studies have shown consistently that each discipline has a preference for certain linguistic choices (Hyland, 2000). The Introduction section was analyzed in the present study because most studies have investigated the RA abstracts. Moreover, this section seemed most suitable for thematic analysis as the communicative purposes of an Introduction lend themselves readily to long cohesive chains, allowing a broad range of TP patterns. Another factor minimized in the design of the corpus is individual idiosyncrasies. Multi- or co-authored RAs were chosen where possible rather than single-authored ones to avoid idiosyncrasies that may confound the results. The English RAs in the corpus were grouped into two sets, one written by NES scholars and the other by NNES Saudi scholars. The following criteria were used to be sure that the writers included were native speakers of English/Saudi scholars: (1) institutional affiliations of the authors; authors’ undergraduate/secondary education background; and authors’ first and last names.

Data Analysis

The steps in analyzing the data were as follows. Each independent clause in the RAs was identified and recorded and the Theme of each independent clause was classified (textual, interpersonal, topical). Each topical Theme was coded as marked or unmarked. Next, the TP patterns were identified.

All features identified in the corpus were reported both qualitatively and quantitatively. Basic descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages were used to precisely compare between the two data sets. Raw frequencies rather than normed counts are reported since the two data sets are comparable. To compare the frequencies, a chi-square test was also run employing Stangroom’s (2019) online Chi-Square Test Calculator was run to examine if the difference in the frequency of occurrence of each of the three thematic aspects (Theme choices/markedness and TP patterns) in the two data sets is significant. Finally, AntConc 3.5.8 software was employed to code instances of first-person pronouns in topical Theme position. This tool calculates the frequency of all words in the corpus and presents them in an ordered list. The frequency of each pronoun was identified using the search only feature. The instances were then manually checked in the software’s concordance page to eliminate incorrect annotations.

Results and Discussion

Table four presents the findings of the frequencies and percentages and the Chi-square distribution of three thematic aspects across the two data sets at both local and global levels, represented respectively through Theme choices/markedness and TP patterns. Overall, the RAs written by NNES Saudi scholars contained slightly more of the examined features than those by NES scholars except for the interpersonal Theme and the two TP patterns “linear” and “split-Rheme.”
Table 4. Chi-square test and the frequency and percentage of three thematic aspects in the two data sets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NES Freq</th>
<th>NES %</th>
<th>NNES Freq</th>
<th>NNES %</th>
<th>P-value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme Types</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topical</td>
<td>2442</td>
<td>74.36</td>
<td>2550</td>
<td>74.19</td>
<td>.583024</td>
<td>1.0791</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textual</td>
<td>768</td>
<td>23.39</td>
<td>821</td>
<td>23.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>.15883</td>
<td>1.9853</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3284</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3437</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>.003475</td>
<td>11.3244</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markedness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarked</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>82.10</td>
<td>2132</td>
<td>83.61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marked</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>17.90</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>16.39</td>
<td>.15883</td>
<td>1.9853</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2442</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>2550</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>.003475</td>
<td>11.3244</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>54.64</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>48.93</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reiteration</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>37.89</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>45.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split Rheme</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>7.47</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>6.01</td>
<td>.15883</td>
<td>1.9853</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1098</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>981</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>.003475</td>
<td>11.3244</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Chi-square test for theme types and thematic markedness indicates no substantial differences between NES scholars and NNES scholars at p < .05, whereas the Chi-square values for TP patterns (11.3244) indicate significant differences at p < .05 (p-value=.003475). In other words, there were significant differences between the NES scholars and NNES Saudi scholars in terms of the different TP patterns. This is in line with Ventola and Mauranen’s (1991) finding that NNES scholars’ TP patterns/Theme choices lack variety. The discrepancy in the use of interpersonal themes is insufficient to argue that NES scholars’ data included more such instances. The low rate of occurrence of the interpersonal Theme type in the two data sets is in line with what would be expected of objective, non-evaluative RA discourse (Gray & Biber, 2012; Hyland, 2005). Rather than using interpersonal Themes to take a specific stance, the researchers opted for a subtler way of conveying interpersonal meanings, as will be discussed next. At the global level, however, NES scholars used more linear and split-Rheme patterns than did their NNES counterparts, as discussed in Section 4.2.

Local Organization

Topical Theme

The use of topical themes in NES scholars’ and NNES Saudi scholars’ electrical engineering RA Introductions was similar. This finding is in line with Leong’s (2016) study of 200 abstracts from science and humanities disciplines, which indicated that topical themes were used more in scientific abstracts. A closer look at the elements selected as the topical Theme in RA introductions might reveal more about the difference between NES scholars’ and NNES Saudi scholars’ RAs. One of the topical Theme choices that occurred in both NES scholars’ and NNES scholars’ Introductions is clause-initial deictic this/these. The examples cited here are
representative of the feature under discussion. The NNES Saudi scholars’ texts revealed a significant difference in the frequency of occurrence of these forms (189 instances) compared to their NES counterparts (97 instances). This construction is frequent in RAs as it contributes to the development of cohesion in texts (double slashed lines indicate the end of a T-unit).

(1) NES authors:

These systems [Theme] can identify previously unobservable patterns thanks to their large spatial extent. [Rheme] (IEEE Sensors Journal, 10/6, 2010)

WSNs [Theme] have several common aspects with wireless ad hoc network [11] [Rheme] // and in many cases they [Theme] are simply considered as a special case of them. // This could lead to erroneous conclusions... [Rheme] (Sensors, 9, 2009)

Each RFID tag [Theme] has a unique identifier or signature [Rheme] which [Theme] is encoded onto the backscatter of the interrogation signal from a RFID reader. [Rheme] // Utilizing this passive backscatter-based encoding technique, [Theme] a single powered reader can retrieve individualized data from large quantities of densely packed mobile tags from a centralized location. [Rheme] // (Sensors, 14/8, 2014)

Significant growth of the asset base [Theme] occurred in some technologies...[Rheme]// This changing mix [Theme] was distorting the apparent reliability. [Rheme] (IEEE INTLEC, 2017)

(2) NNES authors:

It is natural for the two operations of channel and data recovery [Theme] to be considered jointly, [Rheme] especially since one operation [Theme] can be used to enhance the performance of the other. [Rheme]// This intuitive idea [Theme]...

(IEEE Transactions on Signal Processing Journal, 55/7, 2007)

In [6], the author [Theme] has taken the stator resistance variation into consideration, [Rheme]// but the same observer gains of [4] [Theme] have been used. [Rheme]// This [Theme] causes that the speed-adaptive full order observers integrated with stator resistance estimation scheme have unstable regions [12]. [Rheme]// (Electrical Engineering, 99/3, 2017)

In [4,5], a Direct Torque Control (DTC) [Theme] is proposed. [Rheme] // This technique [Theme] has a good transient response [Rheme] // but it [Theme] necessitates a high switching frequency to reduce the torque/current ripples. [Rheme] // (Electrical Power & Energy Systems, 103, 2018)

Although the NNES authors’ RA introductions seem to overuse clause-initial this/these + noun, the examples indicate that this form realized similar functions in NES authors’ introductions. This finding contrasts with Mirahayuni’s (2002) study, which reported the minimal use of normalized
forms as Themes in NNES scholars’ RAs published in local journals. This was not the case in the refereed journals examined in the present study, suggesting that the status of NNES scholars’ academic authorship might play a role in the skillful use of Theme choices.

Another interesting finding is that the NES scholars (288 instances) used more first-person pronouns ‘we’ and ‘our’ in topical Theme position than did the Saudi NNES scholars (105 instances), suggesting greater visibility of the former group than the latter. The use of this form indicates authorial stance towards a proposition and increased author visibility (Ebrahimi & Chan, 2015; Ebrahimi, Chan, & Ain, 2014; Leong, Toh, & Chin, 2018). It seems that the Saudi NNES scholars’ reluctance to over-use this form may be attributed to their awareness of academic writing norms which discourage its use.

(3) NES authors:

We propose an approximate MMSE ABD method for MIMO active sensing systems. // (IEEE Transactions on Signal Processing, 66/18, 2018)

We show in this paper that R-RANSAC is also more computationally efficient. // (IEEE Transactions on Automatic Control, 61/2, 2016)

We compare six routing protocols designed for WSANs in terms of route discovery and maintenance, delay-bound and energy consumption. // (Journal of Parallel & Distributed Computing, 72/7, 2012)

(4) NNES authors:

In this paper, we derive a new union bound on the bit error probability of coded FHSS systems with MAI. // We consider FHSS systems with perfect channel estimation and pilot-aided channel estimation over Rician and Nakagami fading channels. // (EURASIP Journal on Wireless Communications & Networking, 2008)

We rely on a precoded cooperative transmission technique to extract the underlying rich multipath-Doppler-spatial diversity. // (Wireless Communications & Mobile Computing, 2018)

The under-use of first-person pronouns by NNES scholars was also observed in biology RAs written by Spanish-speaking scholars and was explained in light of cross-linguistic influence (Martínez, 2005). The NNES Saudi scholars’ reluctance to over-use this form, however, may be attributed to their awareness of academic writing norms which discourage its use.

Interpersonal Theme

The realization of the interpersonal Theme was extended to include grammatical metaphors in *it*-clauses with extraposed subjects. Both NES scholars and NNES scholars minimally employed this structure (25 and 21 instances, respectively) to construe their stance towards propositions in a neutral way, as illustrated in their use of the modalized adjectives *desirable*, *necessary*, *pertinent*, *well documented*, and *evident* in table five. This is expected since this type of construction tends to cluster in more opinionative, less-formal genres than RAs (Gómez-González, 2001; Mirahayuni, 2002).
Table 5. *Examples of it-clauses in the two data sets*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Group</th>
<th>Textual Theme</th>
<th>Topical Theme</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NES authors 2</td>
<td>And</td>
<td>it is usually desirable</td>
<td>to minimize this metric, which decreases with increasing amplifier linearity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and on occasion</td>
<td>it is necessary</td>
<td>to define a single (ith) element of a sum/set as (:)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>therefore,</td>
<td>it is expected</td>
<td>to show similar characteristics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNES authors 10</td>
<td>Consequently,</td>
<td>it is necessary</td>
<td>to find alternative energy sources to overcome the continuous energy consumption increase in the last decade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>It is also possible</td>
<td>to change the defect hole radius and spacing to modify the sensitivity and quality factor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The thematized comment in the first example in Table includes the modal adjunct ‘usually’ to convey to the readers the degree of certainty.

**Textual Theme**

NNES scholars’ RAs contained slightly more clauses with a textual Theme (*N* = 821) than did NES scholars’ (*N* = 768). However, further analysis of textual Theme types showed that both groups used textual devices to achieve similar functions of setting grammatical and, or semantic relations.

Table 6. *Textual theme instances in the two data sets*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group (Text)</th>
<th>Textual Theme</th>
<th>Topical Theme</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NES author 11</td>
<td>However,</td>
<td>neither paper</td>
<td>addresses the analytical performance of R-RANSAC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Therefore,</td>
<td>the main contribution of this paper</td>
<td>is to analyze the convergence properties of R-RANSAC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNES author 10</td>
<td>Additionally,</td>
<td>integrating different energy resources</td>
<td>improves system reliability and efficiency and decreases system cost.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, in comparison with single-energy systems, HES appear to be more complicated because of the use of two different energy resources joined together. Consequently, an optimum sizing methodology is essential to utilize the renewable energy resources efficiently and cost-effectively.

Grammatical and semantic relations within a clause were constructed using conjunctions (e.g. so, but, or). In contrast, logico-semantic relationships between a clause and the preceding text were established using conjunctive adjuncts (e.g. however, while, on the other hand). The use of conjunctive adjuncts makes the logico-semantic relationships in a text explicit, as adjuncts relate the clause with what precedes through addition, apposition, and other semantic relations (Halliday, 2014). Both groups employed conjunctive adjuncts in Introductions to explicitly advance arguments highlighting the importance of their work. Table six shows instances of NES scholars’ and NNES scholars’ ways of realizing causal (therefore, consequently), additive (additionally, moreover), and adversative (however) meanings through conjunctive adjuncts. Similar conclusions were drawn in previous research showing that retrospective cohesive devices tend to occur in argumentative RA sections such as the Introduction to persuade readers of the validity of claims (Gosden, 1992; Jalilifar, 2010).

**Unmarked and Marked Themes**

The use of unmarked and marked Themes was almost equal in both data sets (Table 4). A similar distribution in engineering report writings was found by Mirahayuni (2002), indicating a preference for maintaining the same topic rather than shifting focus through the frequent use of marked Themes.

The function of contextual frames (CFs) or marked themes in Examples 5 and 6 is to draw contrast by comparing the research with previous studies, allowing the authors to present their work as a solution to the identified problem and establish the significance of their study as a result. Gosden (1992) argues that writers employ CFs in RA introductions “contrast and addition to fulfill the need for finding a gap through contrasting their study with the current state of knowledge, as well as raising [a] problem and showing disagreement with existing research” (p. 8). This finding is in line with Gosden’s (1992) study of 36 Physics, Chemistry, and Biology RAs written by native speakers of English. The findings revealed that CFs were more employed in introduction, result and discussion sections, indicating higher topic shifting through the use of CFs.

(5) NES author 1: While many have used rule-of-thumb approximations [Theme], the present paper shows from the theory that the Pareto trade-off need not be approximated, [Rheme] // but [Theme] can be directly obtained from the S-parameters and noise parameters [Rheme]. (International Journal of Microwave & Wireless Technologies, 2016)

(6) NNES author 12: Since the existing statistical UWB CMs do not incorporate the effect of the antenna [Theme], the present study considers the possibility of extending the existing wideband directional models to UWB systems [Rheme]. // (IET
Marked Themes were also employed by the two groups to justify the research and emphasize its novelty. Fronting the hypotactic clause (Since many…) or circumstantial element (In light of) enabled the authors to place the study within a broader context and thereby motivate the study.

(7) NES author 9: Since many designs must focus on minimizing the spectral spreading from wideband excitations [Theme], the intention of our work is to present a fast measurement-based load impedance optimization to obtain the highest PAE possible while achieving an acceptable ACPR [Rheme]. // (IEEE Transactions on Microwave Theory & Techniques, 62/8, 2014)

(8) NNES author 12: In light of the future of the very promising UWB technology [Theme], the objective of this study is directional UWB channel characterization [Rheme]. // (IET Communications, 4/1, 2010)

Similarly, the circumstances of place in Examples 5 and 6 helped the writers to orient the attention of their readers to the proposed work and its contribution to the field. Perhaps the NNES Saudi scholars’ group selected more atypical message starting points for such purposes because they may have received more EAP writing training due to their NNES status. In other words, they had formally learned the importance of situating their research and establishing or occupying a niche (Swales, 2004) to gain acceptance in the global research community. The difference then does not likely stem from the Arabic L1 background of the NNES group, but rather from the NNES authors’ recognition of the increased promotional elements in academic discourse (Hyland, 2000, 2005).

(9) NES author 5: In this paper [Theme], we provide an approximate method for MMSE ABD // that is less computationally expensive than the exact solution [Rheme]. (IEEE Transactions on Signal Processing, 66/18, 2018)

(10) NNES author 13: In this paper [Theme], we derive a new union bound on the bit error probability of coded FHSS systems with MAI [Rheme]. // (EURASIP Journal on Wireless Communications & Networking, 1, 2008)

The first part of this section examined within-clause Theme choices. What follows is the global thematic analysis of the two data sets to reveal the authors’ preferred ways of sequencing information across the clause.

**Global Organization**

A combination of linear and constant theme patterns constituted over 90% of the TP patterns in the NES and NNES authors’ texts (Table 4). This result is in line with Lorés’ (2004) study, which examined RA abstracts in linguistics and reported the tendency to include linear and constant patterns.
Linear

Consistent with previous studies on thematic development in the Introduction section of biology RAs (Leong, 2015; Leong, Toh, & Chin, 2018) and abstracts in applied linguistics (Ebrahimi, 2016; Lorés, 2004), linear (zig-zag) TP was the most dominant in both NES scholars’ (54.11%) and NNES Saudi scholars’ (48.19%) texts (Table 4). This finding is in contrast with Rahmawati and Kurniawan’s (2015) study of TP in five undergraduate students’ thesis abstracts written in English by students at an Indonesian university, which indicated that constant theme pattern was the most dominant pattern followed by the linear pattern. The high frequency of this pattern in the present study can be explained by the tendency of scientific texts to develop a linear “chain of reasoning (ultimately based on experiments) in which each step led on to the next” (Halliday, 1993, p. 131). Carrying information over from the Rheme of one clause to the subsequent Theme helped to create a clear and coherent line of argument in the introductions as the authors built each idea on what was said before, resulting in a hierarchically structured text.

Table seven shows how NES and NNES authors developed their main topic in the first part of the Introduction through the systematic use of linear patterns.

Table 7. Linear development in the two data sets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Group</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NES author 7: <em>(IEEE Communications Magazine, 52/12, 2014)</em></td>
<td>Lack of reliable power infrastructure, a chronic problem in developing rural areas,</td>
<td>can paralyze cellular infrastructure in even the most well-developed areas after a disaster.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Following Hurricane Sandy,</td>
<td>the FCC reported approximately 25 percent of cell sites in the affected 10-state area were non-operational [7].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commercial cellular base stations</td>
<td>require access to network operator services such as a mobile switching center and home location register.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Damage to central switching stations, power outages, or loss of backhaul connections</td>
<td>can eliminate cellular service across large areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community cellular base stations</td>
<td>do not require any remote infrastructure to operate, and are therefore better suited to emergency and disaster use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In this work,</td>
<td>we leverage a rural community cellular network, VillageCell (also called Kwiiza), as a starting point for a rapidly deployable cellular system for emergency and disaster networks [6, 8].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At high data rates and large bandwidth, communication channels become frequency selective. Single carrier modulation schemes do not perform well under this condition, which has necessitated a shift to multicarrier modulation schemes. Multicarrier schemes such as orthogonal frequency division multiplexing (OFDM) transform a frequency selective fading channel into a flat fading channel, simplifying or even eliminating equalization. This parallel data transfer method offers immunity to multipath fading and impulsive noise and can be efficiently implemented in digital hardware through the use of fast Fourier transform (FFT) [1, 2]. Despite these advantages, one major drawback is that OFDM signal exhibits high peak-to-average power ratio (PAPR). Such large dynamic range of these signals, when amplified, drive the high-power amplifier to operate in the nonlinear region. This results in two types of distortions:

Both extracts demonstrate the potentials of this type of pattern for producing a coherent argument in the Introduction, a requirement that must be fulfilled as this characteristically argumentative section is where writers have to convince readers of the relevance of the proposed work (Swales, 2004). This is illustrated in the NES scholar’s example, where the use of linear development helped the author argue for the need to “leverage[e] a rural community cellular network” and hence build a case for conducting the study. Another skillful employment of the linear method is illustrated in the NNES scholars’ example, where the author introduced “multicarrier modulation schemes” as the Rheme of the second clause and moved it to successive Theme by considering one such scheme, “OFDM,” which was maintained in the following Theme using reiteration. The remaining Themes in the example derived from the Rhemes preceding them, giving a strong sense of topic continuity and in turn sustaining the argument being made. Theme five in NES scholar’s text 7 (“Community cellular base stations”) is reiterated from Theme 3, “Commercial cellular base stations.”

Reiteration

The second most common TP pattern in the two groups is reiteration, comprising 37.51% of NES scholars’ and 44.38% of NNES scholars’ use of information development methods. While both recognized the usefulness of linking clauses by thematic repetition, they used it for slightly different purposes. In NES scholars’ Introductions (Table 8), successive thematic elements were
reiterated across several clauses to explain the organization of the paper or elaborate on the observed similarities of two systems/networks (EDNs). Although the chain of reiterated elements (Section I, II, IV, etc.) in the Theme of a sequence of sentences in Text 8 is not an identity chain but a similarity chain and it contributes to the organization of the text.

Table 8. *Reiteration in NES scholars’ introductions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Group</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NES author 8</td>
<td>In Section II</td>
<td>we investigate the development and origins of the existing RMa path loss models in 3GPP [1], [11], [23], and reveal important inconsistencies with the line-of-sight (LOS) model equation when used at frequencies above 9.1 GHz and at mm Wave bands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This work</td>
<td>also illuminates numerous questionable empirical correction factors used by ITU-R and 3GPP which make no physical sense for rural environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section III</td>
<td></td>
<td>describes 73 GHz propagation measurements conducted in rural Riner and Christiansburg, Virginia for LOS and non-LOS (NLOS) environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section IV</td>
<td></td>
<td>introduces a clear weather RMa multi-frequency close-in reference distance (CI) path loss model and a new RMa path loss model that consists of a close-in free space reference distance and incorporates the base station transmitter height (CIH).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section V</td>
<td></td>
<td>discusses empirical model results and uses the measured data and existing 3GPP RMa path loss models to develop the CI and CIH RMa path loss models that are accurate, simple to understand and implement, and may be used for frequencies from 0.5 GHz to over 100 GHz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NES author 7</td>
<td>Both types of networks</td>
<td>operate under challenging power and network backhaul conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>must be easy to deploy, operate, and maintain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDNs</td>
<td>have the additional requirements of serving large numbers of users, dealing with attempted usage in excess of network capacity, and operating in rapidly changing networking environments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Identity chains are realized through pronominal cohesion, instantial equivalence, the definite article and demonstratives. In contrast, the NNES Saudi scholars’ Introductions (Table 9) kept the Theme constant to indicate the significance of the topic discussed (CRAHNs) and provide further details about the design of an antenna (PIFA structure). Although the identified purposes of the TP pattern of reiteration in the two data sets may overlap, as it offers the authors a strategy to give additional information about a topic closely related to their work, it may be noted that the NES authors mainly drew on this TP pattern to describe the remaining sections of the paper at the end of the Introduction. Unlike the NES group, the NNES authors not only used reiteration to present an overview of the paper sections, but also to further discuss a point relevant to the present investigation and ultimately signal its importance to the study. Again, the examined NNES group seems to be highly aware of the linguistic choices available to them and hence the effective use of the reiteration progression pattern.

Table 9. *Reiteration in NNES Saudi scholars’ introductions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Group</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NNES author 7</td>
<td>The routing of CRAHNs</td>
<td>is a very important issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>because it</td>
<td>affects the performance in terms of delay and throughput of the entire network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The routing of a CRAHN</td>
<td>is different from the routing in conventional ad hoc networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>because it</td>
<td>faces a number of challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNES author 11</td>
<td>Several PIFA configurations</td>
<td>have been suggested for GSM/DCS/WLAN, 900/1800/2450 MHz bands in recent publications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A PIFA</td>
<td>that consists of three separate short-circuited patches with a triple feed integrated in a compact structure is presented in [12].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Another PIFA structure</td>
<td>has been designed in order to reduce the number of feeders used in the above case, and hence simplifies the structure and reduces the cost [13].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Group</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A meander patch PIFA structure</td>
<td>has been suggested to use only single feed instead of triple or dual feeds as in the above two cases.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moreover, the structure</td>
<td>uses two shorting pins.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch line strip PIFA</td>
<td>has also been proposed for triple band operation [14].</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In that multilayer structure,</td>
<td>two short-circuited branch strips are used.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Split Rheme

While linear and reiteration methods of development occurred with similar frequencies in the two data sets, a difference emerged in the occurrence of split Rheme pattern. Whereas the data of the NES authors included 82 (7.47%) instances of split Rheme pattern, the NNES Saudi scholars included 59 (6.01%). This pattern works over somewhat extended stretches of text, unlike the linear and reiteration patterns, which operate between adjacent clauses. Split pattern unfolds across many clauses because it carries several pieces of information revolving around one major topic, with each piece taking thematic position in a separate clause, forming a cluster of topically related clauses. Although there was a quantitative difference in the use of this pattern in the two data sets, the qualitative analysis found a similarity in terms of function of use (Table 10).

Table 10. Split Rheme pattern in the two data sets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Group</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NES author 2 (IEEE Transactions on Aerospace and Electronic Systems, 52/6, 2016)</td>
<td>The reconfigurable amplifier must satisfy performance criteria in several key areas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linearity allows spectrally confined transmission,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>power efficiency allows expeditious use of available energy,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and output power is critical for target detection.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NES author 9 (IEEE Transactions on Microwave Theory and</td>
<td>The literature does contain examples of using intelligent algorithms to perform faster impedance tuning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sun [9] and Sun and Lau [10] have demonstrated use of a genetic algorithm to perform</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author/Source</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Techniques</em>, 62/8, 2014</td>
<td>Antenna impedance matching based on the voltage standing-wave ratio (VSWR).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>du Plessis and Abrie</td>
<td>Examined the use of genetic algorithms and found them to be much slower than other algorithms for some impedance-matching optimization scenarios [12].</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNES author 1, <em>IET Generation, Transmission &amp; Distribution</em>, 12/10, 2018</td>
<td>Although SC is considered attractive in many fields of study, it suffers from three main disadvantages when applied to power systems: many external parameters must be set for optimization, global optimality is not guaranteed, and extensive computational times for simple problems may be required.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNES author 4, <em>IET Communications</em>, 4/3, 2010</td>
<td>Following this methodology, several contributions have been reported recently. For example, a set of switch-based multiuser access schemes were proposed in [9] in order to reduce the feedback load. In addition, the authors in [10] designed a scheduling algorithm that exploits MUDiv using multiple feedback thresholds. Furthermore, an investigation of the performance of multiuser selection diversity with absolute SNR-based scheduling and normalized SNR-based scheduling was conducted by [11].</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table ten shows that NES and NNES scholars used a split Rheme pattern for two purposes. One is to link clauses containing a list of points such as performance criteria (NES author 2) and system disadvantages (NNES author 1), the other to discuss previous work with the aim of supporting the adopted methodological approach (NES author 9 and NNES author 4). The use of this pattern allowed the authors to fill the Rheme with a statement indicating the existence of previous research and then pick studies from this body of research in the subsequent Themes. For example, the Rheme “does contain examples of using ...” (NES author 9) introduced the idea that there are examples of this type of algorithm being used in previous work, and such studies were then separately discussed in the following Themes, forming a split Rheme pattern. This skillful use of the split pattern establishes cohesion in the text as the elements in the Rheme signal connections with the successive Themes by highlighting the propositional content to be provided subsequently.

**Interpretation**

This study aimed to answer four research questions to investigate several thematic choices in NNES Saudi scholars’ writings compared to that of NES authors. To answer these questions, this study analyzed the message structure at local and global levels in 117 electrical engineering RA Introduction sections written by NES scholars and NNES Saudi scholars. The analysis highlighted the quantitative and qualitative similarities/differences between the two groups. Quantitatively, the Chi-square tests revealed that there were significant differences in the use of TP patterns across the two data sets but not for Theme types and thematic markedness. On the other hand, the functional analysis showed that the rhetorical purposes for the examined Theme choices were identical to a large extent but comparatively less identical for TP patterns. The present findings support earlier research in some respects and contradict it at others. The quantitative analysis revealed that NES and NNES scholars differ in their use of TP patterns. This is in line with Ventola and Mauranen’s (1991) finding that NNES scholars’ TP patterns/Theme choices lack variety, leading them to use a limited set of patterns. The current study showed that NES scholars’ introductions had more instances of linear and split-Rheme patterns compared to those written by NNES scholars. This variation in the number of TP patterns across the data indicates that NES scholars linked their clauses using an extensive range of TP chains, unlike their NNESS counterparts. However, unlike previous works (Mauranen, 1996; Mirahayuni, 2002; Ventola, 1994; Ventola & Mauranen, 1991), there was a limited divergence in Theme types and thematic markedness in the analyzed NNES authors’ and NES authors’ introductions. The fact that the present study observed few quantitative and qualitative differences of clause-level Theme choices might indicate that advanced NNES Saudi scholars might be as skillful as their NES counterparts in manipulating the thematic development of a text. There are several factors that might account for the lack of any major differences in Theme types and thematic markedness in the examined data sets. Unlike some of the previous works (Mauranen, 1996; Mirahayuni, 2002; Ventola, 1994; Ventola & Mauranen, 1991), the design of the current study may have controlled the contextual factors that typically introduce linguistic/rhetorical differences in the analysis of NES and NNES scholars’ RAs. Specifically, the present corpus was designed to ensure the comparability of the compiled NES/NESS scholars’ texts in terms of (1) academic authorship (i.e., authors’ writing expertise measured by the number of publications in leading journals), (2) publication context (i.e., fairly high-ranked journals) and
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(3) field and topic similarity (i.e., electrical engineering, wireless digital communication) to control any extraneous effects. Another possible factor for the observed similarity in Theme choices can be attributed to the relatively fixed nature of the examined field, which expects the topics being discussed in the Introduction to be “formulated in a highly standardized code” (Hyland, 2008, p. 20), and this specific formulation of information seemed to require the use of certain TP patterns, resulting in similar patterns of use across the two groups. Further, the high metalinguistic awareness of the examined NNES group might explain the overlap between the Theme choices in the two data sets. The NNES scholars’ status of the examined authors coupled with the push by the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education to publish in English in their home country (Al-Ouali & Shin, 2013) may have led them to consider taking EAP classes to better grasp the conventions of English academic writing, which made them more aware of the thematic choices available to them. It may also simply be that the NNES Saudi scholars’ publishing experience, including negotiating with peer-reviewers’ comments, drew their awareness to the importance of the level of the message in constructing a publishable RA and hence the observed effective use.

Little attention has been paid to the local and global message structures in English RAs written by Saudi scholars. The current study sought to examine this underexplored linguistic aspect in a sample of Saudi NNES scholars’ introductions and a comparable set written by NES scholars as the baseline for comparison. Analyzing the quantity and quality of NNES Saudi scholars’ use of Theme types, thematic markedness and TP chains in their published works can help material designers, academic instructors and novice researchers to gain valuable insights on these linguistic features. The findings of the present study thus can raise designers’, instructors’, and researchers’ awareness of the importance of the message structure in the RA genre and in academic writing in general.

Conclusion

This study was set out to compare electrical engineering RA introductions written by NES scholars and Saudi NNES scholars in terms of Theme choices and thematic markedness within a clause and TP patterns across clauses. The analysis of a) Theme types b) thematic markedness and c) TP patterns in electrical engineering RA introductions revealed two major findings. One is that the NES scholars and the NNES Saudi scholars used quantitatively and qualitatively similar topical, interpersonal, textual, and (un)marked Theme choices in writing the introduction section. The second main finding is that the two groups diverged in their inclusion of TP patterns, with significantly more linear and split-Rheme patterns in NES scholars’ data as the Chi-square test has shown (p < .05). Although there was a considerable quantitative variation in TP patterns across the data sets, the examined scholars seemed to have drawn on linear and split-Rheme patterns for similar rhetorical functions. In other words, while the two groups statistically differed in employing TP patterns, they generally used the patterns for the same functions. Taken together, the main results of the present study showed that the NNES Saudi scholars’ Theme choices within a clause quantitatively and qualitative match that of NES scholars’, with only qualitative but not quantitative similarities for the TP patterns. It is possible to say then that the NES scholars’ and the NNES Saudi scholars’ introductions overlap at a clause level but start to diverge beyond the clause.
Future research could develop the present findings by examining further TP patterns in RAs written by NES scholars and NNES scholars. For instance, TP patterns can be examined within one RA section or across sections to understand the actual differences between the two writer groups. Future studies could also investigate the use of Theme in RA introductions written by NNES scholars from other L1 backgrounds or in different disciplines. Another suggestion is conducting a contrastive study comparing RAs in Arabic to RAs in English in terms of Theme choices and TP chains.

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Williams, I. A. (2009). Discourse style and theme–rHEME progression in biomedical research article discussions: A corpus-based contrastive study of translational and non-translational Spanish. *Languages in Contrast, 9*(2), 225-266. doi: https://doi.org/10.1075/lic.9.2.03wil

**Appendix: Journals used in the corpus**

Advances in Materials Science & Engineering
Ain Shams Engineering Journal
Arabian Journal for Science & Engineering
BioScience
Computer Networks
Digital Communications and Networks
Electrical Engineering
Electrical Power & Energy Systems
IEEE Antennas and Propagation Magazine
IEEE Communications Magazine
IEEE Communications Surveys & Tutorials
IEEE INTELEC
IEEE Journal of Solid-State Circuits
IEEE Journal on Selected Areas in Communications
IEEE Sensors Journal
IEEE Systems Journal
IEEE Transactions on Aerospace & Electronic Systems
IEEE Transactions on Automatic Control
IEEE Transactions on Communications
IEEE Transactions on Information Forensics & Security
IEEE Transactions on Instrumentation and Measurement
IEEE Transactions on Signal Processing
IEEE Transactions on Wireless Communications
IEEE Transactions on Microwave Theory & Techniques
IET Communications
IET Electric Power Applications
Enhancing Critical Writing towards Undergraduate Students in Conducting Research Proposal

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Abstract: Critical thinking in writing for learners is needed to able to build a sense of crisis towards any issues. This capacity is required to create a framework based on reflecting, exploring, and solving some practical problems in their learning, work, and daily lives. This article aims to enhance critical writing towards undergraduate students in conducting research. The research method used is descriptive method with qualitative approach. The data used to analyze is gotten from many research articles in international journals discussing critical writing to conduct a research proposal. The research discussion and result state that learners’ capacity to be familiar with critical thinking writing is essential. It deals with brainstorming the problems of research topics, reflecting, and exploring the issues of research topics. Students should also have the capacity to write the research background, research problem, review of related literature, and research method based on the guidelines of the research proposal. The writing skill relating to the competence of organization, elaborating content, paying attention mechanics, language use, and vocabulary become the leading and supporting capital to be successful in conducting the research proposal.

Keywords: critical thinking, research proposal, writing

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Introduction
Writing the research proposal for students in the final semester is required. The research proposal is considered the academic and intellectual activity in which each of them has the task to finish it. It is the subject the students learn to pass their undergraduate program requirement containing three chapters starting from chapter one, chapter two, and chapter three. Chapter one deals with background, research problem, objective, and the like. Section two discusses the related literature used. Chapter three talks about research methodology used and commonly completed with an instrument. Because writing research proposal is the obligation course for those who would like to finish the study academically, it is important to affirm that writing research paper should be viewed as an extraordinary academic task requiring the students to be able to write well. The well-established writing means that the learners should be able to use the scientific framework in designing the research proposal. Besides that, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) curriculum at university also provides this subject for students in the seventh semester under the thesis writing class or research proposal class. The average length of time for conducting research proposal is less and more than one semester; it relates to the process of consultation with research proposal advisor(s) (Arifani, 2016; Jensen et al., 2009).

The common perception is that writing proposal is the central part to prove competence the students master in their discipline. There is inline course between ability in subject and writing research proposal. It means that anybody who is involved in writing research proposal should be started through a comprehensive understanding dealing with writing. Writing a research proposal should be supported with the self ability to organize mindset, thought, idea, fact, and problem that should be formulated into the research problem. There will not be a research problem in the research proposal without mindset making to organize the idea, fact, and issue to question. Therefore, plan will be becoming while there is a problem to discuss. In writing the research proposal, it is essential to consider the position of critical thinking to be able to read and formulate a question with the research problem. Critical thinking should be viewed as the point of view on how the one faces the challenge and fact. Critical thinking is the way of looking at anything proportionally and objectively. On the other side, writing capacity is necessary to pay attention very much. By having writing capacity, it will support the goal of conducting the research proposal. It is expected that doing a research proposal cannot stand by itself because the task requires excellent writing competence and critical thinking capacity that will assist the learners in getting through the research proposal.

Good writing skill drives the learners in organizing the structure of ideas and thought to elaborate in a unit of the whole research proposal. Writing as a skill has the primary function in generating ideas. The writing competence the learners have will be the capital for them in writing the pre-research paper. Writing proficiency involves much more than the transcription of speech. As a result, the learners will be able to express their ideas in a better way and they write more effectively. The writing competence used by the learners in writing research study helps them to obtain the detail of knowledge dealing with the issue discussed. By writing, the learners are motivated to sharpen their interpretation ability in displaying their experiences in order to improve their understanding concerning the topic to write (Hartley, 2008). Therefore, the learners should be trained to write as the capital in conducting research paper. More and more trained the students are in writing, it facilitates them in producing qualified paper (Elashri, 2013).
Critical thinking should also be understood to help learners in getting ideas. The ability to obtain ideas can be measured effectively on how the learners use the critical paradigm. It deals with providing students with opportunities to reflect, to make any explorations, and to solve some practical problems in their learning, work, and daily lives (Zhang & Kim, 2018; Thonney & Montgomery, 2019). As the effort to build the area of teaching and learning that support the goal of cognition and intelligence development, critical thinking is required. It is the core of English achievement so that the learners can differentiate the word usage in different context and understand the language usage (Tosuncuoğlu, 2018). By strengthening critical thinking capacity the learners have, it helps them to be active and productive life-long learners, and important problem solvers to lead for empowerment (Rezaei et al, 2011; Ku, 2009). Therefore, it is necessary to state that critical thinking has contributed towards shaping paradigm in reading text and context dealing with the ideas for research proposal interest.

Building critical thinking for students is necessary. The essential goal of critical thinking is creating the competence to identify the issues, to formulate the research problem, to analyze the problem, and to deliver the result analysis. In constructing critical thinking, it is important to get a comprehensive understanding of critical thinking itself as the set of skills and dispositions. It enables one to solve problems logically and to attempt to reflect autonomously through metacognitive regulation on problem-solving processes (Gotoh, 2015). These are based:

1) I pay attention to the information source (who wrote it);
2) I pay attention to the information destination (who reads it);
3) I pay attention to the information purpose (program);
4) I assume information from an opposing point of view;
5) I pay attention to a period of data (when it is made);
6) I pay attention to inconsistencies and information missing;
7) I pay attention to gaps in the argument;
8) If necessary, I reserve judgment;
9) If necessary, I make a conditional judgment.

It means that metacognitive regulations should be in line with critical thinking in which seven critical areas of critical thinking should be considered to sharpen the mechanisms in conducting the critical thinking process (Condon & Kelly-Riley, 2004):

1) Identification of a problem or issue;
2) Establishment of a clear perspective;
3) Recognition of alternative view;
4) Locating a point within an appropriate context(s);
5) Identification and evaluation of evidence;
6) Fundamental assumptions implicit acceptance or stated by the representation of a problem;
7) Implications assessment and potential conclusions.

Talking about critical thinking, it also deals with as a way of conveying opinions to other people. The ability to write effectively is a tedious process demanding a lot of effort that even many native speakers of English are unable to master the writing skill well (Celce-Murcia, 2001).
Writing is challenging for English Second language (ESL) learners who do not have the skills to write coherent and cohesive text. In institutions of higher learning, students should have the ability to write well-structured persuasive arguments (Butler & Britt, 2011). Many ESL students face difficulties in writing because they are not proficient in the language. Cheng and Chen (2009) find that writers are unable to convey their ideas clearly because they are weak in sentence structures. Therefore, building capacity for critical writing should be created step by step. Critical essay means the effort to jot the ideas from the environment into anything giving knowledge and meaning. Critical paper is coming from a vital mind made from critical writing. There will no be critical paper if there is no critical writing. Critical paper means the thought work that opens the new perspective and attends to deconstruct the old understanding into new understanding dealing with any topics. Because of it, there must be a capacity to find and interpreting and synthesizing content across sources in critical writing (Cooney et al., 2018). It means that the learners should have this capacity; they can have it by practicing in daily activities in critical writing. Each of them will be able to find, to interpret, and to synthesize content across sources because of being a habit. Critical essay should be based on the curiosity to answer the problem. Interest is the crucial point in learning to be able to write critically towards any topic. Therefore, keeping students active in class through writing activities in class will help students think critically. Writing activities in class dealing with issues in question will take the learners to be able to think critically. Through activities that are sandwiched between pre-writing, reflecting, and writing assignments, it contributes towards the process of critical writing. Improvements in building concept and in organizing the framework to write critically will be evaluated in-process and continuously by comparing learners’ pre-writing results with the final papers they make. Overall, developing hands-on activities increase critical thinking in writing, mainly when they write reflections in a journal shortly after completing an action (Piergiovanni, 2014).

In higher degree research (HDR) studies, research proposal (RP) is an admission requirement into a university and considered an essential step to finish one degree of study in higher education that will lead to a successful authoring of a higher degree thesis (Dunleavy, 2003). RP does not only display the research background and a research problem, but also elaborates the research design. RP highlights that failure to write a good research proposal may cause inability to be admitted into a higher degree research program or failure to be confirmed as the process of ending one degree of study in higher education (Kivunja, 2016). Consequently, writing research proposal should be viewed as a very complicated process involving several varieties of elements, such as introduction towards data analysis sections to yield convincing research proposal writing through reviewing worth-contributing journal articles (De Costa, 2018; Arifani, 2016; De Costa et al., 2011). Based on this consideration, this article aims to enhance critical writing towards undergraduate students.

**Method**

It is a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. The researcher takes the data from research articles talking about enhancing critical writing. There were five research articles relevant to the research problem-focused; the findings and discussion dealing with enhancing critical writing become the data source to discuss.
Descriptively and quantitatively, the display of findings were narrated as detail as possible to give elaboration dealing with enhancing critical writing in conducting pre-research. The discussions were displayed to explain the findings. The analysis technique applied was content analysis. It stated that the researcher positioned himself to get involved by reading the data critically, finding the main points of enhancing critical writing in conducting a research proposal, and synthesizing them into one single new perspective about the importance of enhancing critical writing in conducting a research proposal.

**Findings and Discussion**

**Findings**

It begins to expose several results on enhancing critical writing in conducting a proposal of research through several research articles. Those are shown in the tables below:

**Table 1. Implementing a Grant Proposal Writing Exercise in Undergraduate Science Courses to Incorporate Real-World Applications and Critical Analysis of Current Literature**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Abstract</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementing a Grant Proposal Writing Exercise in Undergraduate Science Courses to Incorporate Real-World Applications and Critical Analysis of Current Literature</td>
<td>Writing is an essential part of a successful career in science. As such, many undergraduate science courses have begun to implement writing assignments that reflect real-world applications and focus on a critical analysis of current literature; these assignments are often in the form of a review or a research proposal. The semester-long project described herein is a unique marriage of these two ideas: students first select a topic and conduct a literature review, and then choose an area of that same topic to investigate further in a peer-reviewed grant proposal. A modified version of this project, which incorporates peer-reviewed oral presentations, is also discussed. It is designed for an upper-level undergraduate course; it has 15-20 students. The approach (or parts of the approach) has been successfully incorporated in an advanced organic chemistry course, a biochemistry capstone course, and courses in endocrinology, as well as ecophysiology.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Cole, Inada, Smith, & Haaf, 2013)

Table 1 gives the detail elaboration that the writing competence should be practiced, and training to be able to write is supported by the students’ activities in line with the habit involved in the environment of writing. What is meant with writing environment is that every learner gets used to critical reading, creating critical analysis. Essential reading of texts will be the source for them to be able to be the ones who are active in finding the topics to write and to discuss. Good writing skill is obtained because of good reading skill. Because of it, the students will be able to think critically; what they write is the result of critical thinking.
Table 2. *Introduction to Research: A New Course for First-Year Undergraduate Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Abstract</th>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction to Research: A New Course for First-Year Undergraduate Students</td>
<td>Introduction to Research is a 4-credit elective course designed for first-year undergraduate students who have a strong interest in the chemical sciences and scientific research. The rich yet accessible field of gold nanoparticles was the theme connecting a multifaceted teaching/learning experience. In the first unit, students were introduced to the various research topics through searching, reading, discussing, presenting, and writing about primary literature. In the second unit, students carried out the synthesis and characterization of spherical gold nanoparticles using prescribed protocols to gain some general knowledge and hands-on skills. Writing a full laboratory report on the laboratory module helped students develop an intellectual appreciation of the discipline and greatly enhanced their scientific writing skills. In the last unit, each student pair carried out one research-style project to gain more comprehensive experience with the complex nature of the scientific inquiry. Students gained competency and confidence through working with a teammate and they came up with a research idea. It was followed by designing experiments, writing a proposal, conducting experimental work, learning laboratory safety, collecting, managing, analyzing data, problem-solving, revising experimental design, and presenting research findings to the class. To jump-start their research career on campus, each student arranged meetings with the instructor and another chemistry faculty, followed by a presentation on their research topics. This course has been offered two times in the spring semesters of 2016 and 2017. Course evaluations and postcourse assessment indicated positive short- and intermediate-term student outcomes.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: (Chen, 2018)

The main points presented in table 2 is about the importance of shaping the mindset in
1. Finding the topic to research;
2. Holding the review of related literature dealing with the issue;
3. Formulating the research problem;
4. Organizing the instrument to get the data;
5. Presenting the data and its analysis; and
Table 3. The Effect of the 6+1 Trait Writing Model on ESP University Students Critical Thinking and Writing Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Abstract</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Effect of the 6+1 Trait Writing Model on ESP University Students Critical Thinking and Writing Achievement</td>
<td>It aimed to determine the effectiveness of the 6+1 trait writing model on ESP university learners' critical thinking and writing achievement. It was considered that students who receive training using the 6+1 trait writing model would reveal greater gains in critical thinking and writing competence. Six instruments - designed by the researchers - included: (critical thinking skills checklist, writing skills checklist, critical thinking skills test, writing skills test and scoring rubric for critical thinking and analytic scoring rubric for writing) were used for data collection. Results revealed that the traditional method used to teach writing is not as effective as the 6+1 trait writing model that developed critical thinking and writing achievement. The experimental group outdid their counterparts in the control group in critical thinking and writing performance test scores. Source: (Qoura &amp; Zahran, 2018)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strengthening learners’ capacity for critical writing in conducting a research proposal can be done through:
1. Critical thinking skills checklist;
2. Writing skills checklist;
3. Critical thinking skills test;
4. Writing skills test;
5. Scoring rubric for critical thinking; and
6. Analytic scoring rubric for writing.

Table 4. Rhetorics of Proposal Writing: Lessons for Pedagogy in Research and Real-World Practice

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Title</th>
<th>Abstract</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rhetorics of Proposal Writing: Lessons for Pedagogy in Research and Real-World Practice</td>
<td>Proposals are ubiquitous documents with challenges beyond the writing task itself, such as project management, strategic development, and research. this article argues for a shift in how proposals are taught and conceptualized. By coaching students on the wide range of rhetorical practices that proposals require rather than how to produce proposal documents, they can better prepare future. Source: (Lawrence, Lussos, &amp; Clark, 2019)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What elaborated in Table 4 describes the importance of coaching students to be able to write the research paper. Coaching starts from real-world practice. The learners will be able to write the research paper critically and academically because of an attempt to shape the habit in critical thinking, academic thinking, and writing. Critical thinking, academic thinking, and critical
writing are learning patterns to create a constructive atmosphere for building the environment in a research paper. Because those are the efforts to make the students get habit in an essay, it is necessary to confirm that the research paper writing competence is the obligation for students to follow.

Table 5. Engaging Postgraduates in a Peer Research Group at the Research Proposal Stage in a Malaysian University: Support and Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Abstract</th>
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<tr>
<td>Engaging Postgraduates in a Peer Research Group at the Research Proposal Stage in a Malaysian University: Support and Challenges</td>
<td>Due to the increasing workloads for supervisors and the challenges in research proposals for postgraduates, the study focused on engaging 15 postgraduates in a Malaysian public university in a peer research group. The data were collected from observations of the group meetings, video-recorded peer feedback and follow-up interviews. The qualitative analysis of the data indicates that the research group supported the postgraduates through peer feedback practices, learning how to present proposals and defend themselves and find directions in research proposals. Although their engagement was challenged by initial reservations of some postgraduates to present their proposals and provide feedback and issues related to provision, reception and reliability of peer feedback, these challenges were reduced through mentoring and instructional strategies. While peer research groups represent valuable pedagogical support that complements supervisors' support to postgraduates in developing their research proposals, the value should be maximized by integrating supervisors in research groups.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Saeed & Ghazali, 2019)

Teaching students in learning to write the research paper can be carried out in several ways. One of them is based on the findings by Saeed and Ghazali (2019) that states the necessity of the research group. Research group for students in learning to write the research paper is needed, as illustrated in Table 5. By research group, the learners in the group share their own experiences on how to determine the topic, formulate the research problem, to write the research background, to enrich the background with detailed research results dealing with the issue to research and to describe the research method used. In the research group, the learners do not only learn to shape the mindset, but also organize the ideas into the well-organized research paper. A well-organized research paper means that the students’ competence in language competence is needed and is to be trained. Although the ideas dealing with the topic to research is challenging and exciting, the students’ language use is weak; it will lessen the research paper quality from the language use itself. Critical thinking in writing a research paper should be taught and learned through practice to write. Practicing to write, gradually, will change the mindset from passive into active.
Discussion

The message in Table 1 delivers meaning that competence in conducting research proposal to determine problem research, background, and so forth or from the beginning up to end should be preceded with the critical writing capacity to produce a qualified research proposal paper. It means that when the students start to write the proposal by considering the well-established structure, organizing the thought into sentences from the beginning until the end. The indicator of a qualified research proposal is not only measured from the topic talked about, but also the writing framework in mapping background, research problem, and research methodology. Such skill appears in the research proposal when writing skill is well established.

It is in line with the message in Table 2 that principally, the researcher’s ability to use the literature for discussing the finding is important. Because the research paper is dealing with the written form, it is necessary to confirm that the writing competence in academics should be stated explicitly. The writing competence in the academic paper aims to support and complete the ability of scientific paradigm. The experimental paradigm with writing skill in academic paper will help the researcher-learner in formulating the research problem; it will produce the self capacity in developing academic writing for research paper. When academic writing is internalized in the researcher-learner, it gives the path for researcher-learner to think critically dealing with the topic in question.

The result of researching capacity for writing the research paper is based on critical thinking; it can be considered as the extraordinary step to build the writing framework in critical thinking for research paper. The qualified research paper is successfully conducted because of critical writing attendance for a research paper. Critical writing itself is the process result of writing critically. Here, there is a context understanding of critical thinking and academic writing for research paper. It is necessary to deliver perception for all researcher-learners so that all learn for the goal.

The main point in Table 3 is that the critical thinking skill checklist helps to measure how critical the students are in formulating the research problem, elaborating the research background, writing the review of related literature, and research methodology. Writing skill checklist functions to find out the accuracy of learners’ writing starting from organization, mechanics, content, vocabulary, and language use. The critical thinking skill test is used to measure the critical level of the topic to discuss. Writing skills test is for mapping and finding out the qualified level of writing. The scoring rubric for critical thinking contains the writing assessment. Analytic scoring rubric for writing is used for counting the range of students’ competence in writing in detail so that this result scoring rubric can deliver the overall achievement the students have in writing the research proposal.

Such a thing that is called the 6+1 Trait Writing Model needs to be looked like an effort to improve the competence in writing the research paper. Writing competence for a research paper should be trained as sustainable as possible. Writing a research proposal is the fact when the students have a critical writing framework: critical thinking for writing. The writing competence attends and is inherent in learners’ capacity because of being accustomed to writing for research paper.
Therefore, Table 4 opens news understanding that writing needs habit; habit can be the fact while the students are required to be able to interact with the event and data. From the event, they collect the ideas to reformulate into topics to discuss in the paper. Paper will be meaningful and gives the additional value while research problem formulation is carried out correctly and rightly based on the academic mechanisms for research interest.

It is supported by table 5 that practicing to write contributes towards paradigm shift so that the students have the linguistic competence in using the language for training the open mindset. More practicing they do, it will drive the students to be able to find the topic quickly, to formulate the research problem clearly, and organize the thoughts in well-organized utterances in written from. The writing competence attends because there is practicing to write and elaborate on the ideas, issues, topics, and so forth. Principally, the students’ critical writing competence for a research paper can be embodied because of continuous and sustainable practice.

**Conclusion**

Critical writing strategies for conducting a research proposal become necessary and essential to state that writing critically dealing with a research proposal should be enhanced for undergraduate students. Improving those strategies mean to teach them to learn to find out the topics of research available with the passion of research topic. The availability of the students’ research topic passion will make them comfortable in conducting the research paper. Critical writing is not only viewed as the criticalness of finding the research topic, but also provides the students to be able to elaborate, to organize, and to formulate research background, research problem, review of related literature, and research method in well-organized text. Well-organized text is dealing with the organization, content, vocabulary, mechanics, and language use.

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Conflicting and Challenging Patriarchal and Liberal Feminist Ideologies and Norms in Afghanistan: Critical Stylistic Study of Khaled Hosseini’s And the Mountains Echoed

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Abstract
The study unveils the Afghan patriarchal ideology and norms that are in conflict and challenge with liberal feminist ideology in Khaled Hosseini’s (2013) And the Mountains Echoed, depicting the cultural and socio-political context of Afghanistan. Tools of critical stylistics, developed by Jefferies (2010), have been used to delve into the conflict as mentioned above. The conflict in ideologies leads to gender differences, and inequalities. Patriarchs view liberal feminism and its motive as a threat to patriarchal social structure. The study reveals how women challenge the monopoly and status quo of patriarchs to raise their voice for their emancipation and free will in matters of their life. Women in Afghanistan are the nang (pride) and namoos (honor) of their families. Men, especially patriarchs, misperceive the status and image of women as damaging their reputation if they are granted full freedom in matters and walks of life. Nila Wahdati, a liberal feminist character in the novel, challenges the stereotypical image of women as fragile, fickle, and prone to sex. She even resists and negates the imposed traditional, conservative ideology and supremacy of her father. Through the use of language, women challenge the Afghan patriarchal thinking. The novelist has manipulated verb processes to represent the patriarchal ideology of the Afghan men, while the discourse-producers utilize nouns and modifications to indicate patriarchs’ contrary thinking towards women. Linguistic tools, like nouns, pronouns, pre-modifiers, negative evaluative words, epistemic modality, and subordinate clauses, describe the conflict and challenge between patriarchal and liberal feminist ideologies.

Keywords: critical stylistics, gender discrimination, ideology, liberal feminism, patriarchy

DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol11no2.11
1. Introduction

The study aims to investigate how liberal feminism and the Afghan patriarchy are in conflict with each other and how women manipulate language to challenge the monopoly and norms of patriarchy in the chosen excerpt from Hosseini’s (2013) *And The Mountains Echoed*. The novel is not a linear narration of different actions in the lives of the main characters. Instead, each chapter presents events from the perspective of the main characters. Researchers have highlighted several issues, like womanhood, the role of the economy as a trap, ethnicity, and post-colonialism in the novel under study. However, nobody has investigated the role of ideology in the discursive and social practices of patriarchal and feminist conflict. Discourse plays a vital role in the (re)presentation of the ideological construction of the issues mentioned above. The ideologies are constructed, presented, and resisted in discourse. The researchers consider Van Dijk’s (1995) definition of discourse for the critical discussion of the interplay of discourse and ideology in the (re)presentation of conflicting patriarchal and feminist practices. Discourse-producers construct new ideologies, and confirm the already existing ones in discourse. In-text and talk, people express these ideologies explicitly or implicitly. Surface structures include “the variable forms of expression at the level of phonological and graphical realization of underlying syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, or other abstract discourse structures” (p. 23). They have hardly any specific meanings but manifest the underlying schematic sense having their own elaborate and systematic plans. The surface structures control the understanding of the speakers and listeners. However, schematic structures are not affected by ideologies. Moreover, schematic structures have their importance as they determine the order in discourse. As the study focuses on the role of ideology in the construction of conflicting patriarchal and feminist discursive and social practices, these variables/concepts are discussed in detail below:

2. Review of the Relevant Literature

This section discusses the different variables and concepts essential for the understanding of the issues under study.

2.1. Gender as an ideological, social structure of dichotomy

The word “gender” has been first used in the United States in the 1970s as a substitute term for “sex.” The name “gender” counters the common belief that our social roles, as men and women, are biologically determined. Humans, as men and women, learn some attitudes, behaviors, and expectations in the society that define and distinguish our gender from the biologically controlled qualities of sex (Krieger, 2003). Likewise, Ford (2002) believes that hormones and genes control maleness and femaleness (reproduction) of an individual, and has nothing to do with the social role as a man and woman. Because of the socially controlled functions, the male is considered superior to the woman. Instead, society regards femininity as inferior and derogatory.

Consequently, gender is depicted and typified by an asymmetrical distribution of power in society, assigning, sometimes, specific responsibilities and entitlements only to men. The social construction of gender is used by people to discriminate against women, who are considered weak (Mhindu, 2014). Sex is a biological category, like age. Sex serves as an underlying force in the differentiation of expectations, attitudes, and roles for a man and a woman in society. Gender is, unnecessarily, based on these socially experienced expectations, beliefs, and roles (Eckert, 1989).
Similarly, Butler (1990) opines that sex, sexuality, and gender are social fabrications through a continuous practice of stylized acts. The recurring nature of these acts, over an expanded time, naturalizes these acts and makes them integral to gender. She refers to this practice as "performativity." Gendering is an involuntary process as there is nobody that society has not gendered before their birth. Gender is not what one is; instead what one does. She opines, further, that gender is a manner attributed to a body, which is constructed and has no relevance to the elemental truth. It is more ideological. It tickles down to our routine life and structures our minds. In this process, gender permanently settles down in our minds. She believes that gender is constructed and (re)presented through discourse.

Stereotyping, according to Sunderland (2004), is one of the reasons for gender portrayal. The stereotypical portrayals depict women in disfavor. She uses the term “co-construction of meaning” because different people interpret these stereotyping in various manners. Not only the speaker but also the listener is engaged in the construction of meaning. Therefore, the issue of gender (re)presentation is not as simple as it seems on the surface. She also argues that “gender as a set of differences is being (at least) supplemented by a notion of gender as a construct, or idea, dissociated from dimorphically sexed human beings” (p. 25).

Rolleri (2013) argues that, historically, three schools of thought influence the definition of gender. These are: “evolutionary theory, social role theory, and social constructivist theory” (p. 1). The evolutionary theory estimates the social role and importance adopted by women by being the producers of children. In social role theory, gender is a static and fixed belief. The third theory (social constructivist theory) presents the changing position of masculinity and femininity with time. Most of the proponents of gender believe and support this third approach towards gender.

2.2 Ideology and language: a critical review

Language is an essential aspect of communication in society. The study of language is a researchable domain in linguistic, literary, and discourse studies. Language serves as a ground for ideology. Many researchers believe that it is useless to study ideology without the study of language (Fairclough, 1992; Fowler, 1991; Hall, 1982; Trew, 1979; van Dijk, 1993). Secondly, life and life practices are (re)presented through language (Scannel, 1998). Therefore, language is not an abstract phenomenon. Instead, it carries ideologies (van Dijk, 2002). Further, it is a source of instruction, and discourse-producers cannot use it in a vacuum (Garrett & Bell, 2005). Consequently, language is used as a political device that carries signals, images, and notions to construct, present, and replicate culture, social life, and politics (Alaghbary, Alazzany & Al-Nakeeb, 2015).

There is a close link between ideas, beliefs and ideology, and language. This link functions as a means and product in the political arena. Democracy, enlightenment, human rights, and emancipation are represented, and resisted through language (Dijk, 1998; Wodak & Weiss 2004; Wodak, 2006). Ideology may have two basic interpretations. Firstly, it is a false (re)presentation of truth, and secondly, it is a certain feature of thinking and acting (Wodak, 2007). Further, ideology has also defined as “perceptions and opinions about the social and political realities of societies, which aim at truths and generalizations, although they contain untruths, half-truths or
unfinished systems of thoughts and beliefs” (Wodak, 2007, p. 2). She also sees ideology as a means of constructing and sustaining asymmetrical power relations (Wodak, 2001).

According to Bhasin, patriarchy “refer(s) to male domination, to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterize a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways” (2004, p. 3). Patriarchy justifies the dominant position of man and the subordinate position of women. Walby (1990) sees patriarchy as a system of practices and structure used for the exploitation and domination and oppression of women. By this, she means that patriarchy does not accept the equal role of men and women, and believes in biological determinism. It works as a system in society. Therefore, patriarchy depicts the systematized practice of men’s dominance over women.

Millett (1977) believes that this system is so secure that every oppressed woman gives consent to the oppression she meets. The structure of patriarchy pre-supposes the dominance and superiority of men over women. Men should have all power in their hands in family, society, and state. It deprives women of all legal rights. As a result, men impose restrictions on women’s mobility along with the rights for equality, and property. Violence, low wages, son preference, dowry, discriminatory laws, oppressive use of religion, and deprivation from education are the tools of patriarchy (Sultana, 2011).

On the other hand, liberal feminist ideology believes in the basic ideas of democracy, equal citizenship, autonomy, and universal rights (Tong, 2009). Ideology supports the rights of the individual on the concept of justice, equality, and equal opportunities (Maynard, 1995). Liberal feminism works on the presumption that there is no fundamental biological difference between a woman and a man. Therefore, women should have equal educational, social, political, and legal rights (Nienaber and Moraka, 2016). The ideological basis of liberal feminism rests on the perception that “gender differences are not based in biology, and therefore that women and men are not all that different” (Lorber, 1997, p. 9). Women and men are equal with equal civil rights. Therefore, society should treat both equally, and their sameness demands equality before the law (Lorber, 1997; Khattak, 2011).

2.3. Theoretical perspective

The critical analysis is done in its textual, cultural, and socio-political contexts to investigate the topic, in light of the selected data. The analysts apply Jefferies’s (2010) critical stylistic tools to the chosen passage from a critical feminist perspective of Lazar (2005, 2007). Ideology, gender, and power are elusive. Further, the society ascribes gender because of social practices like “social identity, including sexuality, ethnicity, age, (dis)ability, social class and position, and geographical location” and patriarchal ideological system (Lazar, 2007, p. 141). Gender ideologies, within a context, are discursively structured, asserted, and defied in text and talk. She believes that gender is “an ideological structure that divides people into two classes, men and women, based on a hierarchical relation of domination, and subordination, respectively” (p. 146). The hierarchical relation results in segregation of responsibilities between men and women, depending on the context of time and place.
Patriarchal ideology is structural; that is, it is the outcome of social practices and social institutions. Therefore, it is difficult to explain the asymmetrical relations between genders. Institutions, in a culture, are so much structured on gender ideology that they are male-centered. Not only men but also women are an accomplice in the pervasiveness of gendered ideology in their social practices through their accustomed different attitudes and conduct. In some cases, overreacting against stereotyped gendered roles strengthens them further. Gender ideology remains domineering. However, it seems more acceptable and destined than hegemonic to the people in the patriarchal setup. Discursive sources sustain the taken for granted and common sense nature of these ideologies. Resultantly, asymmetries are mystified and obscured in discourse. One such ideology is the “naturalness” of the belief of “two sexes.” The “twoness” of gender has resulted in the exploitation, oppression, discrimination, and victimization of women. Therefore, the primary concern of critical feminists is to critique the taken for granted notions about women.


The analysts carry out analysis of the selected text in light of the critical stylistic tools developed by Jeffries (2010). She has developed a new approach to the study of texts by plugging the gap between stylistics and CDA (Xiang, 2011). The tools developed by Fairclough, for his three-dimensional model, are further expanded by Jeffries in her book Critical Stylistics: The Power of English. Reeve (2014) argues that Jeffries has combined the strengths of stylistics and CDA to uncover hidden ideologies in a text. Alaghbary (2013) opines that ideologically loaded language consists of structures, and critical stylistics offers the tools of critical analysis to identify and understand the ideological layers. The author considers the work an extension of the works done by Fowler et al. (1979). The tools are not new; instead, she adds to the already existing tools of modality and transitivity by plugging the gap in the tools developed by Fairclough (1989), Fowler (1991), and Simpson (1993).

She has presented ten tools for the critical analysis of ideologically loaded discourse. The first tool is naming and describing, through which the analysts critically analyze nouns, names, descriptions of nouns, and nominalizations. The second tool is representing actions/events/states. This tool analyzes transitivity, actions, and verbs. In the equating and contrasting tool, the researcher analyses the structure of language and the effect constructed through parallel structures, copula structures, apposition, and oppositions. The fourth tool is exemplifying and enumerating, through which the analysts critically analyze the nature of examples given in the text, and the listing structure of a sentence. The next tool is prioritizing. In the application of this tool, the researcher takes into consideration the given and new information structure of a sentence, the low-level structure of a sentence, cleft sentences, active and adjectival transformations, and focuses on the compulsory last portion of the sentence for the prioritized information. The implying and assuming tool critically analyzes the structure of a text for the presentation of suppositions and implicature. The seventh tool is negating. In this tool, the researcher analyzes negative particles (e.g., not, no, etc.) and negative pronouns for an alternative, hypothetical, and possible situations presented in the text. The eighth tool is hypothesizing, where the hypothetically constructed worlds are critically examined by analysts through modality, nature of the narration, and conditional structures. In the ninth tool, presenting other’s speech and thoughts, the researcher analyses others’ speeches and thoughts. The tenth tool is representing time, space, and society, through which the
researcher analyzes the relation between the discourse-producer(s) and the respondent, and time and place deixis.

To analyze a passage, the analysts have numbered the sentences. The tools with their respective double-quoted function features are in a separate portion for the sake of convenience. Finally, analysis is done in a separate section. A large number of passages, in the text, present the topic under study. However, the analysts have selected a sample passage for analysis in the study.

3.1. Ideological conflict and challenge to the Afghan patriarchal norms

The chosen excerpt is taken from chapter six of Hosseini’s *And the Mountains Echoed* (2013) and is part of the interview conducted by Etienne Boustouler from Nila Wahdati. The interviewer asks questions regarding her poetry, and she says that she is proud of her poetry. However, people did not appreciate her poetry in Kabul. People considered her to be the “pioneer of anything but bad taste, debauchery, and bad character” (p. 211).

(1) What I can tell you, however, is that no one was touting me in Kabul.
(2) No one in Kabul considered me a pioneer of anything but bad taste, debauchery and immoral character.
(3) Not least of all, my father.
(4) He said my writings were ramblings of a whore.
(5) He used that word precisely.
(6) He said I’d damaged his family name, beyond repair.
(7) He said I had betrayed him.
(8) He kept asking why I found it so hard to be respectable…
(9) I told him I did not care for his notion of respectable.
(10) I told him I had no desire to slip the leash around my own neck.
(11) I suppose that only displeased him more…
(12) But I do understand his anger…
(13) He was a patriarch, was he not?
(14) And you were a direct challenge to all he knew, all that he held dear.
(15) Arguing, in a way, through both your life and your writing, for new boundaries for women, for women to have a say in their own status, to arrive at legitimate selfhood.
(16) You were defying the monopoly that men like him had held for ages.
(17) You were saying what could not be said.
(18) You were conducting a small, one-woman revolution, one could say.
(19) And all this time, I thought I was writing about sex…
(20) Well, I was angry.
(21) I was angry about the attitude that I had to be protected from sex.
(22) That I had to be protected from my own body.
(23) Because I was a woman.
(24) And women, don’t you know, are emotionally, morally, and intellectually immature.
(25) They lack self-control, you see, they’re vulnerable to physical temptation.
(26) They’re hypersexual beings who must be restrained lest they jump into bed with every Ahmad and Mahmood. (Hosseini, 2013, pp. 211-212)
4. Critical Analysis and Discussion

The passage under study highlights ideology, power abuse, discrimination, oppression, and victimization in the Afghan patriarchal society. The epistemic modality “can” in sentence 1 shows that the Nila Wahdati stretches her statement that she is not sure whether she is proud of her poetry or not. Still, she is sure that nobody advertised her positively in Afghanistan. The negation “no one” presents the possibility of being promoted by someone. The ideologically loaded prepositional phrase “in Kabul” is of significance. First of all, Kabul stands for the country Afghanistan, and secondly, it constructs the effect that her own country is a patriarchal society, where a woman, especially that woman who writes about her sexual affairs, is not promoted. Instead, she is killed. It also constructs the effect that in France, she is touted (as is clear from the interview).

The second sentence also uses the same phrase in the subject area of the sentence. In this way, Nila Wahdati presents an idea, which is not the main proposition. She introduces an NRT in the sentence with the help of MC “considered.” The information which follows the MC is Nila’s presentation of people’s thinking about her. A contrastive (X but Y) is given in the noun phrase part of the sentence. The phrase is in the form of three-part listing. She presents two negative modifications (“bad taste” and “immoral character”) and a negative noun “debauchery.” Ideologically, the focus is on the negative pre-modifiers “bad” and “immoral.” As a result, the negative thoughts of people (ideology) about Nila, in the Afghan patriarchal society, are constructed. People in Kabul do not value her poetry.
Sentence 3 presents an implicature in the phrase “Not least of all.” The phrase particularizes “my father.” All the people (as shown by “no one”), particularly her father, are against her, and her poetry. The phrase separates and prioritizes the deixis of the person (“my father”). The sentence constructs the effect that, now onward, the displeasure of a father has been presented. Through an Indirect Speech (IS), in sentence 4, Nila Wahdati presents two nouns “ramblings” and “whore.” Even her father declares her poems to be playful activities of a prostitute. As the statement is in IS, so the readers/listeners have presented the narrator’s interpretation of the speaker’s words. In Afghanistan, it is unlikely that a father may use such words for his daughter, rather he, in the name of honor, may kill her. The noun “whore” is presented in italics, which means that it has been taken by Nila from the original statement, and secondly, it communicates that it is ideologically loaded. The word “whore” depicts that her poems are about her sexual experiences. In the same interview, Nila herself declares that if you dig her poems, “you will find all manner of dishonor” (p. 210). She prioritizes “whore” through a narratorial comment in sentence 5. The adverb “precisely” is the focal point in the sentence. Her father has no misconception about her and her poems.

Sentence 6 is also an IS, and Nila Wahdati presents the speech of her father. A material action intentional (MAI) “damaged” is used, which depicts that she is intentionally involved in such activities because of which he feels ashamed. The verb “damaged” also serves as an iterative (state verb), which assumes that the family enjoys respect before the adventures of Nila. The noun phrase “his family name” is used as an object of the sentence and supposes that in the patriarchal societies, male represent their families. However, women are the honor of their families. Any misadventure, on the part of women, leads to shame for the whole family. The prepositional phrase “beyond repair” signifies that in the Afghan society, if a family’s name is damaged once, it is not easy to repair it, and people remember the matter of shame for generations. Another MAI “betrayed” is used with the pronoun “I” (Nila) in sentence 7. Her father believes that she has “damaged” and “betrayed” him. The verb processes show the perception of her father about her poems. The MAI nature of actions suggests the active role (real actions) of Nila behind the poems. He thinks that she is the custodian of her honor and pride, but she disgraces him.

Sentence 8 is a narrator’s report of speech act (NRSA), where verbalization “asking” is used with the lexical verb “kept.” Its primary function is that of modality because it shows consistency and regularity of the action. The lexical verb also functions as iterative because it presents the frequency of the question. Her father asks her the same question regularly. The discourse implies that Nila Wahdati does not care about her father and his anger. The prepositional phrase presents the ideologically loaded information. The phrase “to be respectable” is an adjectival transformation as well. The focal point is that her father is worried about society, instead of her daughter. He considers “his family name” important, and believes in the societal norms of respectability. In the Afghan patriarchal society, a woman is respected if she wears a veil, stays inside her home, and is submissive to her parents. The discourse helps in understanding the filial expectations in the patriarchal society.

To a question asked by the interviewer about her response to her father’s questions, Nila responds that she is not bothered by his questions. The negation “did not” presents the possible situation of “care” in patriarchal societies. The low-level information is in the prepositional
phrases. The modification “his notion” suggests that Nila and her father have different notions of respectability. There may be difference in the opinions and ideologies of people in a society. In addition, respectability is a relative term but her father imposes his thoughts over her. The second phrase, “of respectable,” presents the standards of society, as the norms for being respectable. In a patriarchal society, a daughter cannot say the same to her father. If she dares, then she can go to any limit to enjoy her life. However, it is challenging to talk like this, especially in Afghanistan. The next sentence uses boulimaic modality “desire” to show the wish of Nila Wahdati. The phrase “to slip a leash around my own neck” uses an implicature that constructs the meaning that she wants no restraints in her life. She wants to live a free and liberal life, without the thought of being respectable. Sentences 9 and 10 use parallel structure to reject the patriarchal norms of respectability. Men oppress women in the name of respectability. A society develops women’s perception from their childhood that they are the custodian of their family’s honor. The practice is common in patriarchy, especially in the Pashtun culture. In the given discourse, one ideology conflicts with another. The discursive construction of values of the patriarchal society and resistance towards it underpins Lazar’s (2007) ideas that gender ideology is discursively constructed, asserted, and defied as well.

Sentence 11 is the narratorial comment of the interviewer. The lexical verb, “suppose,” functions as modality and constructs a hypothetical situation in the sentence. The interviewer retains the focus of the interview by manipulating and controlling the interviewee. The negative verb “displeased” presents the alternative action of being pleased. The lexical verb (modality), along with negation, strongly constructs the imaginary world of displeasure in the mind of the readers/listeners. The iterative “more” suggests that her father is already not happy with her (as is evident from the analysis). The interviewer, again, uses the dummy “do” to shift focus to “understand” in sentence 12. The mental cognition (MC) “understand” is the sensor of cognition, and the phenomenon is “his anger.” The discourse focuses on issues of filial ideology against that of a liberal and educated daughter.

In sentence 13, the discourse-producer (interviewer) uses an RI structure to equate “He” with “patriarch.” The structure of the sentence establishes the fact that her father was a patriarch. He was behaving more like a patriarch than a father. The negative tag question in the sentence stops the reader/listener from searching for any other alternative of “patriarch.” The conjunction, “And,” at the beginning of sentence 14, links the present idea with the preceding one. The two ideas challenge each other. The RI structure of the sentence establishes a stable relationship between the actor (“you”) and the attribute (“direct challenge”). The pre-modifier, “direct,” downplays the noun. She is his daughter, who lives inside his home. She seems to have challenged her father in the face. If it is some other woman, it will not be that much trouble for her father. The preposition, “to,” introduces apposition/parallel structure. The iterative “all” limits his cognition (“knew”). The effect constructed by the sentence is that her father is a patriarch, and that is what he knows only. He considers patriarchy to be the only values of a society, which Nila challenges. In patriarchal societies, fathers think more like a man than a father.

The interviewer uses nominalization “arguing” in sentence 15, so there is a lack of dynamism in it. Secondly, because of the lack of enough details, the word remains ambiguous. Nominalization dilutes the modification, “direct challenge.” The sentence lacks dynamism because
of the lack of action verb. The prepositional phrases quickly process the information. However, it constructs the effect that the interviewer, being a man of the West, supports and encourages Nila, because she stands against her father for the benefit of the rest of women to discover new things in life, outside home, in expressing themselves as women. This stand will help women to reach their “legitimate self-hood.” However, the pre-modifier downplays the noun and supposes the illegitimate nature of the affairs Nila has with men. The apposition structure constructs the effect that it is the birthright of women to do whatever they desire, even if that is at the cost of their parents’ displeasure, and disgrace.

The interviewer uses negation, “defying,” to present another aspect of reality. The reality challenges the idea presented in the preceding sentence. The object, “monopoly,” expresses the idea that, in patriarchal societies, there are certain kinds of men who want to sustain and maintain the patriarchal system. These few men control the whole society. The subordination clause starts with “that.” As it is not a higher level of information, it is not open to scrutiny. She has been encouraged to challenge the patriarchal norms, but she is not made aware that she has challenged her father. The simile equates her father with other people. Therefore, “her father” loses its value because he is just like the rest of the men.

In sentence 17, the interviewer uses verbalization, where the goal is “what could not be said.” The modality is epistemic because it presents the strong certainty of not saying anything against the patriarchal norms of the society. Negation presents the alternative of saying. The goal, in passive construction, prioritizes “You.” The effect of the sentence is that she is the first to talk on sensitive issues in Afghanistan. Then, the interviewer uses pre-modifiers “small” and “one-woman” (in sentence 18). The pre-modifiers downplay the noun and suggest a large scale revolution brought by a large number of women. Only then will Afghanistan be modernized and enlightened. The interviewer uses past continuous verbs in sentences 16, 17, and 18 (“defying,” “saying,” and “conducting” respectively) to focus on the continuity of the action till a certain time. Before Nila goes to France, she struggles, according to the interviewer, against the monopoly of men. The subject of the verbalization part (“one”) is vague, so the statement seems uncertain, but as the statement is presented first (fronting), so Nila’s focus is retained on it. The tense of the discourse depicts that, in Kabul, Nila fights against the patriarchal ideology, all her life. Now in France, she has stopped fights against patriarchal values, as the country provides the freedom to women.

In sentence 19, Nila Wahdati uses the deixis of time. The demonstrative, “this,” to the time suggested in the statement of the interviewer. The subordinate clause mentions the thought process and uses past continuous verb (focusing on the continuity of the action). The prepositional phrase “about sex” is mentioned at the end so that readers/listeners could focus on the main proposition of writing, rather than sex. The statement is believed in by the readers/listeners because it is an indirect thought. The interviewer tries to encourage and support her poetry. However, Nila knows the nature of her writings. Her discourse seems to stand directly opposite to that of the interviewer. The interviewer mentions some of the “overtly erotic” poems, and tells Nila that sex is part of her “creativity.” He believes that the poems are “angry indictments of Afghan gender roles.” In this way, he comes to the point of Nila but again molds the discourse in another direction.
Sentence 20 is an adjectival transformation and prioritizes the word “angry.” The tense of the sentence is in the past. The italics, “was,” stresses the feelings of anger in the past time. The next sentence repeats the same adjectival transformation to emphasize the feeling of anger once again. The prepositional phrase “about the attitude” contains the ideologically laden information. Most of the parents, in patriarchal societies, consider it their responsibility to protect their children from the wrong. In Afghanistan, a father never wants his daughter to get involved in illegitimate sexual drives. Nila Wahdati talks about this attitude and presents her point of view. She does not favor this attitude of her father. The subordinate clause has a passive structure with epistemic “had to” (strong certainty). Being a woman, she is not allowed to have sex outside marriage.

Sentence 22 starts from “That” and functions as a subordinate clause of the main proposition that she “was” angry. It is in the passive structure, prioritizing “I.” The epistemic modality illustrates strong certainty. A woman has her own body, but in the Afghan patriarchal culture, she represents her family and the honor of her parents. She is not an individual but the custodian of the honor of her parents. She has no right over her body. Sentence 22 is in parallel structure with sentence 21. Thus, “sex” is made synonymous with “my own body.” Nila believes that it is her body, and she should decide her body needs. Sex is the basic need of a body. She is angry because her father interferes in her biological needs. In patriarchal societies, women are repeatedly told by men (and women too) what to do and what not to do. As a result, the “ritualized repetition” materializes sex in society (see Butler, 1990, for more details).

The next sentence is also a subordinate clause, which starts from “Because.” She justifies her anger; that is why the RI statement is present in the subordinate clause. No parents, in the Afghan culture, want their children to get involved in illegal sexual gratification. In particular, women need protection because such women are not only rejected by men to marry, but most of the girls of their family bear the consequences because they are not married by anyone. In the Pashtun society, every woman of the village is considered as a sister and is respected so. However, Nila is not happy with this attitude and makes affairs with men because of her anger against society and her father.

She starts sentence 24 with a coordinating conjunction. The ideology of male in patriarchal societies has been presented with the help of three-part listing to represent women as “immature” and weak symbolically. She appeals to the mental cognition of the interviewer by using “know” in an interrogative manner in the middle of a sentence. Not all people consider all the women as weak and immature. However, the statement is the RI structure to present the idea as a stable relationship. She tries to present the statement as a fact. Women are weak and prone to mischief.

In sentence 25, Nila Wahdati uses negation in “lack” to present the alternative position of having “self-control.” It means that men have self-control, while women do not. The second clause of the sentence is without conjunction to present the statement in parallel construction to the previous statement, hence semantically synonymous. There is an adjectival transformation to prioritize the word “vulnerable.” However, essential information is in the prepositional phrase, “to physical temptation.” It constructs the effect that women are more prone to temptations as compared to men. Because of their weakness, women need protection. It is a common patriarchal ideology and a tool to oppress women (see Lazar, 2005, 2007, for more details).
Sentence 26 uses the circumstantial relation (RC) structure, where women “They” are considered to be obsessed with sex in Afghanistan. Women may cross any limit to satisfy their sexual needs. They are “hypersexual.” Therefore, men consider it their duty to keep women under control. The subordination clause presents another ideologically loaded idea that women start making love with anyone. The names, “Ahmad” and “Mahmood,” make the sentence a circumstantial relation, and place it in the context of Afghanistan. It constructs the perception that women in Afghanistan are sensuous. They indulge in sex with anyone who comes their way. Consequently, they are restricted to make them respectable.

5. Conclusion

Critical analysis of the selected passage shows that ideology plays a significant role in the construction or de-construction of patriarchal norms. In the Afghan patriarchal society, women are inferior to men. They are the honor and pride (nang and namoos) of their family. Women are the custodians of their family’s honor. Nila belongs to a relatively enlightened part of Afghanistan, Kabul. However, even here, the perception of men towards her poetry is not favorable. People in Kabul declare her poetry as the presentation of “bad taste, debauchery, and immoral character.” Her father goes to the extent to claim her poetry as the “ramblings of a whore.” In an Afghan patriarchal society, women are not allowed to have illicit sex. Writing about sex or sexual experiences is never expected and allowed. Based on her poetry, even her father believes that she is a whore. Nouns and modifications construct the disapproving ideology of men towards such kind of poetry. Nila depicts, through the use of past verb “was,” that her sexual enterprises are the result of strict patriarchal norms of the Afghan society. Her reaction shows that she challenges such norms in her way.

Her father believes that Nila’s poetry has “damaged her family name beyond repair.” The lines assume that her father is not aware of her real character. It is because of this reason that he only considers her poetry to be responsible for damaging his family reputation. As they live in a patriarchal society, so her father calls the family “his family.” The verb processes “betrayed” and “damaged” are used to present her father’s patriarchal ideology. On the other hand, the interviewer, through nouns and prepositional phrases, has depicted a contrast in patriarchal ideology and resistance of Nila against such a doctrine. The last section of the excerpt highlights the common belief of men in a patriarchal society. Women are viewed as “immature,” weak, “hypersexual,” and lacking “self-control.” The proper names, “Ahmad” and “Mahmood,” contextualize the discourse in the Afghan society. Men do not consider women as rational beings. It is men’s misperception about women that they may scar their safety and sanctity if women are free in every matter and walk of life. Language has been used, by the interviewer and interviewee, as a literary source to represent women’s challenge to the Afghan patriarchal ideology and norms in the text. Several linguistic tools, like nouns, pronouns, pre-modifiers, negative evaluative words, epistemic modality, and subordinate clauses, in the passage represent the conflict between patriarchal and liberal feminist ideologies and norms.

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**References**


A Diagnostic Chomskian View to Arabic Asymmetry

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Abstract
Agreement asymmetry is one of the significant linguistic phenomena that Arab and Western linguists (Ghaly, 1995; Parkinson, 1995; Benmamoun, 1998; Collins, 2001; Dayf, 1986) and Aoun, 1994) have tried to account for within the framework of the Government and Binding theory. They focused upon the number asymmetry in different varieties in Arabic. Most linguists assert that in different types of Arabic there is always gender agreement between the subject and the verb. This study aims at giving much evidence for the lack of gender agreement in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), and at accounting this gender asymmetry within the framework of the Minimality Program (Chomsky, 1995). The sample consists of 37 sentences collected from some Arabic textbooks. To analyze the data collected, a qualitative diagnostic research design was adopted. One of the essential findings of this study is that there is no gender agreement in Verb-Subject-Object (VSO) sentences between the postverbal subject and the verb if the subject is (a) an unreal feminine Noun Phrase (NP), (b) a broken plural NP, (c) an inanimate collective NP, (d) a collective NP, (e) a regular sound feminine plural NP, (f) an irregular sound feminine plural NP, (g) an irregular sound masculine plural NP, and (h) a real feminine NP separated from its verb by any category. This study concludes that the head C in VSO sentences in MSA carries a weak gender feature represented as [-Strong]. Therefore, in VSO sentences, if the verb disagrees with its subject in gender, it will move from V to I and then to C because C is [-Strong]. A final conclusion is that the head I in VSO sentences in MSA carries a strong gender feature, represented as [+Strong]. Therefore, in VSO sentences, if the verb and its subject agree in gender, the verb will move from V to I; it will not move further.

Keywords: gender asymmetry; minimality; head movement; weak and strong features

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1. Introduction

Agreement asymmetry in different varieties of Arabic has been tackled by many Arab and Western linguists, such as Ghaly (1995), Benmamoun (1998), Mohammad (1999), Mahfoudi (2002), Bahloul (2002). Gender agreement has been given little or no attention. A considerable amount of research has been conducted to set an account for number rather than gender asymmetry. Only Ghaly (1995) introduced a modest attempt to examine gender agreement in Qur’anic Arabic within the framework of Government and Binding, a theory that has been utterly modified by Chomsky. However, the focus of interest in this study is to find the grammatical cases in Arabic grammar that allow gender disagreement between the verb and the post – verbal subject in VSO sentences in MSA such as the example illustrated below, and then to account these cases within the framework of the Minimality Program (Chomsky,1995)

\[
\text{hadarat} \quad \text{Ir-rld3aalu} \\
[\text{came.3.fem.sg.past}] \quad [\text{the-men.3.mas.pl.nom.}] \\
\text{‘‘The men came.’’} \quad \text{(Al-Said, 2006, p.119)}
\]

2. Theoretical Framework

The Minimalist Program (MP) (Chomsky, 1995) depends on two main economy principles: Economy of Representation and Economy of Derivation. Economy of Representation means that we have only two main levels of representation: Logic Form (LF) and Phonetic Form (PF) (Radford, 1997; Roberts 1997). The MP (Chomsky, 1995) disregards the other levels of representation, Surface Structure (SS) and Deep Structure (DS). There are some principles working at LF, such as Chain Uniformity Principle and the Shortest Movement Condition. Chain Uniformity Principle means that the head and the foot of the chain should have the same phrase structure (Ouhalla, 1999; Radford, 1997). The Shortest Movement Condition, for Chomsky (1995), means that a constituent should move from one position to another in the shortest possible steps. Economy of derivation involves three basic principles: (1) the Full Interpretation Principle, (2) the Procrastinate Principle, and (3) the Principle of Greed. For Radford (1997), the Full Interpretation Principle states that “the Logic Form (LF) representation for a given expression must contain all and only those semantic features which determine linguistic aspects of the meaning of the expression,” (p.261) and at Phonetic Form (PF) there are only the phonetic features that determine pronunciation. Ouhalla (1999,) asserts that the basic idea underlying the Procrastinate Principle “is that covert LF operations are less costly than overt operations.” (p.436) The Principle of Greed states that a category moves in order to satisfy its own morphological requirements (Ouhalla, 1999; Roberts, 1997). Both economy of derivation and economy of representation are regarded as the most important pillars of the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995; Crystal, 2003).

But before examining gender disagreement in VSO sentences in (MSA), much light should be shed on the theory of head movement (Chomsky 1993; 1995) which has been illustrated and explained in Ghaly (1995), Hornstein (2001); Roberts (1997), and Ouhalla (1999). Radford (1997) points out that the theory of head movement implies two different types of movement: INFL – movement and Verb – movement. As for I – movement (see 1 below), the auxiliary verb moves from the head V position inside the Inflectional Phrase (IP) to the head Complementizer inside the CP (Complementizer Phrase); the auxiliary leaves behind a trace (i.e. a silent copy of itself). Auxiliary inversion in Modern Standard English (MSE) supports the notion of I – movement. The
V – movement (See 2 below) means that the verb moves from the head V position inside VP to the head I position inside the IP. The theory of V – movement is supported by a close examination of Early Modern English (EME).

\[ \text{CP} \rightarrow \text{IP} \rightarrow \text{I'} \rightarrow \text{VP} \rightarrow \text{V} \]

*Figure 1. [I to C movement]*

\[ \text{D} \rightarrow \text{IP} \rightarrow \text{I'} \rightarrow \text{VP} \rightarrow \text{V'} \rightarrow \text{PP} \]

*Figure 2. [V to I movement]*

3. Review of Literature

Ghaly (1995) investigates the problem of subject-verb agreement in VSO sentences in Qur’anic Arabic within the framework of *Government and Binding* (Chomsky, 1982). She was the first to draw attention to the gender disagreement between the verb and its post-verbal subject, in addition to number disagreement, in VSO sentences in Qur’anic Arabic. Ghaly (1995) also argues that Qur’anic Arabic is basically a VSO variety of Arabic. Ghaly contends that there are two types of VSO sentences in Qur’anic Arabic. In the first type, on the one hand, there is gender agreement between the subject and the verb. In the second type, on the other hand, there is neither number nor gender agreement. She points out that both types (i.e. of VSO sentences) involve the rule of verb - raising in the syntax because agreement is strong in Arabic. In the first type, the verb moves from its head V position inside the VP to the head I position inside the IP forming V₁ (i.e. [[V] + I]). The verb will remain inside the IP, and will not move further. The head I still governs its post-verbal subject. This accounts for gender agreement in VSO sentences in Qur’anic Arabic. The example in (1) illustrates a VSO sentence in which we have only gender agreement between the verb and its subject.

(1)

\[ \text{yafrahu} \text{-} \text{-l-mu?m} \text{nunu} \ \text{bl naşrI-l-laahI} \]

[3. sg. mas. pres] [3.pl.mas.nom] [prep.] [NP.gen.]

/get happy the- believers with God's victory “The believers get happy with the victory granted by Allah.” (Ghaly1995:7)

On the other hand, in the second type of VSO sentences, the verb moves from its head V position inside the VP to the head I position inside the IP, then it moves further to the head C position outside IP. Thus, for Ghaly (1995), the further movement of the verb leads to the non-Arab World English Journal

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presence of the gender agreement between the post-verbal subject and the verb because [I] no longer governs its post-verbal subject. The example in (2) illustrates a VSO sentence in which we have neither number nor gender agreement between the verb and its post-verbal subject.

(2)  
dʒaaʔat-hum   rusulu-hum   bl-l-bayyinaatl  
[3.sg.fem.past]      [3.pl.mas.nom.]     prep. [3.pl.fem.gen.]  
came to- them    messengers-their with. clear proofs  

‘‘Messengers of their own came unto them with clear proofs.’’ (Ghaly1995, p.10)

According to Veenstra (1998) and Aoun et al (1994, p.195), ‘‘full agreement actually obtains in both orders (in Standard Arabic), but agreement (i.e. number agreement) gets ‘lost’ under further verb raising in VS structures.’’ For Aoun et al. (1994), in VS sentences in Standard Arabic, the verb moves to a position called focus (F). For Aoun et al (1994, p.24), the term focus is defined in terms of the notions ‘‘presupposition and assertion’’; the presupposition part of a sentence is the part that constitutes an assumption shared by the speaker and the hearer. The movement of the verb from I inside the IP to the focus position in the FP leads to the loss of number agreement. Thus, the syntactic derivation of an SVO sentence, such as (3), will be as (4) illustrates; and the syntactic derivation of a VSO sentence, such as (5), will be as (6) illustrates.

(3)  
ʔal -ʔawlaadu   katab-uu   -l- wadʒIba  
the.boys.    wrote.    the.assignment  

‘‘The boys wrote the assignment.’’

(4)  
Agreement gained  
SV: [IP sub] V_i + [I [VP t_j t_i ...]]  
(Aount et al., 1994, p.195)

(5)  
kataba    -l-ʔawlaadu    -l- wadʒIba  
[3.mas.sg.past]      [3.mas.pl.nom]      3.mas.sg.acc  
wrote.    the.boys.    the.assignment  

‘‘The boys wrote the assignment.’’

(6)  
Agreement gained  
VS: [FP F+ [V_i + I]_k [IP sub t_k [VP t_j t_i ...]]]  
Agreement lost  
(Aount et al., 1994, p.195)

Going a little bit further than Aoun (1994), Benmamoun (1998) argues that since number the number feature is an interpretable and intrinsic feature of the noun (Chomsky, 1995), the merger
of the subject and the verb amounts to endowing the verb with number features. This in turn prevents spelling out the number feature on the verb by an affix; otherwise number would be spelt-out twice which is redundant. But Benmamoun has not explained why we have this redundancy in SVO sentences. Mohammad (1999) argues that a null-PF pronoun exists in the [Spec, IP] position in Arabic VSO clauses which is responsible for the default third-person masculine singular agreement in expletive clauses, as well as the default singular agreement in VSO regular clauses. The main idea behind Mohammad’s analysis is that in SVO sentences an incorporated null pronoun with the appropriate features is enumerated from the lexicon and generated in the canonical subject position (i.e. Spec, VP) which is then manifested on the verb morphologically as agreement markers. This pronoun then triggers agreement for number between the highest verbal projection and the subject. As for the other Φ-features, they are checked at LF. Mohammad’s account can be summed up as follows:

(7)

(a) SVO:
[IP Sub1 V2 + I [VP t1 t2…]]
(b) Expletive VSO:
[pro Expl1 V1 + I [VP Sub t1…]]
(c) Regular VSO:
[pro V1 + I [VP Sub t1…]]

Mahfoudhi (2002) claims that agreement asymmetry in MSA is a phenomenon related to PF conditions that have nothing to do with the computation/narrow syntax. This claim is based on theoretical and empirical reasons. First, the number agreement feature which gets dropped in VSO sentences cannot be operative in the narrow syntax. It is due to the fact that the number feature has no real effect on meaning, which is conveyed by the DPs. Besides, these features are erased entirely not in part in Chomsky (2000). Actually, the features erased at the computation are, however, visible at PF (Mahfoudhi, 2002). Secondly, there is some related evidence from phonological processes that the reduction of the number of syllables satisfies what we may call, following Boeckx (2006), a general economy principle that operates at the interface levels.

Soltan (2007) assumes that agreement is a syntactic relation that takes place at a distance rather than in a spec-head configuration. In addition, he assumes that T has three non-interpretable features: Φ-features (for person and number features only), CLASS feature (which appears as a gender feature), and an EPP (Extended Projection Principle) feature. He argues that full agreement is actually agreement with VP internal pro-subject, as (7a) shows. As for the preverbal DP, it is base-generated in its surface position to satisfy the EPP feature on T. Partial agreement, on the other hand, is due to the fact that in VS sentences, the v*P (sic) internal subject position is occupied by a lexical DP rather than a pro. Further, T has no Φ or EPP features, as a lexical option for this particular dialect. CLASS, however, is an obligatory feature on T. Thus, partial agreement is due to agreement between the lexical DP and the CLASS feature on T as (7b) shows.

(7)

a. [CP C [TP DP T [EPP CLASS [v*P pro v* [vp V …]]]]]

b. [CP C [TP T [DEFAULT CLASS [v*P DP v* [vp read the book]]]]]

(Soltan, 2007; Smith, 2003; Postal, 2007; Lasnik, 1999; Mahmoud, 1996; McCloskey, 1986).
4. Research problem and questions
The basic problem that this study addresses is that the linguistic literature shows that there is always gender agreement in VSO in MSA. However, a close careful examination of some Arabic textbooks will prove the opposite. To address such a problem, this research study attempts to answer the following questions:
1. What are the main cases in which there is no gender agreement in VSO sentences MSA?
2. Why is there always gender agreement in MSA in SVO rather than VSO sentences?
3. How can gender asymmetry in VSO sentences, if any, be accounted within the framework of the Minimalist Program (Chomsky, 1995)?

5. Research methods
This study is based on a diagnostic descriptive research design. The data on which this study depends are first collected from various Arabic grammar textbooks, and classified into seven types of VSO sentences: (1) VSO sentences with an unreal feminine NP subject, (2) VSO sentences with a separating category between the NP subject and the verb, (3) VSO sentences with a broken plural subject, (4) VSO sentences with a collective NP subject, (5) VSO sentences with collective gender NP subject, (6) VSO sentences with an irregular and regular sound masculine plural NP subject, (7) VSO sentences with an irregular and regular sound feminine plural NP subject, and (8) VSO sentences with static verbs.

6. Results
Before starting to describe that data collected, we will briefly shed some light upon gender and the various forms of plural NPs in MSA. This is actually due to the fact that we will be exposed to several issues concerning gender and the plural NPs while describing the data collected. Therefore, we should know how an NP is marked for masculine or feminine. Further, we should know the major types of feminine and masculine NPs in addition to the major types of plural NPs. According to Al-Hamady (2000), Shinaawy (2000), and Ata (2000), feminine NPs in Modern Standard Arabic have three main suffix markers: (1) -t + vowel (e.g. Fatimat, FatImata, and FatImatI); (2) -a (e.g. Salma, ‘b3fra = good omen’ and ‘ðam?a = thirsty people’); and (3) -aaʔ (e.g. ‘saharaaʔ = desert’ and ‘samaaʔ = the sky’). Most Arab grammarians divide feminine NPs into two general groups: (1) real feminine NPs and (2) unreal feminine NPs. Real feminine NPs, according to Al-said (2006) and NKeMat (1973), refer to an NP that denotes a human being, or an animal that gives birth or lays eggs, such as ‘Imraʔat = a lady’ and ‘baqaratο = a cow’. Unreal feminine NPs, according to Zeyad (2006) and Ibrahim (2005), refer to a group of words that the Arabs categorize as feminine. These words, however; do not denote a human being or an animal that gives birth or lays eggs, such as ‘saharaaʔ = desert’ and ‘mInd datο = table’. According to Al-Hamady (2000), Shinawy (2000), and Ata (2000), in MSA there are three types of plural NPs: (1) Sound Masculine Plural (2) Sound Feminine Plural and (3) Irregular Plural. Sound Masculine plural refers to a word that denotes more than two persons and that ends with / -u:n / or / -i:n /, for example, ‘muʔmInu:n = believers’ and ‘muhsIni:n = beneficent persons’. Sound feminine plural refers to the plural feminine words that end with the suffix ‘-aat’, such as ‘mudarlsaat = female teachers’ and ‘ʔumahaat = mothers’. Irregular plural refers to the words that denote more than two persons, and that do not end with any of the suffixes that mark either sound masculine plural or sound feminine plural.
6.1. Unreal feminine np subject and optional gender agreement

(1) Inkasarat Il-kaʔsu
[broke. the-glass]

‘The glass broke.’

(Al-said, 2006, p.122; Salih, 2002)

(2) Inkasara I-kaʔsu
[broke. the-glass]

‘The glass broke.’

(Al-said, 2006, p.22)

(3) tatlaʕu Iʃamsu
[rises the-sun]

‘The sun rises.’

(NIʕmat, 1973, p. 45)

(4) yatlaʕu Iʃamsu
[rises the-sun]

‘The sun rises.’

(NIʕmat, 1973, p. 45)

(5) Intahat Il-harbu
[came to an end the-war]

‘The war came to an end.’

(Ibrahim, 2005, p.60)

(6) Intaha I-ḥarbu
[came to an end the-war]

‘The war came to an end.’

(Ibrahim, 2005, p.60)

(7) *ʔakala fatImatu
[ate. Fatimatu]

‘Fatimatu ate.’

In (1), (3), and (5) above the verbs ‘Inkasarat = broke’, ‘tatlaʕu = rises’ and ‘Intahat = came to an end’ carry a feminine suffix and are followed by unreal feminine NP subjects, ‘ʔal-kaʔsu = glass’, ‘ʔajamsu = the sun’ and ‘ʔal-harbu = the war’ respectively. In these sentences, we can notice that the verbs and the NP subjects agree in gender. In (2), (4), and (6), on the other hand, the verbs carry a masculine feature and are followed by unreal feminine subjects. There is no gender agreement in these sentences; however, these sentences are not ruled out. They are accepted in Modern Standard Arabic. The sentence in (7) starts with a verb carrying a masculine feature, and is followed by a real feminine NP subject. As a consequence, the sentence
is ruled out. The sentence in (7) proves that only unreal feminine NP subjects can be preceded by a verb that carries a masculine feature. These facts can be summed up in the following formulas:

(8)
a. V [mas] + unreal feminine NP
b. V [fem] + unreal feminine NP
c.*V [mas] + real feminine NP

6.2. The separating category between the verb and the subject

(9)
nadʒahat fl -l-ImtihanI suʕaadu
succeeded in the-exam Suʕaadu

(10)
nadʒaha fl -l-ImtihanI suʕaadu
succeeded in the-exam Suʕaadu

(11)
safara-t fatImatu
[3.sg.fem.past] [3.sg.fem.nom]
travelled Fatimatu
“Fatimatu travelled.” (NIʕmat, 1973, p.45)

(12)
*safrica fatimatu
[3.sg.mas.past] [3.sg.fem.nom]
travelled Fatimatu
“Fatimatu travelled.”*

(13)
safara-t ?ams fatImatu
travelled yesterday Fatimatu
“Fatimatu traveled yesterday.” (NIʕmat, 1973, p.45)

(14)
safara ?ams fatImatu
[3.sg.mas.past] adv. of time [3.sg.fem.nom]
travelled yesterday Fatimatu
“Fatimatu traveled yesterday.” (NIʕmat, 1973, p.45)

(15)
ɣadarat ?ams Il-banaatu
[3.sg.fem.past] adv. of time [3.pl.fem.nom]
left yesterday the girls
“The girls left yesterday.” (Zeyad, 2006, p.6)
In fact, (9) represents a VSO sentence that starts with a verb carrying the feminine suffix ‘-t’. This verb is followed by a prepositional phrase, ‘fI -l-ImtIhanI = in the exam’, that is followed by a real feminine NP subject. Both the subject and the verb agree in gender. In (10), the real feminine NP subject ‘suʕaadu’ and the verb do not agree in gender. They are still separated by the prepositional phrase ‘fI -l-ImtIhanI = in the exam.’ In (11), the real feminine NP subject ‘fatImatu’ is preceded by the verb ‘safara-t = travelled’ that carries the feminine suffix ‘-t’. Both the subject and the verb agree in gender. They are not separated by any category. The sentence in (12) is ruled out as the real feminine NP subject is preceded by a verb that carries a masculine feature. In (13), the real feminine NP subject, ‘fatImatu’, and the verb, ‘safara-t = travelled’, are separated by an adverbial phrase, ‘ʔams = yesterday’; the subject and the verb agree in gender. In (14), the real feminine NP subject and the verb are separated. However, they do not agree in gender. The verb carries a masculine feature; whereas the subject carries a feminine feature. In (15), the real feminine NP subject ‘Il-banaatu = the girls’ is separated from its verb by the adverbial phrase ‘ʔams = yesterday’; both the subject and the verb agree in gender. In (16), on the other hand, the real feminine NP subject does not agree in gender with its verb. However, the sentence is not ruled out. The sentences above point out that gender agreement between the verb and the subject in VSO sentences is optional provided that the subject is a real feminine NP preceded by any category that separates the subject from the verb. The examples above can be summed up in the following formulas:

(17)
   a. V [mas] + XP (1) + real feminine NP.
   b. V [fem] + XP + real feminine NP.
   c.*V[mas] + no XP + real feminine NP.

6.3. Broken plural subject and optional gender agreement

(18)
   hadara Ir-rlḍalu
   [3.mas.sg.past] [3.mas.sg.nom]
   came the-men
   “The men came.”

   (Al-said, 2006, p.122; Trask, 1993)

(19)
   hadarat Ir-rlḍalu
   [3.fem.sg.past] [3.mas.sg.nom]
   came the-men
   “The men came.”

   (Al-said, 2006, p.122; Williams, 1998)

(20)
   dʒaʔa l-dʒunuudu
   [3.sg.mas.past] [3.pl.mas.nom.]
came the-soldiers
“The soldiers came.” (Mukhtar, 1988, p.341; Tucker, 2007)

(21)
dʒaʔat Il-ʒunuudu
[3.sg.fem.past] [3.pl.mas.nom]
came the-soldiers
“The soldiers came.” (Mukhtar, 1988, p.341)

(22)
sarat ʔa-θakala
[3.fem.sg.past] [3.fem.pl.nom]
walked the mothers who are bereaved of children
“The mothers, who are bereaved of their children, walked away.”

(23)
sara ʔa-θakala
[3.mas.sg.past] [3.fem.pl.nom]
walked the mothers who are bereaved of children
“The mothers, who are bereaved of their children, walked away.”
(Mukhtar, 1988, P.341)

In (18) and (20) there is gender agreement between the verbs ‘hadara = came’ and ‘dʒaʔa =
came’ which carry masculine features, and the masculine irregular plural NP subjects, ‘Ir-ʔaldu =
the men’ and ‘ʔa-dʒunuudu = the soldiers’ respectively. In (19) and (21), on the other hand, there
is no gender agreement between the masculine broken plural NPs – ‘Ir-ʔaldu = the men’ and ‘ʔa-
dʒunuudu = the soldiers’ – and the verbs ‘hadarat = came’ and ‘dʒaʔat = came’ respectively. The
two verbs carry the feminine suffix ‘-t’. Unlike (18), (19), (20), and (21), the examples in (22) and
(23) deal with feminine broken plural NP subjects. In (22), the feminine broken plural NP subject,
‘ʔa-θakala = the bereaved women’ agrees in gender with the preceding verb, ‘sarat = walked
away’. In (23), on the other hand, the same feminine broken plural NP subject is preceded with a
verb that carries a masculine feature. The examples above assert that the gender feature carried by
the verb can be masculine or feminine if this verb is followed by a feminine or masculine broken
plural. The examples above imply two main rules that can be summed up in the following the
formulas:
(24)
a. V [mas] + masculine broken plural
b. V [fem] + masculine broken plural
c. V [mas] + feminine broken plural
d. V [fem] + feminine broken plural

6.4 Collective nouns and optional gender agreement
(25)
dʒaʔa -l-qawmu
[3.sg.mas.past] [3.pl.mas.nom]
came the-people
“The people came.” (Zeyad, 2005, p.6; Sokarno, 2005)
The sentences in (25), (26), (27), and (28) deal with two different types of collective nouns. The verb ‘džaʔa’ in (25) above carries a masculine feature and is followed by a collective noun that agrees with the preceding verb in gender. In (26), on the other hand, the verb carries a feminine feature and is followed by the same collective noun; however, the sentence is not ruled out. In (27), the NP subject is a collective noun with a feminine feature; and is preceded with a verb that has the same feminine feature. But, in (28), the same collective noun is preceded by a verb that carries a masculine feature. According to Sidaawy (1999), a collective noun in MSA is the one that implies the plural sense (i.e. it implies more than two persons), but it does not have a singular form, such as ‘gayʃ = army’, ‘ʃaʕb = people’, and ‘nlsāʔ = women’. The examples above indicate that collective nouns in VSO sentences in Modern Standard Arabic can be preceded by a verb that carries a gender feature which is different from the one carried by the collective noun itself. In other words, the masculine collective noun can be preceded by a verb carrying a feminine feature; and the feminine collective noun can be preceded by a verb carrying a masculine feature. These facts can be summed up as follows:

\[
\text{a. V [mas] + masculine collective noun} \\
\text{b. V [fem] + masculine collective noun} \\
\text{c. V [mas] + feminine collective noun} \\
\text{d. V [fem] + feminine collective noun}
\]

6.5 Inanimate collective nouns and optional gender agreement

(30)
\[
\text{ʔawraqa} \quad \text{ʔaʃ-garu} \\
\text{[3.sg.mas.past]} \quad \text{[3.pl.mas.nom]} \\
\text{put forth leaves} \quad \text{the trees} \\
\text{‘The trees put forth for leaves. أورق الشجر’} \\
\text{(Zeyad, 2005, p.6)}
\]

(31)
\[
\text{ʔawraqat} \quad \text{I-ʃ-garu} \\
\text{[3.sg.fem.past]} \quad \text{[3.pl.mas.nom]} 
\]
The examples above in (30) and (31) include an animate collective noun (i.e. ‘ʔa-ʃagaru = the trees’). Before describing the sentences above, let’s shed some light upon inanimate collective nouns. Actually, for J. Sidaawy (1999, p.64), “an inanimate collective noun is the one that implies more than two things; and its singular form always ends with the feminine suffix –t” as the table below illustrates.

(32)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>Singular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ʃagaru ‘trees’</td>
<td>ʃagaratu ‘one tree’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tamru ‘figs’</td>
<td>tamratu ‘one fig’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuffahu ‘apples’</td>
<td>tuffahatu ‘one apple’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Sidaawy, 1999, p.64)

In (30) above, the verb ‘ʔawraqa = put forth for leaves’ carries a masculine feature and is followed by an animate collective noun that carries the same gender feature. In (31), on the other hand, the same inanimate collective noun (i.e. ʔa-ʃagaru = the trees) is preceded by a verb that carries a feminine suffix (i.e. -t). It indicates that the gender feature carried by the verb is optional (i.e. masculine or feminine) if it is followed by an inanimate collective noun. The facts demonstrated above can be summed up in the following formulas:

(33)

a. V [mas] + masculine inanimate collective noun
b. V [fem] + masculine inanimate collective noun

6.6. Irregular and regular sound masculine plural

(34)

yaqr?u      -l-banu:n
[3.mas.sg.pres] [3.mas.pl.nom]
read       the-sons
“The sons are reading. ‘يقرأ البيانون’”
(Hassan, 1992, p.80)

(35)

taqra?u     -l-banu:n
[3.fem.sg.pres] [3.mas.pl.nom]
read.      the-boys.
“‘The sons are reading. ‘تقرأ البيانون’”
(Hassan, 1992, p.80)

(36)

ʔasraʔa    -l-muhaarIbu:n
[3.mas.sg.past] [3.mas.pl.nom]
ran away   the-warriors
“‘The warriors ran away. ‘أسرع المحاربون’”
(Hassan, 1992, p. 82)

(37)

* ʔasraʔat   Il-muhaarIbu:n
[3.fem.sg.past] [3.mas.pl.nom]
ran away   the-warriors
“‘The warriors ran away. ‘أسرعت المحاربون’*
(Hassan, 1992, p.82)
The examples in (34), (35), (36), and (37) involve two main types of sound masculine plural: regular and irregular. Let's shed some light briefly on the types of sound masculine plural before describing the sentences in (34-37). Regular sound masculine plural (RSMP) is the one which is formed by adding the suffixes /-i:n/ or /-u:n/ to the singular form. For example, in (38a) we can add the suffixes /-u:n/ or /-i:n/ to the singular words ‘muhaarIbu = a warrior’ and ‘mudarIsu = a teacher’. In these examples, the sound masculine plural will be formed without exposing the singular form to any changes as the examples in (38a&b) show. The irregular sound masculine plural (ISMP) is the one whose singular form is exposed to some changes while being formed. For example, the word ‘ IbIn = son’ undergoes some changes while being transformed into a sound masculine plural. The initial half-close front vowel (i.e. /I/) is deleted, and the second /I/ is replaced with a front open vowel (i.e. /a/) as the example in (38c) shows. Another example is the word ‘ʔard’. To transform this word into a sound masculine plural, we inserted a front open vowel /a/ after the consonant /r/. It means that the singular form undergoes changes as (38d) shows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>RSMP</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. muhaarIb</td>
<td>‘warrior’</td>
<td>muhaarIbu:n / muhaarIbi:n</td>
<td>‘warriors’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. mudarIsu</td>
<td>‘teacher’</td>
<td>mudarIsu:n / mudarIsi:n</td>
<td>‘teachers’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>ISMP</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c. IbIn</td>
<td>‘son’</td>
<td>banu:n / bani:n</td>
<td>‘sons’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. ʔard</td>
<td>‘land’</td>
<td>ʔaradu:n / ʔaradi:n</td>
<td>‘lands’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Let's get back to the examples (34), (35), (36), and (37). In (34) the ISMP ‘ʔal-banu:n = the boys’ is preceded by a verb that carries a masculine feature. That is to say, both the verb and the ISMP agree in gender. But, in (35) the ISMP is preceded by a verb that carries a feminine feature. That is, the verb and the ISMP do not agree in gender. However, the sentence is not ruled out. In (36) the RSMP ‘ʔal-muharIbu:n = the warriors’ is preceded by a verb. Both the verb and the RSMP agree in gender. As for (37), it is excluded as the verb, ‘ʔasraʕat = ran away’, and the RSMP, ‘ʔal-muhaarIbu:n = the warriors’ do not agree in gender. Thus, we can simply conclude that the gender feature carried by the verb is optional if it is followed by ISMP; whereas RSMP triggers gender agreement with the verb as the formulas in (39) show:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c. V [mas] + RSMP</td>
<td>d.*V[fem] + RSMP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.7 Irregular and regular sound feminine plural

(40)
wasalat It-taallbaatu ila -l-madrasat
[3.fem.sg.past] [3.fem.pl.nom] [prep.] [3.fem.sg.gen]
reached the-students. to the-school

“‘The students reached the school.’” (Zeyad, 2005, p.6)

(41)
wasala -t-taallbaatu ila -l-madrasat
[3.mas.sg.past] [3.fem.pl.nom] [prep.] [3.fem.sg.gen]
reached the-students. to the-school
“The students reached the school.” (Zeyad, 2005, p.6)

(42)

?aSlanat It-talhaatu -l-harba
[3.fem.sg.past] [3.fem.pl.nom] [3.fem.sg.acc]
declared Talhaas the-war
“The Talhaas declared war.” (Hassan, 1992, p.82)

(43)

?aSlana -t-talhaatu -l-harba
[3.mas.sg.past] [3.fem.pl.nom] [3.fem.sg.acc]
declared the Talhaas the-war

The sentences in the examples above involve two types of sound feminine plural: regular and irregular. The regular sound feminine plural (RSFP) is the one that ends with the feminine suffix ‘-aat’ and whose singular form is a feminine proper noun as the example (44a) shows; or a common noun that ends with the feminine suffix ‘–t’ as the example (44b) shows. The irregular sound feminine plural (ISFP) is the one whose singular form violates one of these two conditions. For example, in (44c) the word ‘Ta[lhaat’ is a sound feminine plural; however, its singular form implies a masculine noun rather than a feminine proper noun.

(44)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>RSFP</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Zaynab</td>
<td>‘Zaynab’</td>
<td>Zaynabaat</td>
<td>‘Zaynabs’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. taalIbatu</td>
<td>‘a student’</td>
<td>taalIbaatu</td>
<td>‘students’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Talha</td>
<td>‘Talha’</td>
<td>Talhaat</td>
<td>‘Talhas’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In (40), the RSFP ‘ʔat-talIbaatu = the students’ is preceded by a verb that carries the same feminine feature. In (41), on the other hand, the same RSFP ‘ʔat-talIbaatu = the students’ is preceded by a verb that carries a masculine gender feature. In (42), the ISFP ‘ʔat-talhaatu’ is preceded by a verb that carries the same feminine feature. In (43), on the other hand, the ISFP ‘ʔat-talhaatu’ and the preceding verb do not agree in gender. Thus, both RSFP and ISFP can be preceded by a verb carrying a masculine or feminine feature, as (45) shows:

(45)

a. V [mas] + RFSP
b. V [fem] + RFSP
c. V [mas] + IFSP
d. V [fem] + IFSP

6.8 Static verbs and optional gender agreement

(46)

a. nIlma -l-marʔatu hindun
[3.mas.sg] [3.fem.sg.nom] [3.fem.sg.nom]
to be good the-lady Hindun
“Hindun is a good lady.” (Ibn-Hisham, 1986, p.165)
b. nǐṣma t ’il-marʔatu hindun
[3.fem.sg] [3.fem.sg.nom] [3.fem.sg.nom]
to be good the-lady Hindu

“Hindu is a good lady.” (Ibn-Hisham, 1986, p.165)

c. nǐṣma t?ar-raʔulu zaydun
[3.mas.sg] [3.mas.sg.nom] [3.mas.sg.nom]
to be good the-man Zaydun

“Zaydun is a good man.” (Ibn-ʕaq:l, 1986, p.165)

*d. nǐṣma t?ar-raʔulu zaydun
[3.fem.sg] [3.mas.sg.nom] [3.mas.sg.nom]
to be good the-man Zaydun

“Zaydun is a good man.”*

(Muhyi-l-Din, 1986; Munn, 1993; Al-Anbaary, 1978; Al-Khammash, 2007; Al-Shamsaan, 2007).

Let’s get back to the examples in (46). In (46a), the verb “nǐṣma = to be good” has a masculine feature; and is followed by a NP carrying a feminine feature, “ʔal-marʔatu = the lady”

In (46a), there is no gender agreement between the verb and the post-verbal subject. In (46b), on the other hand, the verb “Nǐṣma = to be good” has a feminine feature; and is followed by a NP carrying a feminine feature as well. It indicates that the feminine NP subject can be preceded by a static verb carrying masculine or feminine feature. In (46c), the static verb “nǐṣma = to be good” is followed by a masculine NP subject, “ʔar-raʔulu = the man”. In (46d), the sentence is ruled out as the masculine NP subject “ʔar-raʔulu = the man” is preceded by a static verb carrying a feminine feature. The examples in (46a,b,c,&d) prove that only feminine NP subject can be preceded by a static verb carrying a masculine or feminine feature. The masculine NP subject, on the other hand, cannot be preceded by a static verb carrying a feminine feature. These facts can be summed up in the following formulas:

(48)
  a. St.V [mas] + feminine NP subject
  b. St.V [fem] + feminine NP subject
  c. St.V [mas] + masculine NP subject
  * d. St.V [fem] + masculine NP subject

7. Discussion

The sentences discussed in the above section into can be divided into two groups: gender-matching sentences and gender-mismatching sentences. Gender-matching sentences refer to the ones in which the post-verbal NP agrees with the preceding verb in gender as the formulas below show:

(49)
  1. V[fem] + XP + real feminine NP
  2. V[fem] + unreal feminine NP
  3. V[fem] + feminine broken plural
  4. V[mas] + masculine broken plural
  5. V[fem] + feminine collective noun
  6. V [mas] + masculine collective noun
Gender-mismatching sentences refer to the sentences in which the post-verbal NP can be preceded by a verb that carries a mismatching feature, as the formulas below illustrate:

(50)
1. V [mas] + XP + real feminine NP
2. V [mas] + unreal feminine NP
3. V [mas] + feminine broken plural
4. V [fem] + masculine broken plural
5. V [mas] + feminine collective noun
6. V [fem] + masculine collective noun
7. V [mas] + RSFP
8. V [mas] + ISFP
9. V [fem] + ISMP
10. V [fem] + ISMP
11. St. V[mas] + feminine NP subject
12. St. V[mas] + masculine NP subject

To explain the sentences in (50) within the framework of the Minimalist program, I will follow Chomsky (1993, 1995) that the lexical items are inserted into the lexicon carrying their features. In addition, I will follow Ghaly (1995) in arguing that in VSO sentences the verbs which lack number and gender agreement with their subjects will move from V to I and then to C. Furthermore, I will follow Ghaly (1995) and Aoun (1994) in arguing that the verbs that have only gender agreement with their subjects will move from V to I. But I argue that the head C, in VSO sentences in MSA, carries a weak gender feature, represented as [-Strong]; whereas the head I carries strong gender feature, represented as [+Strong]. By the weak gender feature (i.e. [-Strong]) carried by the head C, I mean that the head C is the only position that can host a verb that disagrees with its subject in gender. By the strong gender feature (i.e. [+Strong]) carried by the head I position, I mean that the head I should host a verb that agrees with its subject in gender. Accordingly, the syntactic derivation of the sentence in (51) will be as (52) illustrates. In (51), the verb has no gender agreement with its subject. Therefore, it moves from V to I and then to C to check its [-Strong] feature. However, if the verb and its post-verbal subject agree in gender, the verb will move from V to I; and will remain inside IP. It will not move further. The verb moves to I to check it [+strong] gender feature.

(51)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{dā} \text{ʔa} & \quad \text{n-} \text{nlśaa} \text{ʔu} & \quad \text{lā} & \quad -l\text{-madrasatI} \\
[3\text{sg.mas.past}] & [3\text{pl.fem.nom}] & [\text{prep.}] & [3\text{fem.sg.gen.}] \\
\text{came} & \quad \text{the-ladies.} & \quad \text{to} & \quad \text{the-school}
\end{align*}
\]

"The ladies came to the school."
8. Conclusion

This study concludes that there is no gender agreement in VSO sentences between the post-verbal subject and the verb if the subject is (a) an unreal feminine NP, (b) a broken plural NP, (c) an inanimate collective NP, (d) a collective NP, (e) a regular sound feminine plural NP, (f) an irregular sound feminine plural NP, (g) an irregular sound masculine plural NP, and (h) a real feminine NP separated from its verb by any category. This study also concludes that the head C in VSO sentences in MSA carries a weak gender feature represented as [-Strong]. Therefore, in VSO sentences, if the verb disagrees with its subject in gender, it will move from V to I and then to C because C is [-Strong]. A final conclusion is that the head I in VSO sentences in MSA carries a strong gender feature, represented as [+Strong]. Therefore, in VSO sentences, if the verb and its subject agree in gender, the verb will move from V to I; it will not move further.

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References

A Diagnostic Chomskian View to Arabic Asymmetry
Abdulaal


The Linguistic History and the Ideological Inhibitions in Foreign Language Context in the Post-Independence Algeria

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Abstract
The issues addressed in this work concern primarily the linguistic history and the different language policies that have been adopted from independence till today. Through this paper, the author aims to tackle the status of foreign languages in the Algerian educational system and the extent to which English has been promoted on the expanse of French. Henceforth, the higher education reforms and their influence on the process of teaching/learning English as a foreign language. Mainly, this study intends to uncover the ideological inhibitions exercised by the government to model up a citizen meets the requirements that it needs but not the requirements of the 21st century. More specifically, it exposes the trends of the Algerian decision-makers to maintain a position of a particular foreign language –French- over another foreign language, which is English among the Algerian speech community. This study will contribute to the reconsideration of the language policy of the government, the status of English as a foreign language, and the foreign language curricula. Yet, it bears a particular significance to the sociolinguistic situation in Algeria and its relationship to English as a foreign language context. It suggests the importance of promoting English to meet up the escalating waves of globalization.

Keywords: foreign language curriculum, higher education reforms, ideology, linguistic history, the foreign language hidden curriculum.

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1. Introduction

Though its linguistic background is very rich, Algeria has faced for a long time political, social, and cultural unrest and still. All this is due to its linguistic complexity which makes Algeria a specific Arab nation with the number of languages instructed and used either in academic or non-academic contexts as described by Tabory & Taboray (1987), “The Algerian situation is complex, as it is at a crossroad of tensions between French, the colonial language, and Arabic, the new national language; Classical Arabic versus colloquial Algerian Arabic; and the various Berber dialects versus Arabic…” (as cited in Rezig 2011, p2). The presence of this variety created a language crisis, either political or educational, it gave rise to outcries where everyone claimed a monopoly on the language issue: Arabization, French-Arabic bilingualism, the English language status, never reaching consensus (Lakhal-Ayat, 2008). Algeria has endeavored to establish an educational system allows meeting the needs of the population, it may address right after having its independence in 1962. Algeria was considering the French language as a cultural imperative until late in the seventies, when English started having more space in the globalized Algeria. A space that was created by the Arabization policy of 1971 and the socioeconomic changes taking place worldwide. Subsequently, the French began to fade away at the cross-roads creating more rooms to the teaching of English as a second foreign language (Mami, 2013). Lately, and right after the popular movement HARAK, which began on February 22, the language war is revived, and new language policy is meant to be considered in Algeria. According to the French newspaper “Le Monde,” and the Algerian newspaper “Echorouk,” the minister of higher education and scientific research, Tayeb Bouzid launched a proposal to promote English as an official language of teaching and administration at the country’s universities and research centers. It was after a national conference of the Algerian universities on August 20th, 2019. Such language policy aims to give a better status to English over the French language in the Algerian linguistic arena. “Le Monde” explained that the minister himself ordered the Algerian universities to use only Arabic and English in the correspondence and official documents, as a first step to replace the French language by English in education.

2. Historical Background

From the very outset, and right after occupying Algeria, the French authorities aimed to model up the Algerian citizen to the point that he meets their needs and requirements, civilized as they claim, compliant and manageable. Their aim can be fulfilled only through education as Hegony (1973, p.18, as cited in Bacher 2013, p. 21) succinctly puts it:

The attempt by France to control Algerians through the assimilation of Algerians into French culture was no more demonstrated than in the field of education. The imposition of French education norms and the denial of the Algerian of his legitimate cultural identity through controls of language, curriculum, and methods of instruction reveals the colonist policy in its most destructive. The French supplanted Arab educational values and moved to effect and maintain Algerian subordination through structural changes or pre-colonial education and inherent challenges to the spirit and direction of his knowledge.

Hayane (1989) assumes that teaching foreign languages in Algeria and, more specifically, French is closely linked to political ends and implications rather than pedagogical. He quotes Ageron who outlines the objectives of the Ligue de l’Enseignement en Algérie (LEA):
the teaching of the natives was a political work rather than a school work ... if we want the native to obey without hesitation ... the children will be entrusted not to teachers with all kinds of the patent but Native instructors ... having for gerbils school worth 150 or 200 francs ... the French school should wisely be limited to a small number where we raise the future propagators of our influence.” (MOT)\(^2\), (as cited in Bacher, 2013, p. 22)

Clearly, the French colonial authorities endeavored to form future propagators to help in positioning the French language thought, and culture. Hence, denigrating the local population’s sociocultural practices. Furthermore being masters of Algerians as being declared by Pierre Foncin\(^3\): “we’ll never be masters of Algeria until Algeria speaks French”(Bacher,2013,p26.)

In the same vein of thought, Britain, as another high colonial power, raised a rivalry to France in Asia, creating a halo of myths about its culture, language, and civilization. Considering English as an agent of civilization as it is reported by Macaulay, “English is the most important agent of civilization for the colored of the colonies” (as cited in Philipson, 2006, p. 15). This historical competition between French and English raised a controversial issue in the post-independent Algeria and still. English became a direct threat to French in the Algerian sociolinguistic arena.

**English versus French in Post-independence Algeria**

In post-independence Algeria, the linguistic policy of the French colonial authorities had and still has its effects on the country’s language planning and policy, as well as on its social cohesion as Beer and Jacob (1985, p. 139) eloquently states it: “Algeria...continues to face problems of national cohesion and cultural identity, but to date, social and cultural fissures in Algeria are a minimal threat to national integrity” (as cited in Bacher, 2013, p. 25). The teaching of French continued up to date but attenuated through the years as the country launched a new policy in education, i.e. Arabization in which Arabic became the official national language through which both scientific and literary school subjects are taught. What made better worse, is launching English as a main foreign language in schools in 1996. Then, in summer 1999, the president Abdelaziz Bouteflika came to affirm: “Algeria doesn’t belong to Francophonie...” (Baldauf & Kaplanm, 2004, p. 10) The process of Arabization and the consideration of English as a second foreign language have been considered as an undesirable manner of French imperial linguicism, which had an intention to replace or displace the local population’s language and culture.

English is the language of another imperial power, which is Great Britain. Paradoxically, the Algerians have embraced English meanwhile reacting negatively towards French. In his book *linguistic imperialism*, Philipson (2000) attempts to clarify the differences in the conception of linguists’ policies of the two most powerful European empires in the periphery. He states: “the overall goals of the colonial powers were conceived differently, the French aiming at la France outre-mer and ultimate union with metropolitan France, the British accepting the principle of trusteeship, leading ultimately to self-government and independence” (p. 12). Therefore, the English language is not associated with colonialism and linguicism in Algeria, and it is not a rival to the local language, which created a positive attitude towards English.
As moving forward towards the 21st century, English became the language of power, economy, and information. Many countries found themselves obliged to reconsider the English language in their language policies. Algeria is a case in point. English today is more needed than ever before. It opens the gate towards globalization, modernism, and a key player on the international scene. Ruby and Saraceni (2006, p.117) state that “knowing English is like possessing the fabled Aladdin’s lamp, which permits one to open, as it were, the linguistic gates to international business, technology, science, and travel. In short, English provides linguistic power” (Bacher, 2013, p. 28). Yet, English and power became to facets of the same coin. If Algeria wanted to get more political and economic power, it should then give English precedence over any other foreign language.

2.2. Political Dimensions and Ideological Inhibitions

Though it seems a field of educators, teachers, and knowledge experts, education and more specifically, foreign language integration is a political order. Giroux (2000) cites Johnson, who professes the view that:

Teaching and learning are profoundly political at every moment of the circuit: in the conditions of production (who produces knowledge? For whom?), in the knowledges and knowledge forms themselves (knowledge to what agenda? Used for what?), their publication, circulation, and accessibility, their professional and popular uses, and their impacts on daily life. (pp3-4)

Van Else (1994), in turn, states that several of questions of political order need to be addressed beforehand in any language policy statements. The questions are explained by Bacher (2013) to be ranged from the identification of would-be taught languages (which languages?), their number and ordinal arrangement (how many languages? And in what order?), the competences or skills to be targeted and the academic level or grade (what skills to be taught? And, at what level?). Yet, the integration of any foreign language in the educational curriculum is first and foremost connected to the political leadership and its political agenda.

In the current Algerian educational curriculum, there is a considerable number of foreign languages:

- French: it is taught from the second grade of the primary school, and it is given particular interest in all the education strata, even the tertiary. (All scientific subjects are taught in French).
- English: it started as from the third grade in middle school. Now, it is tutored from the first grade. It is tutored in university as an academic branch, and as an optional module in the curriculum of the scientific departments.
- German and Spanish are being taught only in some high schools either in the west of the country or Algiers. And they are integrated into the university as academic branches.
- Italian, Russian, and Turkey are made part of the curriculum only in tertiary education.

Baker (2006) sees a foreign language to intelligence as food to fitness. But, which kind of food is more beneficial? For sure, not all types of food have the same impact on the body. Menu should be selected according to the weight of the sporty, the body’s needs, and the type of exercise. Yet,
the foreign language policy meant to be adopted by any country’s decision-makers should come along with the new era demands.

The Algerian decision-makers recognize very well the necessity of food to fitness. But in fact, they do not give an interest in the type of food that should be taken. I.e., they recognize the importance of foreign languages to knowledge, but they do not consider the language worth given that amount of interest to reach the zenith of intelligence. That is to say, the language that meets the 21st-century requirements. English is the language meant in this case.

It is worth mentioning that the Algerian decision-makers take into account the necessary needs of the information era. In the Ordonnance of April 1976, five goals beyond learning foreign languages those cited in Bacher (2013) are eloquently listed in the following:

1. To communicate with different parts of the world.
2. To have access to top modern sciences and technologies
3. To encourage pupils’ creativity in its universal dimension
4. To make pupils autonomous and self-sufficient in exploiting and exploring material having relation with their field of study
5. To successfully sit for examinations. (chibani2003)

Barka (2002) in turn, comes to gather these goals in two significant dimensions. He quotes from the national chart this much: “while opening up to others and knowing (...) the knowledge of foreign languages that would facilitate the constant communication with the outside world that is to say with modern sciences and techniques and the creative spirit in its universal dimension the most fertile…” (As cited in Bacher, 2013, p. 33) (MOT)

The openness to the outer world and having access to modern sciences and technologies are primary goals for the decision-makers. However, realizing these goals requires a good command of a language that permits being integrated into the global issues of the 21st century. That is to say, a good grasp of English language which has, at least for the time being, the power to integrate any nation in the world into the global village whose motto: “think globally, act locally.” Therefore, English is needed, more than ever before, to be reconsidered in our educational curriculum and to have precedence over all other foreign languages. And, foreign language policy of the country should be reordered according to the degree of importance of any communication in the social, economic, and political arenas.

2.2.1. English versus French in the Algerian Media

Confirming the ideological trends of the Algerian decision-makers to maintain the French language position among the Algerian speech community, even with the advance of technology, French is the widely used language in the sector of media. The number of newspapers is more edited in French than in Arabic. In this respect, Benrabah (1999) pointed out that the journals issued in French everyday outnumber those published in Arabic with 880,000 copies in contrast to just 30,000 copies. As in the sector of the press, French is much more used in radio than on television. A high number of transmissions are broadcasted in French. Other communications are either in Arabic or a mixture of French and Arabic, as it is the case in many radio programs (radio
El Bahdja (as cited in Arab 2015, p.6). In this respect, English remains far beyond the expectations to make a real rival to French in the Algerian society. Yet, it’s high time the Algerian government promoted the status of English in the Algeria media to keep pace with the needs of modern time. English language speakers are raising a challenge to improve English in the Algerian society through the use of the internet and its related services; social networks like Facebook and Twitter, chat rooms, YouTube, downloadable materials, e-books, e-journals and so on. This is what makes English seems imposing itself without an apparent language policy.

3. **English World Roles and Functions**

To justify the assumption that English should be given precedence over any other language, we should know the roles and functions can English do all over the world that any different language can ever play or do. Bacher (2013) says that “in knowledge-based societies and market-driven economies, English has proved its pass-partout language which fills many world roles that no other language can do” (p.29).

Building on Dhamija’s (1994) of English world roles, Tomlinson (2012) puts his detailed list of English world roles:

- English as a conference language
- English as an academic language
- English as Internet language
- English as business language
- English as a commercial language
- English as industrial language
- The language of air and sea control
- A language of social intercourse
- English as a diplomatic language
- A language of sports, entertainment, and popular songs.
- English as travel language, migration, and holidays
- English as an access language of news and views
- English as a language of self-expression.

3.1. **English Educational Roles in the Global issues**

It is no doubt that English witnesses unprecedented critical need in Algeria. This due mainly to globalization, economic interdependence, and the information revolution. Yet, having a commercial presence on the world stage is presumably; having a society whose workforce is an excellent management of English and technology henceforth. The good command of any foreign language is necessarily a result of having positive attitudes towards that language. The society’s tendency to give value to a foreign language, culture, and ideology may account for their preparedness to embrace or reject the entities mentioned above. In other words, the more positive the attitudes are, the more the society appears ready to be responsive. And, the more negative the opinions are, the more it takes counterproductive stances. This goes with the same line of thought of Baker’s (1990, p. 12) view, who in turn, quotes Lewis (1981): “Any policy for language, especially in the system of education, has to take account of the attitude of those likely to be affected.” He adds, “in the long run; no policy will succeed which doesn’t do three things: conform to the attitudes of those involved; persuade those who express negative attitudes about the rightness of the policy, or seek to remove the causes of the disagreement.”
developers need, therefore, to take into consideration these steps and work to eradicate all causes of disagreement and strengthening the positive attitudes in schools, institutions, and universities to get all society’s categories aware of the demands of the new era, and fully integrated into the global issues.

Arguably claimed, the fittest society of the 21st century is said to be that make provisions for quality education in which foreign languages, mainly, English are at heart. Schools, institutions, and universities are “the physical realization of the socio-political and socio-economic needs of state-nations to generalize education to their citizens.” (Bacher 2013, p. 51). And, any failure the state policies or societies lead to is mainly attributed to the educational systems. Nelson, Polonski & McCarthy (2004) argue, “…schools are usually at the center of public arguments about education since schools are the social organization that takes on the formalized task of educating.” (p.2). Schools are the mirror that reflects the contradictory views of decision-makers, and the conflicting philosophies of different civilizational eras.

However, it is no short of amazing to notice that quality education is not only the one which puts foreign languages at heart. But also, the one which takes into consideration the technological boom and the roles it may play in teaching, learning English qualitatively. It’s clear that 21st-century citizen is quite different from that of the previous century. The former face global issues such as globalization, democracy, global warming, the internet, social networks, student mobility, cross-border terrorism, cross-culturally issues, incurable diseases, and so on. The later, had to do with the requirements of the industrial revolution. Yet, it’s high time the Algerian stakeholders rethought their policies, and better reflect their views in the school mirror by giving ICTs or technology significant importance in education in general, and Foreign language teaching/learning in particular so that its roles will be well played.

4. Educational Reforms in Algeria

Right after getting back its sovereignty in 1962, Algeria has aimed to adopt an eradication policy of the French rule and culture, hence shaping its Arab-Islamic identity. This forged the Government of Colonel Boumediène to import hundreds of Arabic teachers and imams from the Middle East to help to realize his pursuit and secure his meant policy of “Arabization.” This policy faced by strong resistance of thousands of French and Algerian French teachers who had been sent to secondary schools during the 1960s and 1970s. A few years later, mainly within the years 1976-1979, a turning point in the Algerian educational system came to announce the end of the French authority and declare “Arabic” the language of instruction for all subjects except sciences and medicine courses. Though it’s been looked upon as “the out-dated methods of teaching,” as it is referred to in the 2008 World Bank Report; Mass higher education and Arabization have reformed the worldview of the mid-1980s generation. As stated by Krichen (1986) : “Arabization, in the region, is not only a question of words and symbols, but a fundamental question concerning the very conception of the world.” (Cited in N. Abdelatif Mami 2013, p.2).By the early 20s, Algeria, which was confronted by a new era marked by information and market-driven societies, and which was also getting out of bloodshed, felt the need for urgent educational reforms to heal the socio-cultural, and socio-economic problems of the Algerian population. Unfortunately, instead of introducing English as a language of science and technology to keep pace with a time of Globalization, the Algerian government reintroduced the French at an early stage in school and
as a language of instruction for sciences and medicine courses still, considering the “Arabization” policy the colossal mistake the government have ever committed repeating the expression “doomed schooling system”5

4. Higher Education Reforms in Algeria:

Right after having its independence and getting control over its ministry of higher education in 1962, significant changes were introduced to facilitate access to higher education for more significant number of Algerians. One of the most significant reforms introduced in 1971, sought to mobilize the full potential of the Algerian universities so that they would be in a position to support the ambitious economic, social and cultural transformation and development of the newly independent country. The 1971 Reform suggested a change in teaching/learning methods, including teaching contents, assessment methods, structure, and organization, besides the university management and the creation of new branches, subject matters, and modules to respond to the development requirements of the country more likely. A modular scheme was introduced. The academic year was elongated and divided into two semesters. (Simon Eseau, Hocine Khelfaoui 2016)

Other significant reform was in 1999. This Reform intended to prepare the Algerian universities to support the transition from a centralized to free-market economy and to address the vulnerabilities and opportunities of globalization to the Algerian economy. The new economic, social, and political challenges brought forth by globalization trends incited a reconsideration of the role the universities in the provision of science and technology through education and research accomplishments. This Reform was also expected to certify that the Algerian university system was not driven only by the objective to increase the quantity of output, but rather by the aim to improve quality that would enhance credibility.

The dominant centralized approach, coupled with the lack of a knowledge-sharing culture, has had the effect of rendering this coordination complex, and unattainable despite of the creation of a large number of the committee sat the national and regional levels. There was also a lack of adequate and consistent follow-up scheme for cooperative projects. This means that the integrated or holistic approach has not yet taken root as a way of doing things in Algeria. The disintegration of decision-making networks has the effect of preventing the surfacing of consensus, which is identified by Esau & Khelfaoui (2016) as the main preconditions for technological development through the application of the “triple helix” model of innovation.

The Algerian framework of university degrees is currently under reform with the traditional system, modeled on the French structure, to be gradually replaced with a three-tier system deemed more internationally compatible. There form, known as the “L.M.D.,” is set to introduce a degree structure based on the new French model of Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Doctoral degrees (Licence, Master, and Doctorate). Introduced by executive decree in 2004, their forms are being undertaken as a pilot project at 10 Algerian universities, which are working in consultation with several European universities. The new degree framework is similar in structure to their forms being undertaken in Europe through the Bologna Process. 

- The Licence degree: corresponding to three years of study beyond the Baccalaureate
(BAC+3); it is awarded for the accumulation of 180 credits.

- The Master’s degree, corresponding to two years of further study beyond the Licence (BAC+5); it is awarded for the accumulation of 120 credits.

- The Doctorate, corresponding to three years of research beyond the Master (BAC+8). It is generally awarded after a three to five years course of study.

It is hoped that the new system will make program offerings from Algeria universities more compatible with those around the world, thereby increasing the international mobility of Algerian faculty and students. Besides, their forms are aimed at improving student flexibility in choosing and transferring courses and credits; making the system more efficient as relates to the time it takes for students to graduate; increasing lifelong learning opportunities; and increasing institutional autonomy while producing learning outcomes more attuned to the needs of the labor market. (Clark, 2006, as cited in Khelfaoui, 2015).

Educational reform has emphasized on teacher training, improving the educational programs and general reorganization of the sector. It has fortified initial training for new educators and set up national training and an update program for working teachers and a variety of procedures to improve their status. Curricula have been reviewed, strikingly for language teaching, textbook content, and the criteria used for selecting the appropriate disciplines. Science has been accentuated, and new technology has been introduced as a teaching tool and a means of access to knowledge (OECD, 2005).


The main objective of the reforms done by policymakers in the field of higher education and scientific research is the establishment of an efficient, high-quality system of training and research, ensuring that Algerian qualifications are internationally recognized and that their general quality is improved and facilitating the employment of graduates. Graduate employability is now one of the leading indicators of the quality, relevance, and socio-economic utility of higher education (Benstaali, 2013).

These objectives currently face several challenges. One of them is how to reconcile the needs of democratic access to higher education with the need for more top quality of training in a changing world characterized by the advent of knowledge and information society, economic globalization and knowledge explosion. Another challenge for higher education is to do more than dispense knowledge and know-how, to go further by introducing a vocational dimension focused on satisfying the needs of the labor market. Furthermore, one of the strategic challenges is to train to a high standard the large numbers of teachers needed to look after a student body estimated to be 1 500,000 strong (Benstaali, 2013).

As for technology, ICT presents a challenge to the Algerian university, not in terms of the network, which is in the process of development, but because many students do not have their laptops and because there are insufficient workplaces within the universities. The government has been asked to help by giving financial support to students to buy laptops. (Rasa and Reilly 2011)
This seems to be a burden that couldn’t be considered by the government, especially with the continuously growing numbers of students.

These challenges require a gradual transition from a bureaucratic and administrative model of student services towards a management system based on the principles of “governance.” This system should also involve greater participation of the whole community in the management of institutions. The ultimate goal is to reinforce decentralization and move towards genuine autonomy.

Accordingly, The Algerian government has made throughout the years considerable efforts resulting in the extension of the university network and the training of hundreds of thousands of executives. These efforts must continue to achieve the desired objectives, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Concerning the general level of qualifications in comparison with the EU and internationally, a special Commission has been established to promote the reform process and identify areas of weakness. Remarkably, the Ministry has recently inaugurated a new salary structure, which will give additional increments for the university staff those utilize e-learning in their teaching as well as undertaking other work. A new system of promotion is linked to the salary-based reward system. Besides, most academics have their laptop, and the university has helped staff to buy PCs (Benstaali, 2013).

Languages are a further area of concern, and the objective is to increase the number of students and teachers speaking English. The formal languages of instruction in the Algerian university are French and Arabic. Though it’s the language of modern technology and science, English is still absent in the technology and science areas of study in the Algerian university. It is taught as a module once or twice a week for specific purposes, or as a specialty in the English department.

5. English Department Reforms:

The Algerian universities are divided into faculties which are subdivided into departments. The English language department is one of them, and it is found almost in every single university all-over Algeria. The Algerian system of higher education had witnessed a transitional process from the traditional structure (four years Licence, two years Magister, and three years Doctorate) to the new LMD system (3years Licence, 2years Master, 3years Doctorate).

The English department took part in this reform, and the LMD system is generalized over all the English departments in the Algerian universities. This system is semester-based; all students are meant to move automatically from the first semester of each academic year to the second. The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is being phased in, and a semester counts for 30 credits; i.e., students are required to have 180 credits to get a Bachelor’s degree and to progress automatically to the second cycle to have a Master’s degree for 120 credits. Semesters are assessed through final examinations and several continuous assessment elements such as supervised assignments, homework, practical tests, reports, and presentations. As for the third cycle, new instructions have been added to the previous reforms in the executive decree of 02 June 2016 in which the Doctoral candidate must have 180 credits when it comes to present the doctoral thesis prepared in (3 to 5) year’s period of time.
5.1. Foreign Language Hidden Curriculum

In the field of foreign languages, language curriculum development has always been a controversial issue. It is stated that alongside the ‘official’ curriculum, there is an ‘unofficial’ or ‘hidden’ curriculum (Apple, 1979). This hidden curriculum, though it seems that it is widely underestimated both theoretically and empirically compared to the official one, remains vital entity that needs to be reconsidered so that foreign language teaching and learning process becomes more efficient and successful. According to Nunan (1989), the hidden curriculum is conveyed to learners through disparities or mismatches between what is said and what is done. Teachers are often unconscious of the covert messages they transmit, verbally and non-verbally, and these messages usually reveal teachers’ attitudes towards many different aspects of the teaching-learning process. He further points out that there is evidence of disparity between what teachers believe they do and what they actually do in the classroom. Yet, it is recommended that teachers and institutions should give the hidden curriculum its real worth.

The concept “hidden curriculum” is tackled by so many scholars and specialists and, their definitions of the term varied according to their views. Peng (2015) defines the term as “everything carried out by the teacher and the learner that is not planned or required by the official curriculum in a language classroom” (p.2). Farrel and Jacobs (2010) simply regard the hidden curriculum as “the knowledge, values, and beliefs that schools present the student” (p.18). Hedge (2000), in turn, describes the hidden curriculum as:

The learning goes on in covert ways beneath the surface of what the teacher sets out to teach. It encompasses the shaping of learners’ perceptions about learning, their own role in it, and the nature of the subject they are studying, their teachers, and so on, and their attitudes towards all of these (p 83).

Differently approached, the hidden curriculum is referred to by Johnson (1989) as a “hidden syllabus” and “alternative curriculum” to indicate that teachers may use the methods, materials, or activities that are not in conformity with the requirements stated in the official curriculum. In the same line of thought, Nunan (1989) comes to employ the term “hidden agenda” to imply that “learners have their own agendas in the language lessons they attend. These agendas, as much as the teachers’ objectives, determined what learners take from any given lesson or teaching/learning encounter” (p. 176). Generally, the hidden curriculum is referred to as a covert, unofficial, or alternative curriculum as opposed to the overt, manifest, explicit, formal, or official curriculum. According to Peng (2015), it manifests itself in two parallel perspectives: the teacher’s perspective and the learner’s perspective:

Hidden curriculum in terms of teachers, which predicts two kinds of teaching acts in a language classroom. First, teachers convey socially-approved knowledge unconsciously while teaching what is required by the official curriculum. This knowledge could indicate social morals, habits, attitudes, beliefs and so on. That is to say; teachers, often teach obedience, conscientiousness, regularity, punctuality, gender identity, and even political awareness. These practices are taught indirectly in schools and institutions, and they are not scheduled as sessions in a foreign language curriculum. There is no session called obedience, conformity, or even consciousness. Peng has discovered that nowadays, in a foreign language classroom, teachers
usually think highly of or also reward those students who are hard-working learners and active participants in the teaching process. At the same time, they may show dislike or disapproval to those who are always late for class, lazy in following teacher’s instructions and those who never answer the teacher’s question voluntarily. This contributes to the students’ unconscious learning of things like what constitutes a good student in the eyes of a particular teacher or what behaviors are undesirable or unacceptable. The reasons beyond teaching this social learning according to her have to do with the society, the local culture of the schools and institutions, and the teacher’s values and beliefs on what constitutes a good student. What is taught by teacher is dictated to a large extent by the expectations and demands set by society. Hence, it will be instilled into students consciously or subconsciously.

The second thing Peng (2015) disputes is that teachers teach in a way that is not consistent with what is required in the official curriculum. She adds factors like teachers’ academic qualifications, their previous teaching experience, their preferred teaching strategies, as well as their proficiency in the target language, may also influence the teaching acts and lead to the occurrence of the hidden curriculum. For example, where the teachers’ own beliefs, previous teaching experience, or proficiency in the target level differ radically from the official curriculum, they insist on using the grammar-translation method instead of the communicative approach. They refuse to use group or pair work even if this curriculum is designed for it.

Hidden curriculum in terms of learners through which learners often learn things other than what has been taught. This is quite usual, according to Nunan (1989), because learners all have their own ‘hidden’ agendas or curriculum in the language lessons they attend. This hidden curriculum of the learners is at least as essential as the overt curriculum in determining learning outcomes. Nunan (1989) provided some evidence from research and classroom observation to show that there are often mismatches between teachers’ and learners’ views of what is important in the learning process, especially in the communicative language teaching classrooms where teachers value some communicative activities, the learners surveyed place higher value on ‘traditional’ learning activities. He concluded:

“Classroom orientation of the learner will often have a marked influence on his/her classroom behavior and the attention given and the learning efforts made. These orientations of the learners will constitute a hidden agenda and will largely dictate what is learned.” (p.180).

Moreover, Nunan (1989) puts forward three kinds of reasons related to the occurrence of the students’ hidden curriculum: (1) “Learners may simply be unaware of the ‘official’ curriculum” (p. 185). That is, they do not know the content the teacher wants to convey to them and what are the objectives of the official curriculum. (2) “Learners may have different priorities from those of the teacher” (p. 186) in the learning process. (3) “Some contents of a course may simply be unlearnable given speech processing constraints and a given learner’s current stage of development” (p. 186). This is to say: There can be a natural ordering in the process of (foreign) language learning which decides a learner’s learning capacities concerning a particular stage of development.
Conclusion:

Algeria has thrived to establish its linguistic identity and still. This is all due to its linguistic complexity, which led, in turn, to several reforms in the national educational system where the status of foreign languages, mainly French and English, still raises a significant problem. Seemingly, the French language is getting displaced by English. This sounds very reasonable since English is the only language for the time being that allows people to meet their needs and face the escalating waves of globalization. However, the linguistic crisis in Algeria leads to social, political, and cultural unrest, which presumably makes the field of education a battleground for the different ideological views, and the learners remain the scapegoat of such a battle. Yet, it’s high time the Algerian decision-makers took practical measures to establish the linguistic identity of the Algerian nation and save the educational field the ideological conflicts.

Footnotes

1 Charles-Robert Agero (1923-2008) is a French historian whose book les Algeriens Musulmans et la France (1871-1919) has had great impact on a wide range of readership.
2 MOT: My Own Translation
3 Pierre Foncin (1841-1916) was a teacher of geography and later promoted to the post of inspector general for public instruction (1890). He was known for his advocacy in favor of the colonial policy.
4 This statement was first said by a Scotsman by the name of Patrick Geddes (1854-1932), and who was an architect by calling. In the field of education, Stuart R. Graur, Ph.D. An American educator is claimed to have been the first advocator.

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Graduate Students Perceptions of Success in United States Colleges

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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to investigate Saudi students’ behaviors at higher education institutions in the US, by clarifying the reasons behind their retentions and the reasons for their dropout (leaving the school), in order to limit the increase in this issue. Data were collected through three focus groups. The participants in this study were 15 graduate students studying in the United States. The method used to prepare focus group data for analyzing in this study was an abridged transcript. The analysis framework in this study was constant comparative. The findings of this study were most participants saw the definition of student success in colleges as: achieving the goals of the study, passing all courses, graduating on time, and diligence and persistence. The most frequent factors which led students to postgraduate study were: obtaining a high level of education, self-improvement, updating their income, and upgrading their job to a higher position. Some of the difficulties/problems the participants faced while enrolled at their universities included: the difficulty of some courses, time constraints, lack of experience, and tuition. These problems were mostly solved by: cooperating with other students, working with the tutoring center, asking advisers for help, and trying to get a scholarship from the government of Saudi Arabia.

Keywords: retention, student success, Saudi students, higher education.

Introduction

Individuals need to enhance their professional and personal growth through education (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002). It opens the doors to widening one’s scope of understanding, which informs the need to ensure lifelong learning and success in colleges. In recent years, the number of international students in the United States has increased. According to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2012), international students are generally considered to be “students who have crossed borders expressly with the intention to study” (p. 436).

In 2005, the Government in Saudi Arabia established the King Abdullah Scholarship Program to send Saudi students to the United States to continue their education in many fields of study; such as Health Sciences, Pharmacy, Engineering, Computer Sciences, Basic Sciences, Accounting, and E-commerce. In 2018, the number of Saudi students studying abroad reached over 108,000 (Ministry of Higher Education, 2018).

Student success has an immediate influence on a student’s academic self-esteem, persistence in elected majors, and perseverance in higher education (Caruth, 2018). Academic achievement can mean a number of things based on the situation in which it is being discussed. Often, grade point average (GPA) is the focus when academic achievement is researched.

According to the ACT policy report student's ability to succeed academically hinges not only on their intellectual faculties, but also on any number of outside factors (Lotkowski, Robbins, & Noeth, 2004). While some factors may affect all students equally, others only affect a minority group. Success in college is often based on a combination of factors, including family support, academic preparedness, life skills and decision-making abilities of the student.

According to the Saudi government data, over 200,000 students and dependents took advantage of the King Abdullah Scholarship Program to go abroad in 2014, at the cost of around 22.5 billion royals ($6 billion U.S.). The scholarship typically covers full academic tuition, medical coverage, a monthly stipend, and round-trip airfare for both scholars and dependents.

In an effort to understand and reduce the high percentage of graduate student dropout and transfer from one University to another, this study aimed to identify the reasons behind students’ behavior.

Purpose of the study

The primary purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the reasons behind students’ retention and the reasons that lead them to dropout their schools, in order to better understand this issue. In this study, the success in United States colleges is defined as students who do not leave their schools until they have graduated. Hence, the main question in this study is: What are the factors that make graduate students successful in United States colleges?

Focus groups would expand on the information gathered in the surveys and engage members to participate in a dynamic conversation about graduate students' perception of success.
in United States colleges. The researchers extrapolated information, provided analysis, and created a more in-depth evaluation.

**Literature Review**

According to Aulck, Velagapudi, Blumenstock, and West (2016), about 30% of first-year students at US baccalaureate institutions, each year, do not return for their second year, and over $9 billion is spent on educating them. In their study, they describe the initial efforts to model student dropout using the largest known dataset on higher education attrition, which tracks student demographics and transcript records of over 32,500 students at one of the nation’s largest public universities.

The study shows the preliminary results for predicting student attrition from a large, heterogeneous dataset of student demographics and transcript records. Predicting eventual student attrition provided promising outcomes from a balanced dataset of over 32,500 students, with the strongest predictions being those presented by regularized logistic regression.

The study results emphasize several early indicators of student attrition, and indicate dropouts can be predicted accurately even with predictions being based solely on transcript data from a single term.

Among the strongest individual predictors of attrition, the study discussed, were:

- GPA in math, English, chemistry, and psychology courses;
- the year of enrollment; and,
- year of birth.

The results, therefore, highlight time effects in the data. Predicting the number of quarters non-completions take before dropout yielded marginal results, as predictions of about five quarters of enrollment.

They also spotlight the potential for machine learning to influence student retention and success, and point to several promising courses of future action. In addition, the authors proposed the following future steps: discussions with university administrators, improving the predictive models, and possibly even expanding the dataset to other universities and community colleges where attrition rates tend to be much higher.

The study of looked into international students' experiences in both academic and sociocultural settings of (Wu, Garza, & Guzman, 2015). The qualitative interviews conducted in this study showed that international students dealt with academic difficulties, social separation, and cultural adjustment.

The academic difficulties were more specifically comprised of communication with professors, fellow classmates, and staff. As a result, they have to confront social separation when they take part in different group activities. In addition, Culturally, they have to tackle the different approaches faced in the US. Furthermore, the study revealed that students have adopted certain
resources, most of which have been obtained from the university itself, in order to overcome these obstacles.

Consequently, this study showed that university faculty and staff having a better grasp of international students' academic challenges can help in recognizing their needs and more effectively offering support through campus resources and services. The university has to not only deal with the students’ academic difficulties, but also be prepared to meet them socially and culturally.

The study also proposed that the university must make some preparations that will fully welcome international students from their moment of arrival. As well, as proposing several recommendations for higher education institutions in the US, such as:

1. Provide international students with a program to support their English language proficiency. Language barriers can impact the academic process, including their learning, participation in different activities, and cultural awareness. Therefore, universities could host workshops wherein international students can become more familiar with colloquial English, used slang language, and the social and cultural customs and conventions of US society, thus enabling them to better communicate both in academic and nonacademic environments.

2. Domestic students and faculty should acknowledge the value of embracing international students and appreciating each other's diversity. For instance, holding orientation programs to learn from international students. Faculty should bear in mind the equivalent access and learning opportunities for all students. Domestic students should also develop inter-cultural competence to better interact with international students. For example, training could be provided for staff who will be working with international students.

3. International students require guidance for success in their academic learning, and support for their psychological stress. Therefore, tutoring and counseling should be made available.

4. Offer international students a special orientation program that covers US culture and overall academic culture. Efforts towards this goal could include seminars by professionals, international students sharing their own experience of studying in the US, and founding of organizations where ties of friendship can be developed with local people.

The study of Caruth (2018) was an archival quantitative, data mining research study which used data from the Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) of the National Center for Education Statistics. The purpose of this study was to analyze the academic success of current college students, by examining if students are actually graduating from college. This study pinpoints the numbers of students graduating during the years 2009 to 2014, based on the information available from public, private, and for-profit 2-year and 4-year universities in the United States.

The findings indicated in the years 2009-2014 it was the for-profit 2-year and 4-year academic institutions which displayed the greatest increase and the numbers of students graduating. In spite of student retention being scrutinized for nearly 50 years, the fact remains that in over two decades, college graduation and persistence rates have not increased. Moreover, time to degree rates indicate it is taking longer to earn degrees.
As a result, a significant amount of individual and financial expense is needed to earn a college degree. It is the responsibility of higher education to the society it serves to make postsecondary education a successful experience for students, and to ascertain whether or not colleges and universities are meeting the students’ learning needs (Caruth, 2018).

In their study Li, Chen, and Duanmu (2010) examined the learning experience of international students by examining the differences between Chinese and non-Chinese cultural groups and identified the top predictors of academic achievement through multiple regression analysis. More and more international students are traveling to well-developed countries for their higher education, resulting in an increased interest in investigating the factors which influence their academic performance while pursuing their overseas studies.

The results of Li et al. study indicate that the following are the most important predictors for all international students:

- the perceived value of learning success to their families,
- their English writing ability, and
- social communication with their fellow countrymen and women.

As the predominant group, Chinese students exhibit some distinctive features. A less active learning strategy is found among the Chinese compared to other nationalities. However, there is no evidence this has any negative effect on their academic achievement (Li et al, 2010).

In addition, the study of Msengi (2007) aimed to identify the sources of stress on 220 international students studying at a comprehensive Midwestern university, to explore its effects on their health behaviors and academic performance, and to discover the coping strategies they used to manage stress.

The study was a cross-sectional descriptive design, using a quantitative method. Two hundred and twenty international students who enrolled at the university during the Summer and Fall of 2003 took part in this study. Data were gathered using the Sources of Stress, Health Behaviors and Academic Performance Scale for international students. The statistical procedure for data analysis included t test, ANOVA, chi-square, and bivariate correlation.

The results found the stress experienced by international students stemmed from:

- alienation/discrimination,
- communication/language difficulties,
- homesickness/loneliness,
- financial hardships, and
- academic pressure.

The most commonly reported best stress coping strategies were: forming friendships, dating U.S. students, and practicing religion. There were significant differences in the level of stress experienced based on gender. Overall, male students reported less stress than their female counterparts.
Academically speaking, international students performed well overall, with a mean GPA of 3.4. The overall health behavior was good among international students. A motivational role of stress was described by international students with regards to academic performance and health behaviors.

Msengi (2007), revealed that orientation programs and cultural competency training for faculty, staff, and students would “increase interaction and understanding among the university community” (p. 1). This facilitates the acculturation process for international students.

**Higher Education in Saudi Arabia**

According to Alabtain (1997) higher education means all types of education which come after secondary school, such as higher institutions; university colleges; and professional training centers which create national cadres needed for training teachers, engineers, doctors, and a variety of other occupations. Alhoqel (1994) found there was a strong relation between higher education and the welfare of nations. In other words, higher education is the main source of creating higher skills for human factors as the major element of progress and development throughout the world.

The aim of higher education is to contribute to the development of society, in order to achieve more advanced civilizations. It may be perceived that higher education graduated specialists or professionals can contribute to the development of a country (Albahashi, 2004). Moreover, it provides the educational sector with plans and foundations to drive society in various humanitarian and urban directions. Graduate scientists and researchers can contribute to sciences and progress in both community and humanitarian service to the country (Aldawood, 1995).

According to the Ministry of Higher Education (1994) higher education means: "All types of education that follow secondary education, or equivalent, and provided vocational training centers, higher institutes, colleges and universities" (p. 34). The late King Abdullah believed education to be critical to the development of the country. During his 10 years' reign, the number of universities increased from 8 to 35 (Alamri, 2011). Higher education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has witnessed special attention due to the country's vision toward providing the best level of education, and as a result of the increasing social demand for this type of education.

As stated by Nofal (1999) study in this kind of education is based on the cognitive side only, and the basic role of the university is scientific knowledge. Nofal believes a university where study and research are performed is the most honest, full of value, and the best place to obtain this knowledge.

The post-secondary system of education in Saudi Arabia leads to a specific degree, similar to the educational system of the United States. The patterns and procedures of these educational systems have been adopted in accordance with Islamic systems, traditions, and customs (Abdulateef, 1997). According to Alghamdi (2002), the Higher Education Council is the supreme authority for post-secondary education affairs, with the specific task of supervising and coordinating its institutions—with the sole exception of military education. The main aim of this Council is to manage and monitor the process of education in universities according to policy and to supervise the progress of education in universities regarding all sectors. It also coordinates the
different universities in the field of scientific degrees and departments, in addition to supporting research (Alghamdi, 2002).

Methods

Sample

Participants in the focus groups, the students, had to meet the following criteria:

1. Studying at a university in the United States
2. Graduate level student
3. Country of origin is Saudi Arabia
4. Enrolled in at least one course in the 2016 Spring semester.
5. Received the King Abdullah scholarship.

The number of participants for this study was 15 graduate Saudi students, in which nine were males and seven were females, all enrolled in the graduate level courses. The strategy for selecting participants for this study was nomination. The researcher requested graduate students in United States universities to find any who wished to participate in the study, and some were then nominated to take part.

Focus Group Questions

The focus groups participants were asked the following questions:

• Could you please state your name, age, and how long you have been studying as a graduate student?
• Looking at your University experience, do you see yourself as a successful student? Could you explain what success in college means?
• Can you please describe your decision to begin your postsecondary education? And have you ever left a University before? If so, why?
• Have you ever encountered difficulties/problems while enrolled at University? If so, how did you overcome them? Did the problems make you consider dropping your classes?
• How do you see the courses that are offered? (Match with ability and interest)?
• Is there anything else you think is important for us to know regarding graduate students seeking degrees and college retention in the United States that was not covered today?

Data Collection

In order to collect the data for this study, a recording device was used to capture the focus group meetings, to make sure no information was missed. Ethical research was the essential element in the focus groups; therefore, permission was obtained from all participants.

There were three focus groups. The groups were conducted on January 7th, 19th, and February 2nd of 2016. The meetings were scheduled for 40 minutes, including food and drinks. Focus group participants were asked to first talk about what success in college meant to them, then give their reasons for beginning postgraduate education, and any difficulties/problems faced while enrolled at the University.
Data Analysis

The method to prepare the focus group data for analysis used an abridged transcript. According to Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, and Gorenc (2009) this includes listening to an audio recording of each focus group, and identifying the abridged transcript of the relevant and useful portions of the discussion. The analysis framework in this study was constant comparative, since the main objective was to identify patterns in the data and determine the relationships among ideas or concepts (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). The key task was comparing one segment of data with another to identify similarities and differences. In this case, the data were grouped together based common themes. Next, these patterns were arranged by their relationship to each other.

The data were analyzed using a classic approach, which includes breaking the job down into doable portions. This method of analysis helps make it a visual and concrete process. The researchers focused on identifying themes and categorizing the results. At the end of the analysis, 18 themes were identified. Several methods were used to ensure the trustworthiness of the results; such as working with classmates to conduct a pilot-testing of the questions to ensure that they were understood, listening to the participants' comments to modify any weakness in the questions, and listening carefully and observing their answers.

Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine the reasons behind students retention and the reasons that lead them to dropout their schools. Based on the questioning and the frequent areas discussed during the focus group, the following themes were identified by most of the focus groups participants:

Success in college. There are different meanings of success in college among the participants; such as achieving the goals of degree program, passing all courses, graduating on time, implementing the objectives of the learning, and being diligent and persistent. One of the participants shared “Success is having a goal and achieving it, and in my current time of life, success to me is attaining the Ph.D. degree. When I get the Ph.D., that would mean that I have achieved the first goal and my first success”.

Another added “The Saudi student should maintain his academic success by following the academic plan throughout his studying period”. In addition, another participant said “The continuous follow-up from the Saudi scholarship committee, makes us the students more careful to keep up the hard work and to show the vest academic progress”, Another added “The Saudi scholarship committee does not allow for low grades and failure, students should be really hard workers and maintain academic success”.

Postgraduate education. The most frequent factors which led interviewees to begin postgraduate education were: obtaining a high level of education including knowledge and information about a particular subject; improving themselves in various aspects such as life, thinking, and culture; updating their income, upgrading their job to a higher position; and helping their families get a good education.

One of the participants mentioned, “Factors that contribute to success are optimism,
persistence, hard work, and having a specific goal”. Another added “The Saudi that has a degree from the U.S will get a better income, which motivates us to stay distinct”, another participant shared “The current hard work will payoff upon our return to our country, a better living is awaiting us, one can give a better life to his family as well, be able to pay for improved education systems to his kids”, in addition, a participant added “Studying is part of our lives, once one is committed to his academic life and studying, this reflects directly on the other sides of his life, such as his career and development”.

**Difficulties/problems.** The participants faced several difficulties and problems while enrolled at a university: the difficulty of some courses; insufficient time for studying and performing assignments, especially students who work part-time jobs; lack of experience in some skills such as research methods, statistical methods, and time management. Another difficulty was paying graduate school tuition.

One participant added, “The importance of education is to expand knowledge and build an intelligent society. As for life, it ensures a better level of living, for example, better salaries and better jobs”. Another added, “Peers are important for students in that they share the same problems and try to help each other”. Also, another participant shared

“Using another language in the courses and assignment is challenging, especially at the beginning of the academic process, which requires the students to work even harder to obtain higher results”.

**Dealing with difficulties and problems.** Students can take control or solve these difficulties / problems through ways such as: cooperating with other students, working with the tutoring center, asking advisers for help, and attempting to win a scholarship from United States universities.

One of the participants explained that “The educational level and work position of parents play a significant role in student decisions to complete their degree, as educated parents usually provide advice while the final decision is down to the student.” Another said, “Universities neither give the student enough time to pay their tuition nor provide sufficient financial support to help the study toward a better level of achievement. Another added “I will take class notes from any student as one of many forms of cooperation among students. Thanks to us helping each other, the school is a united community”.

One participant offered a statement that “When a professor shows respect for the student, the student absolutely feels the desire to complete his degree”. Moreover, other participant shared “Persistence usually comes from within a person. Certain events and circumstances could lead a person to seek opportunities for a better life”. Also, one of the participants shared “Communication with professors both in class and office hours improves the relationship between them and their students. Therefore, this could affect their achievement and grades, since the professor would be more familiar with the level of the student”.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, there are several recommendations for future research:

- This study investigated graduate students perception of success in United States colleges. Similar studies should be conducted with students from other countries.
• This study focused on graduate students. Similar studies could be conducted with undergraduate students and the results compared with those for graduate students.
• This study relied on a small sample of graduate students in the United States from different institutions. A larger sample or sample from another university might offer different student perceptions.
• This study did not include any demographic variables. A similar study could be conducted adding demographic variables such as gender; martial status; and the number of semesters the student has been enrolled at university.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to clarify the reasons behind students’ retention and the reasons that lead them to leave their schools in order to limit the increase in this issue. The questioning route comprises seven questions including opening, introduction, transition, key, and ending questions. The data were gathered based on 15 graduate students in the United States. These graduate students are generally positive about their perception of success in United States colleges. All participants in this study strongly agreed that success is important and that it has several different meanings among students. Participants also agreed that there are some difficulties and problems that face graduate students and impact their success in college. The results in this study show that the university’s system and students’ advisors influence student success in United States colleges.

Implications

This study contributes to possible improvements to the educational system in Saudi Arabia. It also may help Saudi students to be successful when they travel abroad to perceive their higher education degrees. The Saudi Ministry of Education can also benefit from this study by improving the external scholarship system and by looking at the obstacles students face while enrolled in universities abroad.

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References


**Effectiveness of Using Poly Category Mind Map for Vocabulary Development**

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Abstract  
Despite learning English formally in primary classrooms, most of the Malaysian primary learners are incapable of conveying their ideas accurately in the target language since they have limited vocabulary. Action research based on the Kemmis and McTaggart Action Research Model was carried out to alleviate the vocabulary learning challenges. Thus, the study aims are to investigate the effects of the Poly Category Mind Map for vocabulary development of third-year students. Thirty students from the third-year suburban school in Mersing, Johor participated in the study. Vocabulary pre-test and post-tests used as the instruments of collecting the data. The results of the post-test at the end of the second cycle showed a significant difference between the mean scores before and after using Poly Category Mind Map to develop vocabulary (p>0.05). The use of Poly Category Mind Mapping helped students in understanding and remembering the words, their meaning, and spelling precisely. The findings concluded that using the features of Poly Category Mind Map, which are the pictures, keywords, and grouping of words aided the students in learning vocabulary. This study hopes to encourage students, teachers, and curriculum designers to integrate Poly Category Mind Mapping strategy in English classrooms. Researchers can also utilise the Poly Category Mind Mapping in learning skills of the English Language such as reading and writing for further studies.

**Keywords**: Mind Map, Poly Category Mind Map, primary school students, vocabulary, vocabulary development  
DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol11no2.15
Introduction

Vocabulary is one of the main elements in language teaching because students can be successful in learning the language by having adequate knowledge of vocabulary. The Cambridge University Press (2008) defined vocabulary as all “the words are known and used by a particular person or all the words that exist in a particular language or subject” (p. 2). Learners need to master several different components of language, such as grammar and syntax before they can learn a language. However, vocabulary knowledge is the primary and vital component in acquiring a second language. This statement is also supported by Wilkins (1972), who argues that “there is not much value in being able to produce grammatical sentences if one has not got the vocabulary that is needed to convey what one wishes to say” (In Al Qahtani, 2015, p. 22). Thus, vocabulary knowledge is significant as it is the main component of a language.

According to Asgari and Bin Mustapha (2010), vocabulary acquisition is one of the most challenging components of language learning. Therefore, students are weak in their language proficiency is because they have limited numbers of words stored in their mind to convey their ideas. This claim is also supported by Misbah, Mohamad and Yunus (2017) as they found from their study in seven Sekolah Kebangsaan (National) schools in Malaysia that “the most important factor contributing to the students’ problems in learning English is the restricted vocabulary” (p.2000). They stated that students with restricted vocabulary have difficulty reading, writing, listening, and speaking English. In conclusion, students' small number of vocabulary knowledge is the most significant barrier learners' face in studying the English language.

Purpose and question of the study

The lack of adequate vocabulary has made Malaysian primary students have difficult times having excellent English language qualifications. This problem is also extended to the researcher’s school, as Malaysian Classroom-Based Assessment or also known as Pentaksiran Bilik Darjah (PBS) of third-year students, showed that most of the students scored in low bands in their assessment. Most students are average achievers who scored band 2, which indicates that students are of limited language proficiency. Based on the analysis of the classroom assessments, the researcher found that the students do not fully understand the words, their meaning, and they can't remember the words or the words’ spelling that they have learned. All the problems mentioned above address one crucial question, which is how the students can learn words effectively.

The researcher believes that learners need to gain more productive knowledge of vocabulary and build their vocabulary learning strategies. Since the CEFR syllabus is more about the communicative learning approach, teachers often ignore the method to teach individual words. Although these words can incidentally be learned, vocabulary becomes more meaningful to learners when provided with a language-rich setting. In other words, students will benefit from systematic and direct word instruction. This statement is also in line with Thombury (2002), in which he proposed that word teaching is as important as language learning. In short, descriptive vocabulary learning is crucial to enhance the students’ language skills.

Another vital issue is the way students in the class represent their knowledge. Based on their English notebooks, the researcher noticed that research participants usually represent their knowledge in linguistic forms. For instance, they will simply write the definition of a new word
without the addition of language recall techniques. This strategy is similar to some of the schools in Malaysia, according to Muhamad and Kiely (2018). They argued that the data gained from their research indicated that teaching vocabulary in the classroom is limited only to discuss the definition of incomprehensible words. Therefore, it is clear that there was a need to develop the representations of word knowledge that makes words acquisition easier and words could be kept longer in the memory. Teachers should assist students with their difficulties in understanding and recalling the words learned in previous lessons. The value of acquiring vocabulary for second-language learning is vital. Since the time at schools is minimal, the students need to know vocabulary items as efficiently and practically as possible.

Thus, action research should be conducted to explore a better language learning strategy. To overcome the problems that are brought upon the students due to ineffective methods of learning vocabulary, memory strategies that are regarded as powerful mental tools should be applied. One of the effective memory strategies to learn vocabulary is using Poly Category Mind Mapping, which is also a type of mind map. Mind map features consist most of the elements in the memory strategies, which is integrating new words into the acquired knowledge via imagery, grouping, use of keywords, and associating. (Schmitt, 1997). Besides, Buzan and Buzan (1993) also advocated the usage of a mind map as a learning tool as they stated that “the brain finds it easier to accept and remember visually stimulating, multi-coloured, multi-dimensional mind map, rather than monotonous, boring liner notes.” (p.89) The Poly Category Mind Map is a type of mind map which has only three to seven branches. According to Buzan (1993) also, this type of mind map allows in splitting details of information up into manageable pieces. Thus, this study aims to:

1. Investigate the effects of the usage of the Poly Category Mind Map on third-year students’ vocabulary development.

Literature Review

Vocabulary Development Process

Vocabulary is usually regarded to be the most prominent instrument for learners to be successful in second language learning, and ESL students see it as the most challenging section. It is a truism, therefore, that the absence of adequate vocabulary knowledge restricts the understanding of language by learners and hinders their capacity to develop their vocabulary knowledge. It is due to the reason that vocabulary "plays a vital role in all language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing.” (Robert Ayin & M. Shah, 2020, p.2) Without a doubt, vocabulary development is a complicated process involving distinct stages, and inadequacy can be an obstacle to vocabulary learning in each step. Nation (2006) also suggested five phases of learning vocabulary to develop students' vocabulary knowledge, including finding new words, knowing the word definition, consolidating the memory of the word form and meaning, and lastly using the word. In reality, the procedures listed show that more explicit teaching strategies are required for vocabulary teaching. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) believed that making vocabulary learning comprehensible and meaningful can be facilitated by using suitable cognitive learning strategies.
Vocabulary Learning Strategy

As stated earlier, vocabulary acquisition is a tricky subject among distinct fields of second-language learning. Many academics think that excellent use of teaching strategies is needed for building a comprehensive vocabulary list and using them correctly (Alharthi, 2014; Khoshshima & Rezaeian, 2014). Folse (2004) stated that L2 learners have to memorise the form, get the definition, and use the term. On the other hand, to obtain, remember, and use new words, it needs the learner to be disciplined. Dóczi (2011) thinks that acquiring vocabulary is an ongoing method, so vocabulary learning strategies have an essential role to play in resolving insurmountable language learning problems. Maximising the opportunity to succeed in teaching, remembering and using words are the primary objectives of vocabulary teaching strategies that can be achieved through cognitive strategies. In reality, the cognitive strategy highlights the growth of thinking abilities. Scheid (1993) also supported this statement by stating that the goal of cognitive strategies is to allow all learners in their learning efforts to become more strategic, self-reliant, flexible, and productive.

Poly Category Mind Mapping Strategy

The Poly Category Mind Mapping Strategy is one of the cognitive learning techniques, as it helps learners to become more pragmatic, self-reliant, agile, and efficient in their vocabulary learning. The Poly Category Mind Map is a form of a mind map. “Mind mapping involves writing down a central idea and coming out with new and related ideas from the centre.” (Yunus and Chien, 2016, p.621) According to Buzan (2016) cited in Hawrani (2011), not only do Mind Maps display facts, but they also demonstrate a subject's general structure and the comparative significance of individual components of it. It enables learners to combine thoughts, believe creatively, and establish links that might not otherwise be possible. These advantages are similar to the Poly Category Mind Map because the Poly category is also a form of a Mind map. However, according to Buzan (2016) cited in Hawrani (2011) Poly Category Mind Maps “can contain from three to seven branches” (p.17). This mind map allows the creation of mental classification capabilities because Buzan (2016) cited in Hawrani (2011) believed that in short-term memory, the average mental capacity of beings is unable to recall more than seven parts of information.

Tony Buzan created Mind Map in the early 1970s as an instrument to help individuals more efficiently take notes and make it easy for us to remember a lot of data. Mind mapping is generally like art because it uses many colourful photos and symbols. Buzan (2016) cited in Hawrani (2011) said mind mapping is a robust graphic method that offers a universal key for unlocking the brain's potential. The recording of data through symbols, images, emotional significance, and colours is precisely the same as the processing of our brains. The Poly Category Mind Map is also in line with the Dual Coding theory, which states that data presented with both verbal depictions and mental images can improve memory and understanding recognition (Li, Yang & Chen, 2010). The Poly Category Mind Maps which consist of both verbal depictions and mental images using pictures, colours, keywords to present thoughts and the picture or topic in the central portion can assist learners' process input more effectively. All the characteristics of the mind map allow the brain to remember better and recollect the words as according to Dual Coding Theory. Although the verbal and nonverbal system are both naturally and structurally discrete, they aid each other during encoding, storing and retrieving, which are the three significant phases of brain memory function.
Past Studies of Using Mind Map to Improve Vocabulary

Studies on the use of Mind Map to develop students' vocabulary are discussed here to see the benefits it has given to other researchers in their studies which could be related to the current study. As indicated by a research, Mind Map seems, by all accounts, to be a compelling approach to educate and find out about new information and overarch ideas. The following studies below show how effectively the Mind Map has been used all around the world, and they are also applicable for students in Malaysia. However, the researcher was unable to find any existing past research on vocabulary learning related to specifically to Poly Category Mind Map.

The first research was carried out in Malaysia by Abdul Aziz and Yamat (2016) to investigate if the implementation of mind mapping method on Year 6 students can expand the vocabulary limit of sample students as well as to obtain a quantitative measure of the difference in vocabulary improvement among the students. The findings showed that there was significant evidence that mind maps had increased the students’ scores in the post-test as compared to the pre-test. The second research was carried out by Heidari and Karimi (2015), which aims to explore the impact of mind mapping on vocabulary learning and its retention on 40 Iranian male high school students. The experimental group that was drilled using a mind map had higher scores than the control group. The third research was carried out by Sahrawi (2013), which focuses on investigating the efficacy of mind mapping to instruct English vocabulary on grade 8 students. The research result showed the post-test mean score proved that mind map was effective in increasing students' vocabulary mastery. The fourth research was carried out by Kusuma (2015), which aims to examine the efficacy of mind mapping method on the vocabulary mastery of elementary school second-grade learners. The research found that there were no major differences between experimental group students who used mind mapping and those who used word lists.

These researches explored the efficacy of mind mapping method in teaching vocabulary. For instance, the study carried out by Abdul Aziz, and Yamat (2016), Heidari and Karimi (2015), Kusuma (2015), and Sahrawi (2013) researched on mind mapping technique to learn vocabulary. In the current study, the researcher studies the usage of mind map for vocabulary development. However, only the technique of mind map that is used by Heidari and Karimi (2015), Abdul Aziz and Yamat (2016) and Sahrawi (2013) showed a positive result after the implementation. In the aspect of methodology, Kusuma (2015) and Heidari and Karimi (2015) used the experimental approach. On the other hand, Sahrawi (2013) used the pre-experimental research. However, since the researcher conducted the research in school, action research method is more suitable because the researcher will be able to improve on her teaching method. Concerning the sample of study, it has differed from the previous studies, and all the previous studies are carried out among different learners. Heidari and Karimi (2015) studies on high school students. On the other hand, Kusuma (2015) researched on the second graders but Sahrawi (2013) studies on eight graders. Abdul Aziz and Yamat (2016) conducted on upper primary students. Thus, these studies indicated that mind map is useful tool for learning for all levels of students. Therefore, the current research was conducted among the lower primary elementary learners, which is the third students in Malaysia.

Concerning the location of conducting the study, Kusuma (2015) and Sahrawi’s (2013) study were all conducted in Indonesia. Heidari and Karimi’s (2015) research was conducted in Iran and
Abdul Aziz and Yamat’s (2016) research was conducted in Malaysia. Thus, it can be concluded that the mind map technique can be used for students all around the world, including Malaysia because it showed positive result in students’ achievement after using the technique of mind map. However, the findings of all research except for Kusuma’s (2015) was different. Kusuma (2015) discovered that there were no significant variations between the learners who were instructed by mind mapping and those who were taught by word list. Therefore, the current study is vital to be conducted among the lower primary students in Malaysia to find out if the Poly Category Mind Map technique works when used to develop vocabulary.

**Significance of the study**

Although the mind map is agreed by scholars to be a powerful way to improve memory, there is still a lack of study mind maps in Malaysia for vocabulary learning, particularly in primary schools. Abdul Aziz and Yamat (2016), in their research supported the previously mentioned statement. They found “most of the studies and aspects have been done were just for the secondary and university level” (p. 106). Abdul Aziz and Yamat (2016) carried out their research using the mind map on the upper primary students. To bridge this gap, the researcher has agreed to apply the Poly Category Mind map among lower primary school suburban students in Malaysia. Thus, the Poly Category Mind Mapping strategy in developing students’ vocabulary will hopefully act as a guideline for lower primary educators in Malaysia. Teachers, who are still practising the usage of word list memorising method could try out this technique as an alternative technique to help students enhance their vocabulary. The findings of this research are also hoped to benefit many stakeholders. ESL textbook authors and curriculum designers may have practical solutions for vocabulary teaching.

**Methodology**

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), if you have particular instructional problems to address, action research is used. Therefore, as proposed by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), the researcher decided to embrace the technique of action research to reflect on the specific problem faced by the learners in the school, to collect and analyse information and to execute modifications based on our results. The researcher also had chosen the mixed method design in action research that combines both qualitative research by doing classroom observation and quantitative research by doing vocabulary tests. The significant advantage is that the interpretation of both kinds of information can provide a better knowledge of the research problem than either type of information alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). This study used Kemmis and McTaggart Action Research Model-based action research design. The model is a spiral model containing: (a) planning, (b) acting and observing, (c) reflecting and (d) re-planning (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005)
Planning

In the planning stage, the researcher used Poly Category Mind Map to fix the educational issue identified during the preliminary research, which is the lack of vocabulary knowledge. The next step was to analyse items to be constructed in the test given before and after the intervention. The target vocabulary is based on Get Smart Plus 3's Teacher's Book, one of the books given to the teacher under Malaysian CEFR textbook. Topics 'Occupation', 'My House' and 'Seasons of a Year' that were used in intervention were taken from the book. The participants were given a pre-test in the form of the worksheet before they started their lesson for topic "Occupations" in the first week.

After the pre-test was carried out, the teacher gave the students input by teaching the topics based on the textbook. Then the teacher gave the students a mind map each and a whole class discussion was made to construct a mind map. This mind map was used to discuss the types of occupation based on the teacher's input. The mind map illustrations measure about 250 mm x 353 mm, which is the size of B4 paper. Throughout this process, all mind map characteristics such as colours, images, keywords and central image were used to encourage the memorisation process. Both the verbal and non-verbal components of the mind map were combined to ensure a better memory of the students as suggested by the theory of dual coding.

Students were taught how to connect the picture with words. The associated process was linked to the theory of dual coding. For example, a person's picture of 'fireman' was associated with the word 'puts off fire'. Then, students were provided unfinished mind map and learners filled in the missing alphabets based on the specified image. This assignment was aimed at requiring learners to recall the word spelling. The final phase was to strengthen the understanding learned in which the researcher conducted operations such as matching the image and phrases and writing simple sentences based on the vocabulary learnt. All these language skills practices were to reinforce the vocabulary learned.

Implementing and Observing the Intervention Process

During the implementation of the actions, the researcher carried out the intervention process that had been designed. These activities were introduced in one research cycle. The researcher taught new topics during the first, fourth, sixth session. The researcher taught the topic of 'Occupation' at the second meeting, 'My House' at the fourth meeting. The topic of 'Seasons in a Year' was taught at the sixth meeting. When the new topics were taught, the students were asked to remember the vocabulary items in the mind map.

Reflection

The evaluation of the action was carried out by examining and analysing the intervention process carried out in the classroom, the outcome of a post-test and classroom observation. Then the second cycle started as the revised strategy (planning) was then implemented again. The first cycle took about two weeks to be completed. The outcome was then reflected in the second study cycle to achieve the research's aimed criteria for success. The criteria of success aimed by the researcher are at least 70% of the participants must have a minimum score of 26 out of 40 questions. The minimum score of 26 is chosen because in Malaysian Primary School English Test for standard six which is also known as the Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah, the percentage of
65% carries the grade of ‘B’ that concludes that students are in the satisfactory level of English vocabulary knowledge.

The formula used to find the criteria of success was as follows:

\[
\% X = \frac{X_1}{N} \times 100\%
\]

\(X_1\): number of the learners who scored more that 26 out of 40 questions.

\(N\): total of learners

**Participants**

The selected participants for this study were twenty 9-year-old primary school students from Mersing, Johor, which is in the southern part of Malaysia. All of them were learning English as their second language since they are the native speakers of Bahasa Melayu or native speakers of Sabah and Sarawak. The twenty students are from 3 Satria. They converse in class using the mother tongue, which Bahasa Melayu or the native language of Sabahan and Sarawakians. The performance of these students was based on the previous Pentaksiran Bilik Darjah with a band score ranging between 2 to 3. According to the Standards-Based Curriculum for Primary Schools or also known as Dokumen Standard Kurikulum dan Pentaksiran (2018), band 2 and 3 in terms of vocabulary knowledge informs that the students can spell some familiar words and use partially correct grammar. (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2018). Thus, it can be concluded that the participants of the research students know the familiar words in English but do not have a wide knowledge of vocabulary to communicate effectively.

**Instruments**

The data collection method used in this study was conducted through the test and non-test instruments. Pre-and post-tests were one of the tools used in this research. The basic principle behind the design of pre-and post-tests requires a pre-test measurement of the outcome of interest before the treatment is carried out and followed by a post-test on the same measure after treatment (Salkind, 2010). Before being introduced to the Poly Category Mind Map, 30 students in Year 3 were provided with a pilot test of 40 items to determine the reliability of the test questions. The researcher made use of the computer program's assistance in finding the accuracy of the 40 test items using the Cronbach's Alpha statistics. It was known that the reliability of the 40 sample items was .915 based on the outcomes of reliability analyses. It implies that questions were highly reliable, and the intervention was carried out. After two weeks of studying vocabulary using Poly Category Mind Map, the respondents were provided with the post-test. The products used in pre- and post-tests were the same except for manipulating the arrangement of the items. The next tool used is in this research is semi-structured classroom observation. This is because the researcher made a semi-structured observation that allows the teacher-researcher the flexibility to attend other concurrent occurrences in the classroom (Hubbard & Power, 2003).

**Data Analysis**

The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistical method used to analyse information from pre- and post-tests were frequency and mean. In contrast, the inferential statistical method used was paired sample t-test as a means of answering
the research question. On the other hand, the data from the semi-structured observation were coded and analysed according to emerging subjects. After the process coding, the data were triangulated with data from the pre and post-tests to ensure credibility.

Findings
The findings of this study would be discussed based on the research question that was to prove the effectiveness of using Poly Category Mind Map in Vocabulary Development in the English language. The first data which was the scores of the participants in both pre and post-tests of the first cycle were recorded and analysed through descriptive analysis in terms of frequency and mean and inferential analysis by using paired sample t-test. The test was done through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Table one showed the comparison between these two tests in terms of frequency, mean, standard deviation and significant value. Before that, the Shapiro-Wilk, the tests of normality of data was carried out to ensure the data is normally distributed.

Sample Characteristics

Table 1. Tests of Normality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tests of Normality</th>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnova</th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Df</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRE TEST</td>
<td>.100</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POST TEST</td>
<td>.121</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shapiro Wilk’s test (p>0.05) was carried out for the first cycle. Table one shows that the significance of the pre-test is 0.957 and post-test is 0.884. Since the significance value for the pre-test and post-test are more than 0.05, it means that there is not enough evidence to reject the null hypotheses. Thus, the pre-test and post-test are normally distributed because the significant value is greater than 0.05. The Paired sample t-test is run with the following hypotheses:

a) Null hypotheses: There is no significance difference between pre-test and first cycle post-test.

b) Alternative hypotheses: There is significance difference between pre-test and first cycle post-test

Table 2. Paired sample statistics of first cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Samples Statistics</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1 PRE TEST POST TEST</td>
<td>18.4000</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.15228</td>
<td>.70487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POST TEST</td>
<td>23.5000</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.80038</td>
<td>.62618</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the results, it proved that participants’ vocabulary knowledge significantly increase from the pre- to post test. It specified a significant difference between the mean scores before and after using Poly Category Mind Map to develop vocabulary (p>0.05). These mean scores projected a significant increment in participants’ score after the usage of Poly Category Mind Map. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The score performance level as shown in Figure two below can also prove this analysis:

![Figure 2. Histogram of Post-test in first cycle](image)

Although there is significant improvement on the scores of the students, the first cycle results of post test revealed that it did not achieve the minimum criteria of success aimed by the researcher which is at least 70% of the participants must have a minimum score of 26 out of 40 questions. Based on the histogram, it was revealed that only 5 out of 20 students achieved the minimum score of 26 and above which revealed that only 25% of students achieved the minimum scored needed to enable satisfactory level of vocabulary knowledge. The researcher did the reflection after the results of observation, and the results of the vocabulary test were collected. From the observation in the first cycle, it was found that many learners still had problems in mastering vocabulary. It could be seen from the learners' answers in the vocabulary test. The next cycle is carried out with the inclusion of students own drawings on the vocabulary learnt in the mind map.

Table 3. Paired sample statistics of second cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Samples Statistics</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1 PRE TEST POST TEST</td>
<td>18.4000</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.15228</td>
<td>.70487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27.2000</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.94168</td>
<td>.88139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Effectiveness of Using Poly Category Mind Map

Prabha & Abdul Aziz

From the results of the second cycle, it proved that participants' vocabulary knowledge significantly increase from the pre-test to second cycle post-test. It specified a significant difference between the mean scores before and after using Poly Category Mind Map with the personalised drawing of vocabulary to develop vocabulary (p>0.05). These mean scores projected a significant increment in participants' score after the usage of Poly Category Mind Map with the personalised drawing of vocabulary. The score performance level, as shown in Figure three below, can also prove this analysis:

![Histogram of Post-test in the second cycle](image)

**Figure 3.** Histogram of Post-test in the second cycle

Based on the histogram of the second cycle, it was revealed that 15 out of 20 students achieved the minimum score of 26 and above. Therefore, in percentage value, 75% of students achieved the minimum scored needed to enable a satisfactory level of vocabulary knowledge. This finding showed that the usage of Poly Category Mind Map with the personalised drawing of vocabulary is more effective and will allow the researcher to achieve the criteria of success aimed by the researcher which is to have at least 70% of the participants with a minimum score of 26 out of 40 questions.

**Semi-structured Classroom Observation**

The semi-structured observation carried out by the researcher had a few checklists that allowed for triangulation of the data gathered in pre and post-test. During the first cycle, it is observed that the ability of some students in understanding words and their meaning by relating the pictures with good words increased. However, some of the students, especially the ones that scored lower marks in the first cycle post-test had a problem recalling the vocabulary learnt when they were doing their mind map. It is observed that they had to ask their friends when they have to match the words with the correct pictures. Indirectly, it showed that students had trouble relating the images with the vocabulary learnt. However, during the second cycle, when the researcher asked them to draw the pictures, even the low achievers can recall the vocabulary learnt because they remembered their personalised drawing related to the images.
Next, the students also had troubles in identifying the pictures of adjectives with the correct words. The students were always asking for the teacher's help to differentiate the images of 'misty' and 'foggy'. Although some students took the initiative to find the meaning of the words in the Malay language in the dictionary, they were still unclear about the meaning. Most of the students wrongly answered this question in their first cycle post-test. The students were still unclear of the meaning of the words because in the dictionary, both stated 'berkabus' (foggy or misty). However, in English, both fog and mist are caused by water in the air, but fog is thicker than mist. Thus, this hindered the students understanding of the meaning words despite being explained the meaning by the teacher earlier. However, when they drew the pictures of those words by differentiating the colour used to colour the drawing of 'misty' and 'foggy', they understood that 'foggy' is thicker than 'misty'. Some of the students also used darker blue to colour 'foggy' and 'lighter' blue to colour 'misty'. As a result, most of the students understand the concept of 'foggy' and 'misty' and they scored well in these questions during second cycle post-test.

Discussion

This research aimed to investigate the effects of the usage of the Poly Category Mind Map on students' vocabulary development. The data analysis in the form of paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare the results of pre-test and first cycle post-test. There was a significant difference in the scores for pre-test (M=18.400, SD=3.152) and first cycle post-test (M=23.500, SD=2.800) conditions; t (19) = -12.256, p = 0.000. The statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores proved the effectiveness of the Poly Category Mind Map as a tool to improve students’ vocabulary learning. However, the result did not attain the criteria of success because only 5 out of 20 students achieved the minimum score of 26 and above. Thus, it revealed that only 25% of students achieved the minimum score needed to enable the satisfactory level of vocabulary knowledge instead of 70% of the students achieving the minimum criteria of success as aimed by the researcher.

Thus a second cycle of the study was carried out with the inclusion of personalised drawings of the words learnt, and the results of pre-test and second cycle post-test were compared. There was a significant difference in the scores for pre-test (M=18.400, SD=3.152) and second cycle post-test (M=27.200, SD=3.941) conditions; t (19) = -10.614, p = 0.000. It was revealed that 15 out of 20 students achieved the minimum score of 26 and above. Therefore, in percentage value, 75% of students achieved the minimum scored needed to enable a satisfactory level of vocabulary knowledge. Thus, the main finding of the current study was the usage of Poly Category Mind Map was able to successfully develop the vocabulary knowledge of the students in terms of understanding and remembering the words and their spelling.

This results can be explained as follows. First, students who used Poly Category Mind Map strategy in learning vocabulary integrated the newly acquired words with the old previously learned ones. The students studied subcategories of words after grasping the main category of words when constructing the mind map. For instance, the words 'hose' is only learnt after learning the words 'fireman'. Integrating and connecting the new words with the previously established vocabulary repertoire facilitated profound semantic processing which in line with Buzan’s (2016) cited in Hawrani (2011). He stated that not only do Mind Maps display facts, but they also demonstrate a subject's general structure and the comparative significance of individual
components. These findings are also similar to Sahrawi (2013) findings in which it was found that students were more encouraged to use new words that were reinforced by keywords that they had already known.

Second, Poly Category Mind Map helped the Year 3 students immediately learn and remember English vocabulary due to the ‘visual appeal’ of the strategy. The nine-year-old students in the current study are proven to be ideal for vocabulary acquisition and retention by pictures and personalized drawings used in this study. This statement is confirmed when the students drew the pictures of words by differentiating the colour used to colour the drawings of ‘misty’ and ‘foggy’. They understood that ‘foggy’ is thicker than ‘misty’ because some used darker blue to colour ‘foggy’ and ‘lighter’ blue to colour ‘misty’. This statement is also supported by Schmidt (2014), as he stated that most experts, in their studies, had advocated the highly influential role of the visual aids in learning vocabulary for children and young learners. The ‘visual appeal’ effectiveness in learning vocabulary in the current study also correlated with the past study conducted by Heidari & Karimi (2015). They stated that “mind maps helped first-grade high school students acquire and retain English vocabulary directly and very strongly because of their ‘visual appeal’” (p.68).

Third, the mixture of pictorial-verbal words in mind maps used in this study involved many parts of the third students’ brain and indirectly gave intense cognitive concentration and mental power for acquiring and remembering words. As mentioned earlier, the classroom observation revealed the ability of some students in understanding words and their meaning by relating the pictures with right words had increased. The effectiveness of Poly Category Mind Map has thus been demonstrated to improve memory and understanding recognition similar to the attributes of the Dual Coding theory as mentioned by Li, Yang and Chen (2010). Thus in the current study, the representation of knowledge with a mind map diagram helped increase the cognitive brain load of the students. It mirrors the study by Haji Maibodi and Ashraf (2017) in which they stated the pictorial-verbal combination of words used in their research included many parts of the brain of students and provided more cognitive attention and mental capacity to learn and memorise words.

Next to the outstanding feature of Poly Category Mind Map which helped better vocabulary learning and its retention for students was that Poly Category Mind Maps were easy to review. Regular review reinforced these learners’ memory. This view is also supported by Velayutham and Yunus (2019) stating that mind map "is a lot of faster to form, and far easier to recollect and review" (p.32). They specified that the mind map is easy to review because of its non-linear nature and visual quality. Since the research used Poly Category Mind Map, which only consists of only three to seven main branches instead of the various number of branches, it allowed better retention of memory. This verified Buzan (2016) believes in which he specified that in short-term memory, the average mental capacity of beings is unable to recall more than seven parts of information.

The most crucial feature of Poly Category Mind Map, which played a positive role in vocabulary development among students was that they were personalised according to the learning needs or interests of the learners. Although the researcher did not give absolute freedom for the students in the designing of mind map similar to Heidari and Karimi (2015) in their research, it is found that personalised drawings of the students made the students understand and remember the vocabulary learnt better. Both the current research and the research carried out by Heidari and Karimi (2015) found that the freedom of students to construct their mind map by using diagrams,
colours, shapes and lines will eventually help students to acquire the vocabulary better. However, it is essential to note that the current research is carried out among primary school students instead of the high school students in the Heidari and Karimi’s (2015) research. Thus, primary students' needs more guidance from the teacher instead of letting all the task to be done by them.

Another point worth considering is that the findings of this study are in contrast with Kusuma’s (2015) study. Kusuma (2015) revealed that mind-mapping strategy did not help to acquire low-frequency words and their meanings compared to the students who were taught using word list techniques. The results of the Kusuma’s (2015) post-test strongly indicated that “mind mapping is not suitable for Elementary School Students” (p. 86). In contrast, it is evident from the findings of the current study, both in the first and second cycle, the use of Poly category Mind Map helped students to understand and remember the words better. A possible explanation for the ineffectiveness of mind map in improving students’ vocabulary knowledge in Kusuma’s (2015) research might be due to the way the mind map was utilised among students.

In contrast to current research, which emphasised on personalised mind maps, experimental group participants in Kusuma’s (2015) research used mind mapping and the roles in the groups. Thus, using the mind map to learn vocabulary in groups might have demotivated the students because not all students prefer to learn using a mind map in groups. This statement is also supported Goodnough and Woods (2002) as they found in their research that students choose to use Mind Mapping in an individual situation rather than in a group, mainly because it allowed more personal expression of ideas. Hence, as previously mentioned, the personalised mind maps contributed to the current research success because students can efficiently recall the vocabulary learnt due to their personalised learning experience that they have gained during the construction of mind map.

Since Poly Category Mind Map is useful in learning vocabulary, students can construct mind maps regularly after vocabulary lessons. Then, the students will use the mind maps that they have developed to write or tell a story in class. As a result, mind maps can be utilised to develop students' speaking and writing skills. Mind map techniques can only be mastered with regular practices. After the method has been mastered, students can easily apply the skills to memorise vocabulary and organise ideas for their writing and speaking assignments. Indirectly, students would be able to learn other language skills using Mind Map technique. This statement overlaps with another study by Buran and Filyukov (2015) that found that their students developed skills in reading, writing and speaking via the usage of the mind map. Hence, this study using Poly Category Mind Map to develop vocabulary can also be expanded into other language skills in the English Language to optimise the benefits gained.

Conclusion

In general, there is a significant improvement which has been justified from the findings. The differences obtained from the test results show that the use of Poly Category Mind Map was practical and helpful in improving participants’ performance in vocabulary learning. The students' second cycle post-test showed that the number of correct answers for each student increased, which showed improvement in terms of understanding of words learnt, remembering the meaning and the spelling of the words. It implied that the use of aspects in mind mapping such as key pictures, keywords, colours, and categorisation made the presentation of vocabulary items easier.
Furthermore, drawing mind-maps skills were also quickly gained by the students because the drawings were personalised and straightforward. In sum, all these outstanding features of Poly Category Mind map aided students to acquire more vocabulary efficiently.

This effectiveness of Poly Category Mind Map also gave insights on the importance of direct vocabulary teaching in the English language. As mentioned earlier, current CEFR syllabus is more about the communicative learning approach. Consequently, explicit teaching of word instruction was considered outdated and often ignored. Poly Category Mind Map, which serves as one of direct vocabulary teaching technique, clearly proved that students still need adequate direct vocabulary instruction. This technique is necessary to help students, especially average learners, to develop their vocabulary knowledge. As mentioned earlier, students in Malaysian classroom, including the ones in the researcher’s classroom lack of proper language recall techniques. This condition made the learning of vocabulary a daunting task. Poly Category Mind Map successfully changed the daunting task to a more straightforward method via the usage of memory learning strategies that are embedded in the Poly Category Mind Map. The success of Poly category Mind Map as a better learning strategy compared to word list also correlates with Buzan and Buzan (1993) opinion. They suggested that "the brain finds it easier to accept and remember visually stimulating, multi-coloured, multi-dimensional mind map, rather than monotonous, boring liner notes." (p.89)

The results of the study, however, shed light on the problem concerning the time spent to the mind map activity. Based on the results of this research, it was found out that the use of Poly Category Mind Map consumes more time compared to the traditional word list method. Contrary to this issue, Poly Category Mind Map can be handy as students learn a great deal about new words and the interrelationships in their long-term memory of the meanings associated with the words. It is suggested that a few ready-made templates can be set earlier to conduct better research in future. Thus, the learners can choose a variety of ready templates to work on directly without starting from scratch, and this would take lesser time for them to accomplish their work effectively.

This action work focussed on using Poly Category Mind Map to improve the vocabulary skills of students. This study has proven to give the researcher meaningful data. Yet the study’s results should also be complemented by those of additional studies. First, the study could be replicated with different student levels, so the use of the Poly Category Mind Map could be validated further. The study could be conducted with a larger sample population if possible so that the study's generalizability could be increased. The current population, which is one third-year students’ class, may not produce enough data to be commonly used.

Suggestions for Further Research
The future study can focus on the topics below:
1) Using Poly Category Mind Map on Malaysian to improve students' acquisition and retention of idioms and collocations

2) The Effect of Poly Category Mind Map on Malaysian male vs. female students' vocabulary development and retention
3) Using Poly Category Mind Map for in developing (listening, speaking, writing and reading) skills of English.

Implications

For three particular groups, the findings of the current study are significant. Firstly, the results of this study may be conducive to Malaysian language learners, offering them some valuable insights into possible alternative forms of learning vocabulary. Secondly, it would be necessary for language teachers to gain a better understanding of the strategies of alternative vocabulary teaching that can promote the long-term retention and development of lexical items in the learners 'minds. Also, the findings of this study may assist materials designers in presenting words through a recommended technique that could promote vocabulary retention among learners.

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References


Development of English Spelling Acquisition Stages of Saudi Intermediate School Students

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Abstract
Spelling words accurately is not an easy process. Instead, it is a complex developmental skill. Due to this fact, several studies have recently investigated learners’ spelling ability and how this skill develops in different stages. The main purpose of this study is to examine the developmental nature of Saudi intermediate school students’ acquisition of spelling knowledge as measured by the Schlagal’s Qualitative Spelling Inventory (designed to assess spelling error patterns). Further, it aims at determining whether Saudi intermediate school students' spelling performance improves as their grade level increases or decreases based on word-level complexity or difficulty. In fact, this study is significant since it reflects the progress of Saudi intermediate school students not only in spelling, but in other literacy areas such as reading, and listening. A strong parallel has been found between spelling, reading and listening. The sample of the study was 300 participants, all of whom were 7th and 9th male graders who study at intermediate public schools in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Spelling features and word spelling scoring scales were used to score the given data. The findings showed that the 7th-grade students were listed at the phonetic stage, while the 9th-grade students were listed at the patterns within words stage and syllable juncture stage. Besides, the findings revealed that students' spelling performances improved as their grade level increased. Moreover, students' spelling performances were decreased with the increase of word-level difficulty or complexity.

Keywords: intermediate school, Schlagal's qualitative spelling inventory (SQSI), spelling acquisition, spelling features, spelling performance

Introduction

Spelling words accurately is not an easy process. Instead, it is a complex developmental skill. Due to this fact, a number of studies have recently investigated learners’ spelling ability and how this skill develops in different stages (Ehri, 2000; Greenberg, Ehri, & Perin, 2008; Reece & Treiman, 2001). Learning to spell is no longer considered a mechanistic activity involving the memorization of letter-sound-correspondence rules and their exceptions. Instead, it is viewed as a developmental process and a "highly complex intellectual accomplishment" (Henderson, 1985, p. 2).

In the past, spelling was typically taught as a separate subject; memorization was thought to be the key to its mastery. Even at the present time, spelling, in many Saudi schools, is treating as a subject separately from the other language arts. Nowadays, research has shed new light on the acquisition of spelling knowledge. The essential idea is that students or learners pass through different stages of spelling development as they become more literate writers and readers of English. Spelling is now viewed as a complex developmental process that occurs throughout five developmental stages. The stages of spelling development are generally identified as prephonetic, phonetic, patterns within-words, syllable juncture, and meaning-derivation (Cramer, 1998).

The current study investigates the developmental nature of Saudi intermediate school students' acquisition of spelling knowledge. Further, it examines whether the target group of students' spelling performance changes based on their grade level and word-level complexity. The present study is meant to seek answers for the following questions:
1. Are there identifiable features of spelling development for Saudi intermediate school students as measured by Schlagal’s Qualitative Spelling Inventory?
2. Does their spelling performance change based on their grade level and word-level complexity in each list of the inventory?

Literature Review

An overview of stages of spelling development

The spelling process has changed dramatically. Learning to spell is viewed as a developmental process and a "highly complex intellectual accomplishment" (Henderson, 1985, p. 2). Like other language activities, learning to spell involves the acquisition of complex rules and a variety of strategies for processing English writing as a multilevel system with underlying regularity. Studying the developmental stages of spelling has become an essential issue to understand the spelling system. Many researchers have defined, refined, and renamed the stages for this purpose. According to Henderson (1985), EFL learners pass through five stages of spelling, which are preliterate, letter name, within word pattern, syllable juncture, and derivational stage. Gentry and Gillet (1993) classified the stages as precommunicative, semiphonetic, phonetic, transitional, and correct spelling.

Cramer (1998) presented the following classification scheme: prephonetic, phonetic, patterns within words, syllable juncture, and meaning derivation (as cited in Hamdan, 2001). In this framework, learners progress from squiggles and marks on a page in their early years to the sophisticated use of spelling patterns that mark an accomplished speller. Gramer's (1998) classification scheme is used throughout this study.
Prephonetic stage

The prephonetic stage occurs before students understand that letters are associated with sounds. This stage is characterized by squiggles, random marks, and letters or words that students have copied. The prephonetic stage is distinguished from the following stages because there is no systematic connection between letters and sounds (Cramer, 2001). Students' writing at this stage typically includes various forms of scribbling, letter-strings, numbers, and drawings. Due to the lack of systematic connection between letters and sounds, students convey meaning with the “mock” writing they produce.

Phonetic Stage

The phonetic stage, or letter name stage, is the beginning of spelling literacy. Students reflect letter-sound connections in their writing. At this stage, spellers tend to represent consonants more accurately than vowels. The spellers use letters that provide a partial mapping, but not complete mapping, of the phonetic representation of the target word (Hamdan, 2001).

When the sound of a letter in a word resembles the name of that letter, students use that letter to spell the sound. Students perceive these letters and their sounds to be closely associated. Thus, they attempt to match letter names to sounds. For example, "they may spell time as tm or tim because the letter names t, i, and m closely resemble the sounds t, i, and m make in time” (Cramer, 1998, pp. 14-15).

Patterns Within Words Stage

The patterns within words stage refers to misspellings having sequences of letters that correspond consistently to sound or meaning. Students become aware of patterns of short and long vowels during this stage. For example, the silent final e marks or signals that the preceding vowel is long. Cramer (1998) says that students at the beginning of this stage realize spelling is not simply a one-to-one letter to sound correspondence, as they thought during the earlier stage. Now, they tend to spell long vowels correctly, or a "marking" vowel may appear in a misspelling. For example, "boat may be spelled boet and cake may be spelled caik" (Cramer, 1998, p. 20).

During this stage, students become aware of patterns of short and long vowels. Short vowels tend to be spelled correctly: "no longer is word confined to concrete linear matching of letters to sounds. Instead, patterns begin to function relationally" (Henderson, 1985, p. 11).

Syllable Juncture Stage

A syllable juncture is "the place within a word where syllables meet. Letters are often dropped, doubled, or changed at the juncture of syllables” (Cramer, 1998, p. 23). Thus, syllable juncture refers to errors that occur where syllables join; for example timing may be spelled timeing or timming. By the time students reach the syllable juncture stage, they begin to adhere to more basic conventions of English orthography. At this stage, students have a basic spelling vocabulary and they have control of many long and short vowel spelling patterns. For example, egul may be written instead of the phonetic stage spelling of egl for eagle (Perfetti, 1985).
At this stage, spelling errors and problems arise within the internal structure of a word where syllables meet. Spellers have to decide whether a word requires one consonant or two. Two concepts must be grasped to understand this principle, according to Bear and Templeton (1998):

1. The final consonant is doubled when adding *-ed* or *-ing* to a word with a consonant-vowel-consonant pattern (CVC) as in *hop-hopping*.
2. The final *e* is dropped when adding *-ed* or *-ing* to a word with a consonant-vowel-consonant-silent *e* pattern (CVCe) as in *hope-hoping*.

**Meaning Derivation Stage**

Many words have a spelling-meaning connection. Words related in meaning are often related in spelling even though there are changes in sound within the related form (Cramer, 2001). Since students at this stage begin to realize that words have an important spelling-meaning relationship, they are now prepared to examine polysyllabic words. In this regard, Cramer (1998) claimed that "many of the words that must now be learned are derived from Greek and Latin roots" (pp. 25-26). The spelling of these words is mainly based on meaning and derivational principles.

Words related in meaning are often related in spelling in spite of changes in sound within the related form. The spelling-meaning relationship is illustrated in these three meaning-related words: *reside, resident, residential*. "Say these words aloud, and you will notice that the long /i/ in *reside* is reduced to an unstressed, indistinguishable vowel sound (schwa) in the derived forms - *resident* and *residential*. Yet despite the change in the vowel sound in the derived forms, there is no change in the spelling of the vowels. That is, the spelling remains stable in the derived forms despite changes in sound" (Cramer, 1998, p. 25).

**Related Studies**

Henderson and Beers (1980) studied characteristics of *patterns within word stage* across grades *one* through *six*. The results revealed that bound morpheme spellings appeared within a span of two grades but not all at the same time, indicating that this stage is characterized by a gradual rather than sudden emergence of features.

Furthermore, Templeton and Bear (1992) focused upon the final stage, *meaning derivation*. At this important stage, the meanings of words play a significant role in learning their spellings. They found that sixth to eighth-graders were not clearly aware of semantic connections between derived word forms they were shown (e.g., *sign, signal, origin, and original*). Besides, Al-Jarf (2010) investigated the phonological and orthographic problems that Saudi EFL freshmen students have in spelling English (their foreign language). The results indicated that the sample exhibited some spelling difficulty; particularly at the phonological level, that was 63% of the errors. Moreover, Al-zoud and Kabilan (2013) examined spelling mistakes made by 43 Jordanian Learners of English in written composition. They analyzed a total of 228 spelling errors. Results demonstrated that most of the spelling errors are omission and substitution errors. Moreover, students had a problem with using actual words in their writing.
Methodology

The spelling features were chosen and arranged according to the developmental pattern, as suggested by Schlagal (1982). These features include different linguistic aspects, which are (phonological, orthographic, syntactic, and semantic elements).

List One
1. R-colored vowels, for example, girl.
2. Simple short vowels: /e/ /u/ /i/ and /a/ for example, bed, cut, ship and want respectively.
3. E-markers for simple and long vowels, for example, plane.
4. The ability to correctly represent two pre-consonant nasal clusters, such as, bump.
5. Comparing the student's ability to correctly represent sounds in single-consonant (beginning and endings) in one-syllable words morphemes, for example, bed and mud.

List Two
1. Presence of inflectional morphemic endings -ed, for example, traded, and -es as in beaches.
2. Varied long vowels patterns e, â, oo, oa, a and ea, for example, queen, train, cool, float, chase, and year respectively.
3. More consonant blends involving incidental affrication, for example, dress, train, try, and drove.
4. Nasal consonants, for example, angry.

List Three
1. The silent letter, for example, knee, knock, and sight.
2. Diphthongs vowels, for example, count, noise, caught, mind, and sight.
3. A cluster of 3 initial consonants, for example, scream and straw.
4. Further r- controlled vowels, for example, thirsty and nerve.
5. Consonant doublets: Cluster of consonant doubling in the middle, for example, sudden and batter, and stepping.

List Four
1. Consonant alternation: /k/ to /c/, for example, cattle, traffic and camel or /s/ to /c/ in force and cellar.
2. Inflectional past tense endings -ed in words, for example, slammed, checked, and gazed.
3. Final sound "l" for example, curl, cable, cattle, and pebble.
4. Suffix /-ive/ for example, protective.
5. Final sound "j", for example, badge and cabbage.

Subjects Selection and Site

The participants in this study were 7th and 9th male students who study in some of Riyadh intermediate public schools. The sample was 300 students (150 of the 7th graders and 150 of the 9th graders). The classes and subjects are chosen randomly.

Instrumentation

The spelling lists in this study were adopted from Schlagal’s (1982) Qualitative Spelling Inventory (see Appendix 1). The words, which are listed in four levels, are selected purposefully for this study because they reflect developmental spelling features. In addition, the researcher uses only the first four lists of Schlagal’s Inventory to be suitable for the students' level as they still study in the intermediate stage.
Procedures of Data Collection

Schlagal’s inventory was administered in different schools for one whole semester. Students were asked to spell as best they could, even though they might be uncertain of the spelling of a word. Two spelling lists were administered at each grade level. Thus, grade seven was given lists (1) and (2), while grade nine was given lists (3) and (4).

Scoring

Spelling features scoring scale

The participants’ features were scored on a scale ranged between one and four. Score four was given to the complete and correct representation of the target spelling features, while score one was given to the incorrect representation of the features. Score three was given to features close to standard spelling, and score two was given to features further from the standard spelling.

Word spelling scoring scale

The subjects’ performances were scored on a scale ranging from one to four. The scoring scale was given as follows:

1. Score one was given to a subject if the word was spelled substantially incorrectly.
2. Score two was given when the word is misspelled, but had a possible standard spelling.
3. Score three was given when the word was misspelled but had a higher correlation to the standard spelling.
4. Score four was given to substantially correctly spelled words.

Data Analysis

T-test analysis is used to analyze the answers to the study's questions and also to compare each grade level performance on each of the lists. In addition, frequencies and percentages were used.

Findings

1. Features/patterns of spelling development for Saudi intermediate school students as measured by the Schlagal’s Qualitative Spelling Inventory.

Table 1. List one’s spelling features for the 7th grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Frequency &amp; Percent</th>
<th>Spelling Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incorrect Representation</td>
<td>Further from Correct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>62 F</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41.3 %</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.girl</td>
<td>2. bump</td>
<td>62 F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27.3 %</td>
<td>54.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.bump</td>
<td>3. plane</td>
<td>93 F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56 %</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.plane</td>
<td>4.ship</td>
<td>9 F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 %</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.ship</td>
<td>5. cut</td>
<td>3 F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1. shows that (75.3%) of 7th-graders correctly represented the feature of single consonants whose sound resemble their names as in *cut*. The feature of two pre-consonant nasal clusters in *bump* was represented further from correct representation by (54.6%) of the students. The feature of E-marker for vowels in *plane* was represented incorrectly by (62%). The feature of simple short vowel in *ship* was represented close to correct by (51.3%) of the students. Furthermore, (41.3%) of seventh-graders incorrectly represented the feature of *r*-colored in *girl*.

Table 2. *List two’s spelling features for the 7th-grade*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Frequency &amp; Percent</th>
<th>Incorrect Representation</th>
<th>Further from Correct</th>
<th>Close to Correct</th>
<th>Correct Representation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>traded</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>10.6</td>
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<td>32</td>
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<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>42.6</td>
</tr>
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<td>cool</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dress</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>angry</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. reveals that the feature of double consonants in final position in *dress* was represented further from correct representation by (53.3%) of the students. In addition, the feature of inflectional morphemic endings –*ed* in *traded* and –*es* in *beaches* was represented close to correct by (49.3%) and correctly by (42.6%) of students respectively. The feature of nasal consonants in *angry*, (52.6%) of spellers misrepresented it. The feature of long vowels in *cool* was represented further from correct representation by (52.6%) of the students.

The results of both tables one and two show obviously that 7th-grade spellers were at the **Phonetic Stage** because most of the spelling features misrepresented or further from correct in list one and two above fell within **Phonetic Stage**.

Table 3. *List three’s spelling features for the 9th-grade*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Frequency &amp; Percent</th>
<th>Incorrect Representation</th>
<th>Further from Correct</th>
<th>Close to Correct</th>
<th>Correct Representation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>knock</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caught</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scream</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Development of English Spelling Acquisition Stages of Saudi Hamdan & Al-Zahrani

Table 3. demonstrates that the feature of silent letter in knock was represented correctly by (44%) of the 9th graders. The feature of diphthongs vowels as in caught was represented correctly by (50%) of students. Moreover, The feature of cluster of three initial consonants in scream was represented close to correct by (54%) of them. The feature of r-controlled vowel in thirsty was represented correctly by (55.3%). Moreover, The feature of cluster of consonant doubling in the middle in sudden was represented correctly by (49.3%) of the students.

Table 4. List four's spelling features for the 9th-grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Frequency &amp; Percent</th>
<th>Spelling Features</th>
<th>Incorrect Representation</th>
<th>Further from Correct</th>
<th>Close to Correct</th>
<th>Correct Representation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.force</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.slammed</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.curl</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>49.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.protective</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.badge</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. indicates that the feature of final sound "l" in curl was represented correctly by (49.3%) of the graders. In addition, the feature of final sound "j" in badge was represented close to correct by (52%) of students. The feature of inflectional past tense endings -ed in slammed was represented correctly by (43.3%) of participants. Moreover, the feature of consonant alternation /s/ to /c/ as in force was represented by (40%) of them. Regarding the feature of suffix /-ive/ as in protective, (39.3%) of spellers represented it correctly.

The results of both tables three and four above reveal substantially that ninth grade spellers left the Phonetic Stage and moved to Patterns Within Words Stage or Syllable Juncture Stage. In fact, ninth-graders’ spelling features representations indicate an obvious transition from a stage to another stage.
2. **Spelling performance of Saudi intermediate school students based on their grade level and word-level complexity.**

The results show that the 7th-grade students varied in their spelling performances regarding the words given to them in both lists *One* and *Two*. There were some words spelled correctly by high percentage scores such as *cut, dress, cool* and *ship* while some other words misspelled such as *bump* and *beaches*; or further from the correct standard spelling such as *girl, plane, traded,* and *angry*. It is obvious that the 7th-grade students' performances in list *One* differed from that in list *Two*. This variance was due to word-level difficulty or complexity. Accordingly, the 7th-grade students' spelling performances were decreased with the increase of word-level difficulty or complexity. In terms of lists *Three* and *Four*, the results of the 9th-grade students varied in their spelling performances. There were some words spelled correctly by high percentage scores such as *knock, scream* and *force*. While some other words misspelled such as *thirsty* and *badge*; or further from the correct standard spelling such as *caught, sudden, protective*, and *curl*. The 9th-grade students' spelling performances were decreased with the increase of word-level difficulty or complexity.

**Discussion and conclusion.**

In terms of students' **Spelling Features**, the results indicated that spelling patterns of Saudi intermediate school students varied according to their developmental levels based on Schlagal’s Qualitative Spelling Inventory (1982). Moreover, results showed a variance of scores on spelling features presented in the four lists given to seventh and ninth graders. Subjects’ scores varied on the four lists. This variance was due to spelling features difficulty level presented in the lists. For example, the seventh and ninth graders scored lower on lists two and four. Most of the spelling features misrepresented in lists one and two fell within *Phonetic Stage*. On the other hand, spelling features misrepresentations in list three and four indicated a transition from the *Phonetic Stage* to *Patterns Within Words Stage* or *Syllable Juncture Stage*. On the other hand, in terms of students' **Spelling Performance**, the results revealed obviously that 7th and 9th grade students' performances in lists *One* and *Two* differed from their performances in lists *Three* and *Four*. This variance or difference was due to word-level difficulty or complexity. On the other hand, the results revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the spelling of the seventh-grade and ninth-grade in the four lists.

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Appendix

Appendix A. Schlagal's (1982) qualitative spelling inventory *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List 1</th>
<th>List 2</th>
<th>List 3</th>
<th>List 4</th>
<th>List 5</th>
<th>List 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>girl</th>
<th>traded</th>
<th>send</th>
<th>force</th>
<th>lunar</th>
<th>satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>cool</td>
<td>gift</td>
<td>nature</td>
<td>population</td>
<td>abundance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plane</td>
<td>beaches</td>
<td>rule</td>
<td>slammed</td>
<td>bushel</td>
<td>mental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drop</td>
<td>centre</td>
<td>trust</td>
<td>curl</td>
<td>joint</td>
<td>violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>when</td>
<td>short</td>
<td>soap</td>
<td>preparing</td>
<td>compare</td>
<td>impolite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trap</td>
<td>trapped</td>
<td>batter</td>
<td>pebble</td>
<td>explosion</td>
<td>musician</td>
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<tr>
<td>wish</td>
<td>thick</td>
<td>knee</td>
<td>cell</td>
<td>delivered</td>
<td>hostility</td>
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<tr>
<td>cut</td>
<td>plant</td>
<td>mind</td>
<td>market</td>
<td>normal</td>
<td>illustrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bike</td>
<td>dress</td>
<td>scream</td>
<td>popped</td>
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<td>carry</td>
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<td>harvest</td>
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<td>stuff</td>
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<td>decide</td>
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<td>crop</td>
<td>knock</td>
<td>gunner</td>
<td>delivered</td>
<td>hostility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fill</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>caught</td>
<td>badge</td>
<td>lately</td>
<td>correspond</td>
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<td>sister</td>
<td>chore</td>
<td>noise</td>
<td>cattle</td>
<td>peace</td>
<td>admission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>gazed</td>
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<td>wreckage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>stepping</td>
<td>cabbage</td>
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<td>division</td>
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<td>float</td>
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<td>scurry</td>
<td>needle</td>
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<td></td>
<td>silent</td>
<td>complete</td>
<td>combination</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cozy</td>
<td>honorable</td>
<td>declaration</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>graceful</td>
<td>baggage</td>
<td>connect</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>checked</td>
<td>television</td>
<td>patient</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Nunes, T., Bryant, P. and Bindman, M. (2001, p. 124).*
A Qualitative Inquiry into the Difficulties Experienced by Algerian EFL Master Students in Thesis Writing: ‘Language is not the Only Problem’

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Abstract
For the last few decades, difficulties encountered by non-native English students in the process of thesis writing have attracted considerable attention from researchers. However, most of the previous research on this topic has given priority to the language-related/linguistic problems and has focused on international students studying in L1 contexts. Thus, the aim of this qualitative study was to gain insight into Master students’ experiences of thesis writing in a conspicuously underexplored EFL context, Algeria. Specifically, the study explored both students’ and supervisors’ perceptions of the difficulties and challenges encountered during the course of thesis writing, with a focus on the non-linguistic factors underlying this academic undertaking. Semi-structured in-depth interviews, supported by open-ended questionnaires, were used to obtain from 30 students and six supervisors, purposely selected from English departments at eight Algerian universities. Findings indicate that the process of thesis writing is a formidable and daunting academic undertaking for Algerian EFF Master students due primarily to sociocultural challenges and then linguistic difficulties. These latter ones included students’ lack of some academic writing skills and their limited knowledge about thesis writing and research whereas the identified sociocultural challenges included lack of supervisor and family support, lack of cooperation of the research sample, and insufficient academic preparation. Pedagogical implications for stakeholders and suggestions for future researchers were presented in the end of the current study.

Keywords: Algerian EFL Master students, thesis writing, linguistic difficulties, sociocultural challenges

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Introduction

During their second year of Postgraduate level, Master students spend the bulk of their time preparing a thesis. This latter can be defined as an official academic document that a student writes and submits as partial fulfillment of the prerequisites for getting the Master’s degree. It is a write-up that presents the outcomes of a research project/study autonomously, though with the help and guidance of a supervisor, undertaken by a student within a master program (Hardling, 2004). Notwithstanding, the process of writing a master thesis involves not only writing per se (Brause, 1999), but it also encompasses a number of phases and steps beginning with the selection of a researchable topic up to the final stage, which is the writing up of the thesis manuscript. Han (2014) argues that “The process of thesis writing is more important than the writing result itself. For EFL learners completing a thesis is a big project, which will take up almost every student’s last year at university” (p. 120).

Quite understandably, thesis writing is a challenging task for most EFL students since it requires from them the ability to have several hard skills such as planning, doing research, critical thinking, the correct use of language (grammar, choice of words...etc.) and style, to mention but a few. Consequently, they have to deal with and may confront a significant number of challenges while writing it. As a result of the large number of skills that are required as well as the need to keep motivated and self-regulate, students often face anxiety in researching and writing their thesis (Vos, 2013). Further to this, the fact that it is the first time for these students to engage in the process of writing a thesis makes this academic mission even more problematic. According to Todd, Smith and Bannister (2006), “The introduction of any new approach to learning is always unsettling, and students will inevitably experience challenges when completing their first piece of truly independent work” (p. 162). Consequently, unavoidable complexities of writing a thesis for EFL students have attracted the attention of researchers in several countries and academic contexts.

For the past couple of years, however, research into thesis writing challenges (for instance, Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006; Cadman, 1997; Cooley & Lewkowicz, 1995; Gürel, 2011; Komba, 2015; Sadeghi & Khajepasha, 2015; Strauss, 2012) has concentrated on the writing up of the thesis manuscript ignoring, to a large extent, the process aspect of this academic task. Further to this, it has often overlooked the sociocultural challenges experienced by students during this critical academic journey. Nevertheless, it is necessary now to give due attention to the challenges that EFL students encounter in the different steps of writing their master thesis. In other words, researchers are called upon to investigate thesis writing not only as a product but as a process, too. In order to add to the growing literature on linguistic and rhetorical challenges in structuring a thesis, more empirical studies are needed on investigating barriers in the research phase, supervision issues and personal as well as other sociocultural challenges in this academic journey.

In the Algerian context, albeit thesis writing is a mandatory academic task and a significant process for Algerian EFL Master students, and one during which they may experience many challenges because of several factors, it is perhaps surprising that the students’ experiences and the challenges facing them have received remarkably limited attention in the Algerian context. Therefore, this study aims to fill this research gap. With this purpose in mind, the current study chose to investigate the thesis writing experiences of Algerian EFL Master students with an emphasis on non-linguistic writing difficulties in this academic journey, hence considering not...
only difficulties facing them in writing but also their concerns, issues, and challenges in the whole process of thesis writing. In the first place, the study set out to ascertain if they encountered any difficulties. It then examined the students’ and supervisors’ opinions about the nature of such difficulties and the sort of them that rendered the process of thesis writing a challenging academic task. As such, it is hoped that the findings of this investigation will contribute to the improvement of the quality of Master’s thesis writing in EFL at Algerian universities since it has provided useful information about the challenges facing students in this academic undertaking, which will allow all stakeholders to think of the possible solutions to overcome them. For the purpose of the study, the following research questions were formulated: 1) To what extent do Algerian EFL Master students experience difficulties during the course of writing their thesis? 2) What is the nature of these difficulties? 3) What sorts of difficulties are more challenging for them?

Literature Review

Acknowledging thesis writing challenges and attempting to address them, a good number of scholars have conducted research studies in various higher educational contexts around the world with the aim to uncover those challenges (for example, Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006; Cooley & Lewkowicz, 1995; Dong, 1998; Gurel, 2011; Hajar, 2016; Ho, 2013; Komba, 2016; Lessing & Lessing, 2004; Sadeghi & Khajepha, 2015; Strauss, 2012; Todd et al., 2006; Wang & Li, 2008; Zuber-Skerritt & Knight, 1986). In the current study, however, we will particularly review some salient previous research on the difficulties and challenges encountered by students while attempting to write their thesis in English as a foreign or a second language.

When reviewing different research studies about the challenges that EFL and/or ESL students face in writing their thesis, it has become evident for us that most of them provided valuable insights into the nature of such challenges; nevertheless, they did not address the writing of the master thesis from a holistic perspective. They instead focused on its product aspect: Shaw (1991), Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006), Ho (2013), Komba (2016) and Singh (2015), for example, have found that students faced difficulty in structuring the constituent parts of the thesis. The outcomes of these studies showed that the most difficult thesis chapters to write were: Introduction and Discussion (Shaw, 1991), Literature Review (Ho, 2013) and Discussion of Results (Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006). These difficulties were attributed to EFL students’ insufficient genre-specific writing skills and unawareness of the rhetorical structure of the thesis. In another study, Singh (2015) indicated that international EFL students found writing the Literature Review, Methodology, and Findings sections very difficult.

Apart from the generic and rhetorical challenges, the literature, on the other hand, shows that some students, who have to write a thesis in English as a foreign or as a second language, still struggle with more palpable linguistic difficulties such as problems with grammar and punctuation and limitation in vocabulary to express ideas and views (Chang & Strauss, 2010; Dong, 1998; Idri, 2015; Singh, 2015; Strauss, 2012). For example, the findings of Singh’s (2015) study showed that thesis writing presented various challenges to international Master students from different EFL backgrounds including students from Middle Eastern, African, East Asian, and Southeast Asian countries. Using appropriate academic style, writing coherent paragraphs and expressing ideas in correct English were found as the major difficulties those international students faced. Although most of the EFL-based research studies have reported students who struggle with different sorts of
language issues, Taiwanese EFL graduate students, in Yeh’s (2010) research study, assumed that their language skills were adequate for the purpose of writing their master thesis and exhibited a rather laid-back attitude towards the language problem.

Despite the tendency of research publications on thesis writing in English as a foreign language to focus on linguistic difficulties in writing up the thesis, some researchers have investigated it beyond its product aspect focusing on a number of additional sources of difficulty including issues concerning the selection of topic and the reviewing of the literature (Yeh, 2010), troubles in data collection and analysis and limited access to resources in the library (Alsied & Ibrahim, 2017), difficulty in accessing the research sample (Huang, 2007), lack of enough support from the supervisors, student’s negative attitude toward thesis writing (Bigdeli & Kazemi, 2015), and students’ inability to manage their time between work and thesis writing (Divsar, 2018; Erbay Çetinkaya & Yilmaz, 2017).

For example, Alsied and Ibrahim (2017) explored challenges in research writing from Libyan EFL undergraduate students’ and their teachers’ perspectives. In order to do so, a sample, consisting of 42 EFL students and four teachers, was selected from a Libyan state university. This study employed a mixed-methods design and obtained data using questionnaires and interviews. The findings of this study showed that EFL students faced great difficulty in the research stage of the thesis writing process. Mainly, they find problematic the tasks of identifying the area of interest, choosing a topic, formulating research problems, and writing a literature review. Besides, they confronted other challenges such as difficulties in collecting and analyzing data, weak background knowledge about research, lack of motivation, and lack of resources in the library.

In addition, Divsar (2018) conducted a study of similar interest which investigated the challenges encountered by Iranian TEFL students in thesis writing. The results of this study revealed that linguistic difficulties (e.g., grammatical and organizational problems and lack of mastery of academic writing style) constituted the major challenge for Iranian EFL students. However, findings showed that the students reported a wide range of other difficulties which were grouped into three main categories: (i) instructional and pedagogical inadequacies (mainly students’ lack of knowledge and experience in researching and writing up their thesis), (ii) personal problems and affairs such as poor management of time and the loss of interest and motivation in the process of thesis writing, and (iii) educational support such as the limited availability and assistance offered by the supervisor and adviser.

Findings from these studies suggest that the process of thesis writing can be made even more complex and problematic when language-related issues are coupled with other non-linguistic challenges. Also, EFL students do not just face difficulty in writing per se, but they also have to deal with personal and social obstacles and challenges in the whole process of writing their thesis. Nevertheless, the limited number of this type of inquiries indicates that there has been little research devoted to personal and sociocultural factors in the process of thesis writing in EFL, whereas more attention has been given to the linguistic and structural challenges. Hence, there is obviously a need to approach the topic of challenges in thesis writing in English as a foreign language from a holistic perspective.
In general, a detailed literature review indicates that most research studies confined their attention to difficulties students face at the level of the thesis text; that is, the linguistic, structural, and rhetorical problems. Thus, with language-related/linguistic difficulties in thesis writing for EFL students having received more attention than other types of challenges (i.e., non-linguistic challenges) in previous research, it is now necessary to shift our attention to sociocultural and personal writing difficulties which in many cases compound the already complex nature of thesis writing. Moreover, although writing the Master thesis is part and parcel of EFL students’ academic career in the Algerian context, there have been no research publications that share the same focus and aims as the current one. Therefore, this study is seemingly the first attempt to fill this significant research gap by exploring the issues and challenges facing EFL students in the course of writing their thesis, taking into consideration not only linguistic difficulties in producing the thesis text but also non-linguistic challenges in the whole writing journey.

Method

Research Design

The researchers’ aim in this study was to explore and investigate students’ experiences of thesis writing so as to provide a detailed picture and analysis of the problems and challenges that faced them. Therefore, an interpretive qualitative research approach was used in this study in order to gain a deep understanding of EFL students’ lived experiences in their natural setting (Creswell, 2003; Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Flick, 2002). The qualitative research design is particularly suited to the current study because it is deemed as the best for "representing the views and perspectives of people in a study" (Yin, 2011, p.7).

Participants

The research sample of the present study consisted of thirty students and six supervisors from English departments at a number of universities in various provinces covering the southern (University of Ahmed Draya (Adrar), Kasdi Merbah University of Ourgla, Hamma Lakhdar Eloued University, and University of Bechar) and northern (University of Oran-2, Abderahmane Mira University of Béjaïa, University of Batna, and University of Blida-2) parts of Algeria. The typical qualitative purposive sampling approach was employed to select participants. The rationale for using purposive sampling was to recruit the participants who were more likely to provide the researchers with the most reliable and richest information about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry (Patton, 2002). The following criteria were established for the selection of the study’s informants who were willing to express their views with regard to thesis writing challenges. First, to be selected as participants, students needed to be second-year EFL Masters who had finished or almost finished writing their thesis. Second, they also had to be only those students who had graduated a year before the time of the investigation. This was to ensure that they were able to remember the process of thesis writing well, hence providing the most reliable information. Third, only supervisors who had more than five years of experience in supervising EFL Masters were selected because they were expected to give richer information for the study than any new university teacher.

In order to cater for the representativeness of the study’s sample, students and supervisors were purposefully selected from eight universities in Algeria with maximum variation in students’ gender, age, Master specialty, …etc., and in supervisors’ academic rank, gender and teaching
experience. In particular, nineteen of the students were males, and eleven were females. All of them were in their 20s or 30s except for four whose ages ranged between 35 and 45. Twenty students majored in Linguistics and Didactics, whereas eight of them studied literature and civilization. We also included in the sample participants from both genders who had other social commitments (e.g., family and work) in addition to being a Master student in order to have diverse students’ experiences of thesis writing. Concerning the second group of informants, all the supervisors who took part in the study were experienced teachers who had supervised both Master and Doctorate students for several years, and they all have a Ph.D. degree in their field of study. There were two females and four males, and their ages ranged between 30-60.

**Data Collection Instruments**

The main instrument used to collect data in this study was a semi-structured in-depth interview with 14 students and six supervisors. Final year students were interviewed in May and June 2019, while the recent Master graduates and the supervisors were interviewed three months earlier. The participants were interviewed either in person or through phone and Internet. On average, each interview took nearly one hour. Each participant was interviewed once, but some of them were interviewed more than once because they exhibited a unique interest in our research and provided richer information than other informants. The participants were first familiarized with the theme and purpose of the current inquiry then asked to give some background information about themselves, such as their age, gender, field of study, and university. After that, the researchers used a set of main, probing and follow-up questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) to give the interviewees the chance to express their views adequately and to speak thoughtfully about their experiences of thesis writing. The interviews were conducted in English with both the students and the supervisors. However, when interviewing students, we sometimes had to resort to the use of Arabic, their L1, so as to allow them to express themselves more freely. After the permission was gained from the respondents, the interviews were reordered and later transcribed verbatim. The researchers do not use their real names when reporting the results in the study; pseudonyms are instead used for the purpose of keeping the participants’ confidentiality. Another source of data collection was an open-ended questionnaire. This instrument was used in order to reach out to information-rich cases who were unwilling to be interviewed. Data collected through the open-ended questionnaire was used to support the interview findings so that a fuller picture of the students’ writing difficulties was attained. The questionnaire was divided into two parts; the first one was devoted to demographic information, and the second part focused on students’ perceived difficulties in the process of thesis writing. The same questions of the interviews were used in the open-ended questionnaire. This latter was emailed to 16 student participants. After two weeks, all the questionnaires were filled and sent back.

**Data Analysis**

The semi-structured interview transcripts and students’ answers from the open-ended questionnaires were coded and analyzed using thematic analysis. The analytical process was inductive, and we followed the systematic procedures recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006). As a first step, the researchers attempted to acquaint themselves with the raw data by listening attentively to the recorded interviews, then reading their transcripts thoroughly and repeatedly. This first step of data analysis enabled us to identify initial codes. Then, meaning units or codes were examined and grouped based on their similarities to determine thematic categories. As a next
step, the codes in each identified theme were reviewed and scrutinized to make sure that they constitute a coherent pattern. Finally, following their refinement, the themes were named and divided into subthemes.

Results and Discussion

Based on the thematic analysis of data, the difficulties were classified under three dominant themes: personal/psychological problems, sociocultural difficulties, and students’ lack of preparedness. Quite interestingly, the types of difficulties represented in the emergent themes did not have the same negative effect on the participants. Therefore, in what follows, the first thematic categories, sociocultural difficulties and students’ lack of preparedness, will be presented and discussed because the participants ranked them as the most challenging types of difficulties, respectively. However, due to lack of space in this article, personal/psychological problems will be reported elsewhere.

The First Category of Difficulties: Sociocultural Difficulties

Evidence from the interviews and open-ended questionnaires showed that EFL students’ progress in the process of writing their Master thesis was negatively affected by a number of sociocultural factors. Notably, these students floundered not only because they had to write their thesis in a foreign language (English) with insufficient academic writing and research skills, but also due to cultural and social challenges. One of the interviewees sadly commented on the sorts of difficulties EFL students faced in the course of writing their thesis, “language is not the only problem” (student N.14). The sociocultural challenges were divided into two subthemes: the first one is inadequate support and cooperation, and the second is poor-quality academic preparation/education for students.

Inadequate Supports and Cooperation

Students considered that the role of their supervisors was focal in assisting them in completing the thesis writing processes. Nevertheless, some of them believed that the help their supervisors provided them with was not enough. Some of them (student: N.03, N.07, N.11, N.13, and N.04) indicated that their supervisors were not approachable all the time, and they spent a great deal of time correcting their thesis drafts. A student stated,

I remember that I met him few times; he was always busy because he is the Dean of the Faculty. So, I always gave the work to his secretary to give it to him and waited like three weeks to receive the correction. (student N. 13)

Similarly, students in previous studies also decried the supervisors’ unavailability and untimely feedback about the students’ drafts (Erbay & Yilmaz, 2017; Bigdeli & Kazemi, 2015; Wang & Li, 2008; Paltridge & Woodrow, 2012). In addition to this, the participants of our study opined that their supervisors were less supportive than they expected them to be, and they were more reactive and less proactive. Hence, students were usually left to deal with difficulties by themselves. In this respect, one student (N.02), talking about her supervisor, said, “she never encouraged me to work; she only waited to me to give her my work, and if I didn’t, she didn’t ask me why or what were my problems”.

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The teaching commitments for some supervisors and administrative roles for others may have contributed to the problem of the supervisor's inaccessibility and lack of time for effective supervision. In addition to this, the increase in the number of students who pursue their studies for the Master level has burdened the teachers with extra numbers of students to supervise. Thus, correcting students' works and returning them on time becomes difficult. Unfortunately, this discouraged the students and slowed down their paces in thesis writing.

With respect to the family support they received, students shared the view that some of their families were naïve about the time students needed to complete the writing of their Master thesis. Thus, the students’ writing progress was hindered because family members made large demands on their time. Corner & Poi (2017) have noted that students may often experience big struggles in balancing their role as a student trying to complete a thesis successfully and their role as a family member from a collectivist culture wherein family needs are put before individual needs. For instance, a female married student (N.02) reported the following:

"I couldn’t work a lot on my thesis because my husband asked me to look after his mother because, you know, she is old and can’t cook or wash or do anything else. So, he told me that his mother has the priority." (student N.02)

Furthermore, another source of difficulty for Algerian EFL students was the discouraging ambiance for writing the thesis at their homes. Student N.08 complained,

"I avoided going home during the holidays because I knew I couldn’t write anything; whenever I opened my laptop to write they start: go do this go do that. So, I stayed in the campus to complete writing on time. I mean before the deadline." (student N.08)

From another angle, students reported that they had negative experiences in undertaking research due to uncooperative research samples. This finding corroborates Huang’s (2007) results, which suggested that students experienced difficulties because of uncooperative respondents. The data of this study indicated that some informants were not willing to participate in the students’ research for unclear reasons. This happened with student N.10 who was investigating the speaking difficulties among Third-year LMD students in her university. She reported this saying, “I gave them the questionnaires and asked them to fill them, but some of them just ignored me and went and others said that they wanted to fill them at home but they never returned them to me”. This perplexed her, and she had to ask one of the teachers to convince them to fill the questionnaires. Another student grumbled,

"People don’t take you seriously. They are indifferent, or maybe they are lazy to answer your questions. I remember that I posted my online survey on Facebook and begged secondary school teachers to fill it but no responses except six or seven. I was really disappointed. So, I told my supervisor, and she advised me to continue with a different sample." (Student N.14)

In their open-ended responses, students also expressed their frustration about unhelpful respondents. For example, one of them (student N. 12) wrote,
I remember another thing. I really felt angry when one of the teachers I wanted to interview kept me waiting outside his office for one hour and half, and when she came out, she said ‘sorry I must go come another time’ and left. (student N. 12)

*Poor-quality Academic Preparation/Education*

The students were asked if the courses and modules they studied in their master programs had prepared them to write the Master thesis. In general, they were unsatisfied with the teaching and training they received in those courses. Student N.01, for instance, pointed out that “everything was theoretical just definitions and theories and things that we memorized them, but in practice it was difficult to apply them”. The students also added that they were not trained adequately to use the APA and MLA referencing styles; that is why they experienced difficulty in adhering to them when writing their theses. Furthermore, students complained about the constant absence of some teachers who taught them the subjects necessary for writing the thesis. For example, in one of the participants’ universities, the module of Methodology was not taught for one semester because the lecturer was on extended sick leave.

The supervisors were also of the view that students might have received poor-quality education throughout the Master level. They touched on some problems such as the fact that some important modules, like Methodology and Written Expression, both in the BA and Master levels, were assigned to inexperienced teachers, who might not be able to provide the students with good-quality instruction. They also mentioned that the courses were not so beneficial because they were not based on the students’ real writing needs. Supervisor N.06, N.04 and N.01 emphasized that students should receive better training in statistics and computer skills, advanced academic writing skills, and in how to analyze data qualitatively. In this respect, Odena and Burgess (2017) noted that “It appears that difficulties and problems faced by ESL students are not fully addressed by the courses on academic writing that they might attend” (p. 584).

**The Second Category of Difficulties: Students’ Lack of Preparedness**

Being prepared for writing the thesis entails that students must manipulate a wide range of skills, including adequate knowledge of how to undertake research and write up the different chapters of the thesis. Nevertheless, it was alarming that both the students and the supervisors reported the students’ lack of the skills necessary for researching and writing up the Master thesis.

*Insufficient Academic Writing Skills*

All the supervisors in this study complained about students’ poor academic writing in general and their lack of knowledge of the thesis genre in particular. They reported various linguistic issues students struggled with while writing up their theses. These issues included minor problems at the sentence level, such as incorrect use of grammar and punctuation, failure to adhere to formal writing styles, and the use of incorrect tone or voice. Besides, students faced major rhetorical problems in writing up some chapters of the thesis. For example, when asked to comment about their students’ writing skills, some supervisors (Supervisor N. 03 and Supervisor N. 05) said that:

well, I have been teaching for many years and I have supervised hundreds of Master students in my career. I can safely say that my main concern when correcting their thesis works has always been their poor English. They make all sorts of mistakes. I have noticed
that some of them still write grammatically incorrect sentences and have problems with the use of some punctuation marks, especially the use of comma and the semicolon, though they have been taught these things since their first year in university. In addition, I often find it very hard to understand what they are writing because their writing lacks clarity, and they tend to express their ideas in very long sentences; or perhaps they think in Arabic and write in English. (Supervisor No. 03)

I think that the major challenge for these students is to write academically. Most of them are unaware of academic writing conventions, so they tend to use informal or colloquial language, personal pronouns, abbreviations like i.e., and emotive expressions. Instead of focusing on the content of their dissertation, I found myself correcting the use of tenses, articles, prepositions and dealing with other writing issues such as coherence and unity. It took a lot of time and effort to make them overcome all these problems. (Supervisor No. 05)

Similar language-related problems were reported by scholars who investigated thesis writing challenges in EFL (Gurel, 2011; Komba, 2015; Sadeghi & Khajepasha, 2015; Wang & Yang, 2012) or in ESL contexts (Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006; Dong, 1998; Shaw, 1991; Strauss, 2012). For example, Strauss (2012) found that the two subjects of her study ‘’had great difficulty with what are generally regarded as basic grammatical skills: use of articles, prepositions, tense and punctuation. Sentence structure was problematic. Many of the sentences were very long and complex’’ (p. 285). The findings of our study are also consistent with Algerian based research on thesis writing in EFL. It was found by Idri (2015) that Algerian EFL Master students face numerous writing difficulties, including their lack of academic writing sub-skills such as paraphrasing and summarizing. These linguistic writing difficulties lead to students’ use of copy-paste mechanisms. However, unlike Idri’s small case study, our investigation was not confined to linguistic problems in thesis writing. The findings of this study have unmasked previously unexplored thesis writing challenges that Algerian EFL Master encounter.

The students themselves expressed concerns over inadequate writing skills. However, most of them were more concerned about their incompetence in paraphrasing and summarizing information properly as well as their inadequate ability in expressing ideas with enough argumentation and clarity. On the other hand, they seemed to be confident of their general writing skills. This was stressed by an interviewee when she stated the following:

since I have time to write and review my writing again and again, I didn’t have a problem with words and grammar and punctuation and so on, but I faced difficulty in summarizing and paraphrasing what I read from the literature. When I tried to write in my own words, my supervisor didn’t like my sentences. She told me to write again and to be clearer and more concise. (student N.10)

An interesting finding that we did not expect was that students expressed their confidence in their general writing skills. Although this perspective conflicts their supervisors’ views, it resonates with Taiwanese EFL masters’ laid-back attitude towards language-related issues in Yeh’s (2010)
study. Quite surprising, like the students who participated in this investigation, most of Yeh’s informants were seemingly unworried about writing in the foreign language.

Another common challenge for students, as reported by the participating supervisors, was their lack of knowledge concerning how each section and chapter of their thesis should be written. They stated that students faced difficulty in writing the Literature Review because here they needed to read a lot of sources and then draw the relation between the reviewed books and articles, finding a research gap and restate information in their own words. Earlier research studies indicated that writing the Literature Review is a formidable task that poses numerous difficulties for students (Ho, 2013; Shaw, 1991; Singh, 2015; Yeh, 2010). According to Ho (2013), difficulty in writing the Literature Review “often resulted in some problematic issues, such as improper or mistaken citations, or even plagiarism, especially when students had to write multiple papers at the same time near the end of the semester” (p. 85).

The supervisors’ perspectives were in parallel with the views of their students. The participating students reported that they faced difficulty in writing the various chapters because it was the first time for them to deal with the genre of research writing. For instance, one student (student No.22) noted that it was challenging for him to write the Literature Review:

In order to write the second chapter, I mean the literature review you know you must read a lot about your topic. It was exhausting. And I didn’t know what is the difference between theoretical and conceptual framework. And I didn’t know what to include in this chapter because there was a lot of information. And I was afraid to commit plagiarism. (student No.22)

**Lack of Research Skills**

Lack of research skills and knowledge presented another hurdle for EFL students in the process of writing their master thesis. Undertaking research is an integral part of this process writing. However, evidence from the data of this study suggests that given their lack of experience in doing scholarly research in the BA degree, EFL students proceed to the Master level with insufficient theoretical knowledge and practical skills of research. The majority of students stated that they experienced difficulties in the various research stages, including formulating the research questions, choosing the research methodology, designing instruments for data collection, and analyzing data statistically. The following extracts from the interview elucidate this idea:

Although we were taught how to choose the right methodology for our research by our teachers of Methodology, me and most of my classmates were complaining about how difficult it was for them to decide whether to use quantitative or qualitative or mixed method design. So, for myself, I read again the notes of Methodology lecture and borrowed methodology books from the library and used them to see what is the best methodology for my research. (student N. 12)

For me the data analysis was very difficult. My supervisor advised me to use SPSS but I didn’t know what was that software and know how to use it. So, I asked my sister who was studying Economy to explain everything to me. She taught me how to use computer to
analyze data from the questionnaire. Also, I didn’t know how to use Microsoft to present the data you know… I mean the pie charts, bar graphs and tables and pictures I didn’t know how to create them. (student N. 06)

I needed to create an online survey but I didn’t know how to create it because we didn’t see this in class. I asked my supervisor and he said that I should learn that on my own. So, I watched YouTube and, in the end, I was able to create it There is something else, the questionnaire and interview… yes it was hard for me to design them so I just used similar ones from the articles and theses that I read. (student N. 09)

Lack of research knowledge and skills, which was coupled with inadequate academic writing skills, made the thesis writing journey even daunting and more problematic for Algerian EFL masters. These findings are in line with the outcomes of previous research in similar EFL contexts such as the Libyan one (Alsied & Ibrahim, 2017), the Iranian context (Divsar, 2018), and the Turkish EFL context (Erbay & Yilmaz, 2017). Therefore, more research is needed both in the context of the study and in other EFL contexts to determine the effective solutions for the problems of EFL students’ lack of preparedness for writing their theses.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The current study explored the difficulties Algerian EFL Master students experienced in the process of writing their thesis, from their own as well as their supervisors’ perspectives. The key purpose of the study, which was the identification of those difficulties, has been successfully achieved. Interestingly, unlike most previous research studies, the findings of this study revealed that Algerian EFL students perceived linguistic problems as less problematic than sociocultural challenges. This study has also succeeded in filling a great research gap, which is the dearth of research publications on EFL students’ experiences of writing the Master thesis. Thanks to the current study, a general picture about the experiences of EFL Master is now available for all those genuinely interested in enhancing the quality of thesis writing in EFL in the Algerian context. It concludes that the process of thesis writing is a formidable and daunting academic undertaking for Algerian EFL Master students due primarily to sociocultural challenges and then linguistic difficulties.

Based on these findings, a major recommendation made by this study is that supervisors and teachers ought to be aware that language is not the students’ major difficulty in writing their Master theses, and the non-linguistic challenges identified in this study must not be overlooked when teaching or supervising Master students. It is also recommended that supervisors should try to make a balance between their professional duties and supervision in order to provide students with effective guidance and ample assistance, especially timely constructive feedback on language, style, content, and structure of the thesis. Students’ families are also required to facilitate their journey through encouragement and less demand on their time during the period of thesis writing.

Furthermore, despite the significant role the supervisor has in the process of thesis writing, the onus is on the student throughout this academic journey to warrant the final production of a fine write-up. Therefore, students are required to take responsibility for their own learning and work hard to enhance their academic writing and research skills. On the other hand, as Komba (2015) has suggested, university teachers are advised to revise the teaching methods and the contents of
academic writing and methodology modules so as to make them cope with the needs of EFL students to accomplish the writing of the thesis. Further to this, universities and EFL English departments are required to adequately train and prepare Master students for writing their theses by organizing training days and workshops on the different steps and aspects, especially the most difficult ones, of writing the Master thesis.

Finally, given its small number of participants, it is not our contention that the findings of this qualitative study can be generalized. Consequently, it is recommended that further research involving larger samples and using different methodological designs should be conducted in all Algerian universities to have a broader picture of thesis writing challenges and the factors that generate them. Also, it would be useful to investigate what strategies students use to overcome those difficulties. Future research can also be done to explore the views of Doctoral EFL students about their dissertation writing challenges in order to find out if they face the same or different types of challenges.

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The Impact of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety on Saudi Male Students’ Performance at Albaha University

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Abstract
The present study aims at investigating the effects of foreign language classroom anxiety on Saudi male students’ performance at Albaha University. This study is going to answer the question if the FLCA has an effect on Saudi students’ performance. The participants of the study were (n=50) students, who enrolled in applied linguistics courses, level 2 in the College of Science and Arts in Almadaq in the second term (2018). The study ran a questionnaire for testing anxiety levels to the participants of the study to collect data. It contained fifteen elements, with the variables divided into three segments they are communicative apprehension, test anxiety, and Fear of negative evaluation, respectively. It also used a descriptive and inferential methods to investigate whether the students feel EFL anxiety. The study findings revealed a slightly higher level of communicative apprehension (3.6), a moderate level of test anxiety (3.4), and the participants experience a low level related to fear of negative evaluation (3.3). The calculated mean of overall hypotheses is (3.4) which suggests that the students suffer a moderate level of foreign language Classroom Anxiety. These findings explored significant effects of foreign language anxiety on the Saudi male students’ performance at Albaha University due to these variables, respectively. Besides, the results of this paper provided teachers and decision-makers with some recommendations and pedagogical implications that will enable them to overcome the male students’ language anxiety in the classroom in the Saudi setting, which will also help in achieving better learning outcomes.

Keywords: anxiety, apprehension, foreign language classroom, Saudi male students, performance

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Introduction

Recent research in foreign language learning has focused on the effects of psychological factors in the success or failure of EFL learners. Among those psychological factors are affective factors, such as: anxiety, self-esteem, attitudes and motivation. According to Philips (1992) there are two types of anxiety, these are: state anxiety, which is defined as “a situation-specific trait anxiety; that is, individual suffering from state anxiety will manifest a stable tendency to exhibit anxiety but only in certain situations”. and trait anxiety, which is defined as “a relatively stable tendency to exhibit anxiety in a large variety of circumstances” (Phillips, 1992, p. 14). However, trait anxiety has not proved to be useful in predicting foreign language achievement (Gardner and MacIntyre, 1991). According to Brown (2000), language anxiety is a kind of state anxiety, and Phillips (1992) thinks that test anxiety is a well-known type of state.

Basing on research, foreign language classroom anxiety is one of the major causes of EFL university students’ weakness in their performance. Campbell and Ortiz (1991) pointed out that language anxiety among university students is disturbing and can disrupt their learning process. The students in the College of Science and Arts face many problems, including classroom anxiety (Ezzi 2012). This problem has not received adequate attention from researchers in Saudi Arabia, primarily, the variables related to anxiety such as communicative apprehension, anxiety related to tests, and fear of adverse assessment.

Male Saudi students, who enrolled in applied linguistics courses in the College of Science and Arts in Almandaq at Albaha University, have weak English language performance in applied linguistics courses. Based on research and experience, this problem has some relations with language anxiety. English language instructors observed that language learning anxiety exists among many Saudi students when they gain admission into universities and it has adverse effects on their performance and achievements. Most of the students at Albaha University who enrolled in linguistics courses express some feelings of anxiety when they speak English in the classroom. They also experience some difficulties in expressing themselves in English classes due to different types of anxiety. This research proposes some recommendations to help teachers overcome the male students' stress in English classes. The findings of this study will help instructors to overcome such problems and will enhance the development of male students' performance to archive better results.

Review of Literature

Language Learning Anxiety

The process of learning a foreign language becomes vital for many people all over the world due to science, business, tourism, technology, etc. However, many psychological factors have effects on the process of learning EFL, such as: self-esteem, self-efficacy, motivation, and attitudes in addition to some linguistic factors such as: language anxiety, cultural background, and learning technique. Horwitz (2001) argued that a lot of EFL learners have some levels of anxiety. Ellis (2008), and Riasati (2011) explained that many students have high levels of stress when learning a foreign language. He recommended that English language teachers should be careful about language anxiety inside the classroom, and they should find solutions to simplify the language learning process. Also, Hurwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) specified three types of language anxiety. These are Fear of negative evaluation, apprehension from communication with teachers.
or students, and anxiety related to tests. First, fear of negative evaluation means worry and being anxious about passive assessment from others. This type of anxiety refers to personal assessment i.e. when the learners assess their oral or academic performance. Secondly, communicative apprehension refers to the feeling of shyness, stress, and discomfort which the learner experiences when he speaks in English classes. This type of anxiety happens when students face difficulties while they are speaking, asking, or answering questions in the classroom. Wu (2010) clarifies test anxiety as worry about assignments, quizzes, and exams that used to evaluate students’ oral performance.

**Sources of Language Anxiety**

Previous research has mainly focused on the sources of foreign language learning anxiety. Jackson (2002) explains that *situational variables* such as course level, activities, teacher’s behavior, and organization of the course establish main sources of foreign language learning anxiety (cited in Alkhasawneh, 2016). Dewaele (2002) examined the *learners’ variables* as causes of FL learning anxiety; such as age, gender, beliefs, personality, and learning styles. Some other scholars stated that the learner language ability and aptitude of language learning are the main causes of foreign language learning anxiety. Besides, Young (1991) lists six possible sources of FLL anxiety: These are:

1) Personal and interpersonal anxieties.
2) Learner beliefs about language learning.
3) Instructor beliefs about language teaching.
4) Instructor-learner interactions.
5) Classroom procedures.
6) Language testing.

**Types of Anxiety**

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) considered language anxiety as distinct from general anxiety and specified three types of foreign language anxiety: these are communicative apprehension, test anxiety, and Fear of negative evaluation:

*Communicative Apprehension*

The communicative apprehension is the level of learner anxiety or fear related to either real or expected communication with other persons (McCroskey, 1978). In recent years, researchers became more interested in the investigation of the factors that are affecting the performance of EFL learners. Young (1991) noted that learners in oral courses express high anxiety level when compared to other courses. Oral performance anxiety is a common problem among English language students. In another study, McCrosky (1970) found out that 20% of the participants experienced oral performance anxiety. Also, he found that one out of every five students, who experienced oral performance anxiety, was affected negatively in his oral performance and achievement.

*Test Anxiety*

Test anxiety, on the other hand, is the tendency to assess the performance in an evaluative situation (Sarason, 1984). Test anxiety appears when the performance of learners was poor in the previous tests. Accordingly, the learners experience a negative impression about tests and have wrong
perceptions in evaluative situations. This negative impression is transferred unconsciously to the English class (Chan & Wu, 2000). Similarly, learners may have incorrect views on language learning. They might feel that any weak test result is a failure (Horwitz et al. 1986). Young (1991) argues that test anxiety can affect the performance of weak students more than those with high proficiency level and more anxiety experienced in evaluative situations. Test anxiety, according to Mandler and Sarason, (1952), includes a mixture of physiological over-arousal, apprehension, fear from test performance, and often affects the normal learning and test performance. Test anxiety exists among the students in different universities and it has been detected by researchers since the early 1950s. Also besides, test anxiety is a psychological and behavioral phenomenon that is concerned with the feeling of failing exams or negative assessment. Due to these situations, the learners are subjected to weak performance when evaluated. In her study, Aida (1994) concluded that foreign language anxiety and test anxiety had negative statistical impacts on the students’ grades in exams.

Also, test anxiety has obvious effects on classroom language and the students’ performance. According to Horwitz (2001), test anxiety is one of the three components of foreign language anxiety caused by fear from failing exams. Inappropriately, to overcome the students’ anxiety, foreign languages require continuous evaluation by the instructors more than any other problem. Horwitz claimed that the anxiety of learning foreign languages affects both the test and communicative performance of students. In sum, the fear of failing tests and negative assessments can affect the students’ performance.

Fear of Negative Evaluation
Finally, fear of negative evaluation is defined by Horwitz, et al. (1986) as the fear about others’ assessment and evaluation Gardner and Maclntyre (1993) claim that apprehension of negative evaluation is closely associated with fearing of communication. When students are uncertain of what they are speaking, apprehension of negative evaluation occurs and they will be doubt about their abilities to give positive outcomes.

One of the components of the anxiety of learning a foreign language is the fear of negative evaluation. It can also be associated with a negative interpretation of social assessment and feedback. It is a feeling of failure and excessive attention from other evaluations. Fear of negative evaluation can be seen in students’ performance during evaluation or social activities like job interviews or in English classes when it comes to speaking (Horwitz et al., 1986). Moreover, it also relates to the teacher’s evaluation and other students’ responses. Horwitz et al. (1986) considered fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, and communicative apprehension as an important theoretical framework for an illustration of the foreign language (FL).

Anxiety and Learning Process
Recent studies, like those of Alsowat (2016), Alsaleh (2018), and Al-Khotaba et al. (2019), have examined in-depth the impact of anxiety on EFL learning. The results were insignificant, in terms of effective factors, when the coefficients were all negative. Besides, the results of these studies revealed the negative effects of anxiety in the process of learning the English language. A high level of anxiety usually causes many problems such as disappointing learners, and this will result in weak performance. Learners with high anxiety levels often perform less, their achievement is
low, and this makes them anxious in terms of learning (Gardner & McIntyre (1993); Pan & Tang, (2005). EFL students with weak performance experience high anxiety levels in the English language classes and tests.

**Classroom Anxiety**

Most of the students, who enrolled in applied linguistics courses at Albaha University, rarely enjoy the learning of the English language inside the classroom. The tension of instructors makes an uncomfortable environment in the classroom, which causes the students to be nervous. English instructors believed that being hard on students and correcting them will make it possible for learners to score high in English Language tests. No doubt, the teachers' behaviors, and teaching strategies have an extreme effect on students’ anxiety in the classroom. English language teachers should create a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom to reduce the level of anxiety in students. On the other side, when teachers are too serious or firm in the classroom, the anxiety of the students increased directly. In his study, Young (1991) found out that the teachers' character; his relationship with students in making a relaxed environment can reduce the students’ language anxiety. Freeman (2002) argued that teachers should use an effective teaching approach that promotes respect for students' feelings to decrease the students’ anxiety. Using teaching tools in the classroom, such as posters, flashcards, comfortable lights, and music, creates a conducive environment that enhances learning and causes students to be relaxed and pleasant.

**Previous studies**

Al-Khotaba, Alkataba, Abdul-Hamid, and Bashir (2019) examined the impact of foreign language speaking anxiety as a psycholinguistic barrier affecting speaking achievements of EFL Saudi learners at Northern Border University in Saudi Arabia. The study used a questionnaire and speaking achievement tests as the main tools for collecting data. The participants of the study were 100 (50 female and 50 male) students major English. Also, the research implemented SPSS program to analyze the data. The findings of this paper showed a weak correlation between foreign language speaking anxiety and the participants’ achievements in language learning.

Alsaleh (2018) investigated the relationship between foreign language anxiety and reading anxiety as well as the impact of foreign language anxiety on reading comprehension among preparatory year students major English language at Imam Mohamed Bin Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Sixty female students participated in this study. The tools of the study were the Foreign Language Classroom Scale, the foreign language reading Anxiety Scale, and a test for reading comprehension. The findings of this study showed that the participants experienced a moderate level of reading anxiety and language anxiety. Also, it revealed that difficulty of understanding new words' meaning, pronunciation, difficulties of reading long texts, and the fear of making mistakes are the main sources of foreign language reading anxiety.

Bansalem, (2018) investigated the relationship between foreign language anxiety, multilingualism and anxiety in the Saudi context. The participants of this study were 96 Saudi undergraduate students (40 female and 56 male). The Arabic version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLACS) of Horwitz, et al. (1986) applied as a tool for data collection. The findings of this study revealed that Saudi multilingual students experienced a moderate level of foreign language anxiety. In addition, female learners have more anxiety than male learners.
Alsowat, (2016) examined the level of anxiety of learning a foreign language among Saudi students who majored in the English Language at Taif University. Two questionnaires administered to the participants including males and females. The findings of the study explored a moderate level of Saudi students who majored in English at Taif University.

In his research, Al-Khasawneh (2016) ran a study about the anxiety level experienced by the students studying English language courses at King Khalid University. Ninety seven students, who enrolled in English language courses, participated in this study. A questionnaire examining Language Anxiety in the classroom, by Horwitz, used as the main research tool. The findings on the level of anxiety showed a moderate level as depicted by the students. Alrabai (2014) examined the oral anxiety of learners' in the Saudi EFL context through a questionnaire. He found that the study participants were unwilling to respond to questions orally in the classroom due to their high level of oral anxiety. Al-Khotaba (2013) carried out investigations on the reasons Saudi students are not willing to speak English in front of their classmates. The instrument of the study implemented to 154 students who are studying the English language at the Al-Qassim University. The study findings revealed that most students faced difficulties in speaking in the classroom and they have weak performance.

Besides, Alrabai (2014) tested the sources of oral anxiety for university students using FLCAS and found that lack of motivation to attend classes was the main reason for oral anxiety. Al-Saraj (2013) worked with ten female students using questionnaires, interviews, and class observations. Based on the participants' responses, he concluded that teaching technique, the interaction between teachers and students, apprehension of negative evaluation and communication style are the most common causes of language anxiety. Asif (2017) examined Turkish students’ speaking anxiety and its causes. Samples of the study were 147 students who study English in Preparatory Year at State University. This study used a questionnaire to the participants to discover their anxiety level. The results revealed that the participants observe a moderate level of speaking anxiety. He also argued that the fear of making mistakes causes oral anxiety for university students.

In their research, Kamaruddin and Abdullah (2015) studied the relationship between English proficiency and anxiety. A negative impact of anxiety on English proficiency was revealed in their findings. Another research carried out by Al-Asmari (2015) studied oral anxiety among students at Al-Taif University in a Preparatory Year. The participants were 64 students with low English language proficiency and 76 students with high English language proficiency. The results revealed a moderate level of anxiety in the English language among the sample of the study. Alsharani (2016) examined the level of anxiety in language among 144 female and 146 male students. So, the results explored high anxiety level in most of the students. Al-Shalawi (2010) investigated the level of language anxiety for 60 Saudi students at Taif University. He also explored the connection between anxiety and language proficiency in the Saudi setting. The findings showed that the students suffered high anxiety levels.

Summary
The previous studies above suggested that Saudi students' foreign language anxiety is rather high. The findings attained from the above studies show that foreign language anxiety has a significant impact on Saudi students.
impact of foreign language anxiety on male Saudi students. The present study is similar to most of the previous studies in that it investigates classroom anxiety among Saudi students using a Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale questionnaire (FLCAS). However, it investigates the effects of anxiety that relate to testing anxiety, communicative apprehension, and fear of negative evaluation of Saudi students' performance among those who enrolled in applied linguistics courses in the English Language department in the College of Arts and Sciences at Alba University. The results of this study reveal that the students feel a moderate level of foreign language anxiety. These findings indicate that it is in line with that of Al-Khotaba et al. (2019), Alsaleh, (2018), Bensalem (2018) Al-Khasawneh (2016), Asif (2017), Alasmari (2015), Kamaruddin and Abdullah (2015), and Al Saraj (2013) and Alsowat (2016) because they explored a moderate level of anxiety of Saudi university students who majored in the English Language. Also, communicative apprehension and test anxiety appear to be the main cause of classroom anxiety among Saudi students.

Methodology
This research aimed at exploring the effect of a foreign language classroom anxiety on Saudi male students in the College of Science and Arts in Almandaq at Alba University. This research also aimed to provide solutions that will enable the English language teachers and students to overcome anxiety for them to learn English Language and linguistic and develop their basic skills without difficulties.

Research Questions
1. Do male students at Alba University have anxiety related to communicative apprehension?
2. Do male students at Alba University have high test anxiety?
3. Does the fear of negative evaluation affect male students’ performance at Alba University?

Research Hypotheses
1. Male students at Alba University have anxiety related to communicative apprehension.
2. The male students at Alba University have high test anxiety.
3. Fear of negative evaluation affects male students’ performance at Alba University.

Participants: Fifty EFL students who are studying applied linguistics courses in the College of Science and Arts, Almandaq branch at Alba University, participated in this study in the second term 2018. A questionnaire administered to 57 students. However, only 50 students (n= 50) who returned the papers considered as samples for this study.

Research Instrument: The researcher used an anxiety questionnaire as the main instrument for this study to collect data. It contained 15 items adapted from the Horwitz questionnaire of oral performance anxiety (Horwitz, et al., 1986). The questionnaire contained three variables: five items for each test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation and communicative apprehension. A five-Likert scale ranging from 1(strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) used to categorize the data. After examining the instrument with professors in the English Language departments in Almandaq and Qilwah branches of Alba University for face validity, the final draft of the questionnaire
prepared according to their observations. The Cronbach’s Alpha for the list of items is .951 showing excellent internal reliability for the instrument as seen in Table one:

Table 1. Reliability and Validity of the questionnaire by using alpha-Cronbach test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alpha-Cronbach</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th>Validity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.951</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table one shows that validity and reliability coefficients for individuals sample for each questionnaire’s theme for the overall questionnaire is greater than (50%), of which some are nearest to one. These results show a high level of validity and reliability of the responses. Accordingly, the instrument of this study is valid and reliable. These results offer accurate and conventional statistical analysis.

Procedures:
The data collection finished in the second term in 2018. The first part of the questionnaire is a brief instruction on how to fill it. The questionnaire directed to the participants of the study in their classes. The questions pointed to the students to select the best choice that describes their situation when learning the English Language. They knew the confidentiality of their responses and the information given will only be used for the research. It took the students about 15 minutes to fill in their responses.

Data analysis
After conducting the questionnaire, the study analyzed the data through descriptive statistics. Means, frequency, and percentage to investigate the level of anxiety among the participants. Moreover, the inferential statistics applied to find out if any significant differences or correlations existed among variables.

Findings and Discussion
A questionnaire having 15 items used to measure levels of anxiety. The total score ranged from (1 to 5) because the tool is a 5-Graded Likert Scale.

Results of the first variable “Communicative apprehension”

Table 2. Frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents’ according to communicative apprehension, (5 statementsX50 participants = 250 responses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1. Responses of the study samples to communicative apprehension

Table two and figure one showed that (33) responses of the study’s samples representing (13.2%), agree strongly to all statements relating to the first variable ‘communicative apprehension’. (61) responses of the participants representing (24.4%) agree and (58) answers representing (23.2%) are not sure, and (63) responses representing (25.2%) disagree, and (35) replies of the participants with 14% disagree strongly. These results justify a slightly high level of communicative anxiety among students enrolled in applied linguistics courses, level two, in the College of Science and Arts in Almandaq at Albaha University.

Results of the second variable, “Test anxiety”:

Table 3.: Frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents’ according to 'test anxiety' (5 statementsX50 participants = 250 responses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agree</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neutral</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The findings of table three and figure two above shows that (24) responses of the study’s sample represented (9.6%) percent agree strongly with all statements related to the test anxiety variable. There were (67) answers of the participants represented (26.8%) percent agree with that, and (84) responses of the participants represented (33.6%) percent are not sure about that, and (42%) of the study sample's responses represented (16.8%) disagree. And (33) participants' responses represented 13.2% disagree strongly. These results justify a moderate level of test anxiety among the students who study applied linguistics courses in the College of Sciences and Arts, Almandaq Branch, at Albaha University.

Results of the third variable ‘Fear of negative evaluation’

Table 4. The Frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents’ according to the ‘Fear of negative evaluation’ (5 statementsX50 participants = 250 responses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agree</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neutral</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the previous table four and figure no three, it is evident that (15) respondents of the study’s sample represent (6.0%) agree strongly with all statements related to the third variable, ‘fear of negative evaluation’. There are (58) participants' responses represented (23.2%) agree with that, and (77) samples represented (30.8%) are not sure about that, and (57) samples depicted (22.8%) percent disagree. And (43) persons with 17.2% are strongly disagreed. These results justified a low anxiety level that relates to fear of negative evaluation among students who enrolled in the applied linguistics courses in the College of Sciences and Arts in Almandaq at Albaha University.

Table 5. Chi-Square Test: Results for participants’ responses to the overall questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Variable’s statements</th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Chi square</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>communicative apprehension’</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Test anxiety’</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fear of negative evaluation)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>overall</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SPSS 24 (from the applied study)

The mean calculated values of chi-square for the significance of the differences of the participants' responses for the first variable is 25, which is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square on the degree of freedom four and the significant value level 5%, which is 12.3 and also the calculated mean is (3.6) which is greater than the hypothesized mean (2.3). This reveals a statistically significant difference at (0.05) level of the responses given by the respondents', which is in support of the participants who agree with the first hypothesis; ‘communicative apprehension’.

The mean calculated values of chi-square for the significance of the differences of the participants' responses for the second variable is 24 which is greater than the tabulated value of
chi-square on the degree of freedom four and the significant value level 5% which is 12.3. and also the calculated mean is (3.4) which is greater than the hypothesized mean (2.3). This result reveals statistically significant differences at the level 0.05 among the responses of the participants, which supported the participants who agree with the second hypothesis that related to 'test anxiety'. The mean calculated values of chi-square for the significance of the differences of the participants' responses for the third variable is 23 which is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square on the degree of freedom (four) and the significant value level (0.05) which is (12.3), and also the calculated mean is (3.3) which is greater than the hypothesized mean (2.3). This indicates statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) among the responses of the participants who agree with the third variable ‘Fear of negative evaluation’. Based on the findings mentioned above, all the hypotheses formulated in this study are accepted. The mean calculated values of chi-square for the significance of the differences of the participants' responses for the overall variable is 24 which is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square on the degree of freedom four and the significant value level (0.05) which is (12.3). And also the calculated mean is (3.4) which is greater than the hypothesized mean (2.3). This indicates statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) among the responses of the participants who agree with all hypotheses of the study. This indicates that Saudi male students at the College of Science and Arts at Albaha University, who enroll in applied linguistics courses (level-2), experience a moderate level of foreign language classroom anxiety.

These findings of this study confirmed the hypotheses of the study
1. Male students at Albaha university have slightly high anxiety levels related to communicative apprehension.
2. The male students at Albaha University have a moderate level of test anxiety.
3. Male students at Albaha university experienced a low level of anxiety related to the fear of negative evaluation.

**Conclusion**

The current research aims to explore the effects of anxiety on Saudi male students’ performance at Alba University. It contributes greatly to the field of applied linguistics and language learning in the Saudi context. The instrument of the study contains fifteen elements, with the variables divided into three segments they are communicative apprehension, test anxiety, and Fear of negative evaluation, respectively. Furthermore, the study findings revealed a slightly higher level of communicative apprehension (3.6), a moderate level of test anxiety (3.4), and the participants experience a low level related to fear of negative evaluation (3.3). The calculated mean is (3.4). The overall mean of the three hypotheses is (3.4) which is greater than the hypothesized mean (2.3). This indicates statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) among the responses of the participants who agree with all hypotheses of the study. This suggests that the students at the College of Science and Arts suffer a moderate level of foreign language anxiety. These findings can help teachers to overcome the students' anxiety which results in better achievements and performance. It further helps instructors in making students feel relaxed and speak without hesitation.
These findings, further, showed a high level of communicative apprehension among male students at Albaha University. They showed a moderate level of test anxiety; and finally, the results revealed a low level of anxiety related to fear of negative evaluation among the students in the College of Arts and Sciences in Almandaq at Albaha University.

In sum, the results of the current research paper as presented above are in line with most of the previous studies' findings such as: Alkhotaba et al.(2019), Alsaleh (2018), Alkhasawneh (2016), Sibel (2015), Al-Asmari (2015) Asif (2017), Alasmari (2015), Kamaruddin and Abdullah (2015), and Al Saraj (2013). Communicative apprehension seems to be the major cause of foreign language anxiety among Saudi students. These levels of anxiety cause some problems to the students such as lack of confidence to express their thoughts in English, and their communication and cause a delay in the progress of their communication ability (Wu & Lin, 2014).

Recommendations
In light of the findings, the study recommended the following: Firstly, the language should be practiced by students inside the classroom with the teacher and their classmates. Secondly, the students should make conversations with EFL speakers outside the classroom such as: when they meet doctors and nurses in hospitals or supermarkets when they meet Indian or Pakistani people. Thirdly, teachers should motivate students to participate in English in the classroom without correcting them. Also, the teachers of English should increase the students’ self-confidence and reinforce them as well as appreciating their work in the classroom. Also, they should encourage their students to speak confidently without anxiety or fear of making mistakes. Finally, the staff of the English department should set a program to help the students to feel relaxed and to speak English without hesitation.

Implications
Furthermore, this paper provided teachers with some important implications that will enable them to deal with the anxiety of students’ performance in the classroom in the Saudi context and also in the teaching of the foreign languages as an ultimate goal. Teachers should use games to create a relaxed atmosphere. They should also try to change the traditional teaching methods that focused mostly on teachers by other methods that activate the role of the students, i.e. students centered-approach. Finally, these great pedagogical implications can help instructors to overcome the language of classroom anxiety supported by recommendations. This study focused on male students at Albaha University, future studies should investigate the impact of oral anxiety on female students’ performance. The current study investigated the effects of foreign language anxiety on Saudi male students at Albaha University. However, future studies should investigate the impact of FLA on female students in the Saudi context, exploring the cultural context and its impact in raising speaking anxiety, and a comparative study between males and females’ performance.

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References


Appendix

Oral Performance Anxiety Questionnaire

This questionnaire adapted the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) and used to measure Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety. They used a questionnaire that contains 33 items. However, 15 items selected from Horwitz’s questionnaire for this study. Five Likert Scale ranged from strongly agree to disagree strongly used to collect the data concerning the English language oral performance anxiety in the classroom. Please read each statement and circle the answer according to how you feel in English classroom. Your answers will be confidential.

1 = strongly agree    2 = agree    3 = not sure  4 = disagree    5 = strongly disagree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Communicative Apprehension</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>- It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English language class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>- I am afraid that my English language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>- I always feel that the other students speak the English language better than I do.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English language class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>- I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the English language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Test anxiety</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>- I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English language class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>- I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in the English language class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td><strong>Fear of Negative evaluation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>- I worry about the consequences of failing my English language class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>- Even if I am well prepared for English language class, I feel anxious about it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I feel more tense and nervous in my English language class than in other types.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak the English language.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I get nervous when the English language teacher asks a question which I haven't prepared in advance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
English-Mediated Presentations in Pharmacy: Exploring Literacy Practices among Saudi Female Undergraduates

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Abstract
Despite the complex nature of language learners’ needs, researchers on language use in tertiary education tend to look at these needs through textual analyses associated with written discourse more than any other aspect of language use. Because learners’ needs, however, extend to include recognizing the challenges and situated nature of language use among learners (Hyland, 2006), this article adopts a social account of literacy (Barton, 1994; Barton and Hamilton, 1998; Street, 1984; Pahl & Rowsell, 2012) to explore the literacy practices surrounding how year-five female undergraduates engage with English-mediated oral presentations in pharmacy at a Saudi Arabian university. The article offers a situated understanding of these undergraduates’ views of English as a considerable challenge in this literacy event to provide a more in-depth understanding of how undergraduates address this challenge. The article concludes by offering some suggestions as to how knowledge of the social practices surrounding learners’ engagement with reading and writing can help to inform EAP pedagogical practices.

Keywords: English-mediated oral presentations, social practices, ethnography, Saudi female undergraduates, language learners’ needs

Introduction

Genre studies form one of the critical areas of investigations within English for Academic Purposes (EAP). These studies often work to facilitate learners’ access to essential functional and technical skills of reading and writing by examining a variety of texts with which learners engage. Research on genres tends to be dominated by textual analyses which usually seek “to ‘fix’ problems with student learning” by focusing on “surface features, grammar and spelling” (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 159). This focus, however, tends to overlook the situated nature of these skills and ignores the various ways and purposes that shape how people engage with reading and writing.

Most available genre studies tend to favor specific genres over others within language research. Because of its significance in relation to knowledge dissemination and assessment in academic contexts (Lillis & Scott, 2008), written discourse is mostly prioritized (e.g., Giannoni, 2008; Martin, Rey-Roch, Burgess, & Moreno, 2014; Samraj, 2008; Molle & Prior, 2008; Nesi & Gardner, 2011; Sawaki, 2014; Lancaster, 2016). Fewer studies, in comparison, focus on spoken genres, such as presentations, conference proceedings and lectures despite their significance and increasing use in academic contexts (e.g., Carter-Thomas & Rowley-Jolivet, 2008; Chang, 2012; Ferguson, 2001; Morton, 2016; Lin, 2015; Webber, 2005).

This general concern with textual analyses of written discourse is also echoed within investigations of English language learning and teaching in Saudi Arabia which often focus on identifying and addressing the challenges and difficulties that English language learners face. In relation to research methodology, these studies tend to rely heavily on quantitative methods, including surveys and textual analyses (e.g., Alqahtani, 2015; Alzubi d., 2017; Javid, Al-Asmari, & Farooq, 2012; Liton, 2012). Fewer studies adopt qualitative methodologies to provide deep understanding of situated uses of language (e.g., Barnawi, 2016; Ababneh, 2016; Mahboob & Elyas, 2014; Barnawi & Phan, 2015; Nazim & Hazarika, 2017). Many issues, thus, remain under-researched, such as the social practices that underpin learners’ use of English in academic settings.

Statement of the Research Problem

Although approaches to genre analysis have always acknowledged the impact played by social contexts on how genres are produced and used, they have not adequately examined this impact (Charles, 2013). Increasing calls among language researchers draw attention to the need to move “from looking at language use, in general, to the use of language in specific settings and in specific genres” (Paltridge, 2012, p. 347). This article draws on a doctoral thesis and employs a social account of literacy to explore the social practices associated with using English among Saudi female undergraduates in pharmacy while engaging with English-mediated oral presentations. The majority of scholarly research on English-mediated oral presentations by non-native speakers of English generally focuses on English-dominant contexts and formal settings such as academic and conference presentations (e.g., Kim, 2006; Kunioshi, Noguchi, Hayashi, & Tojo, 2012; Morton, 2009; Rowley-Jolivet, 2002, 2004). This article contributes to available research by examining how language learners in a non-English dominant context engage with English language use. As useful genre knowledge among language learners exceeds learners’ recognition and mastery of specific linguistic features (Dressen-Hammouda, 2008), the article moves beyond textual analysis to highlight some of the social practices that underpin presenters’ engagement with this genre.
Theoretical Framework

To examine the social practices surrounding undergraduates’ engagement with oral presentations, the study draws on a social account of literacy as proposed by the New Literacy Studies (NLS) which understands literacy as a social practice that can only be understood in relation to its surrounding social contexts (Barton, 1994; Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996; Pahl & Rowsell, 2000; Street, 1984). Unlike traditional views of literacy which consider reading and writing as technical and decontextualized skills, NLS moves beyond the functional values of reading and writing to examine their situated uses (Marsh & Larson, 2005). Two analytic concepts are identified within NLS to examine literacy: literacy events and literacy practices. Literacy events refer to “any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participants’ interactions and their interpretative processes” (Heath, 1983, p. 50). Literacy events refer to what can be observed, seen and documented as people read and write (Papen, 2005). Literacy practices, on the other hand, refer to “the general cultural ways of utilizing written language which people draw upon in their lives” (Barton & Hamilton, 2005, p. 7). Understanding of these practices in any context involves exploration of people’s regular activities, hopes, identities, expectations, challenges, values, regulations and relationships while reading and writing.

Research Context

The investigated literacy event is the second module of one of the mandatory courses in the College of Pharmacy within a Saudi university. The course consists of two modules. The first module, ‘Pharmacy Seminars 1’ (PS1), is offered to year-four undergraduates to train students to prepare and give formal presentations on general topics that last from three to five minutes. These presentations are followed by general feedback from the teacher. The second module with which this investigation is concerned, ‘Pharmacy Seminars 2’ (PS2), is offered to year-five undergraduates, and it aims to examine their ability to prepare and give longer and pharmaceutically-oriented presentations. These presentations last from seven to nine minutes each, and students are required to choose medical topics through which they can demonstrate their growing command of pharmaceutical knowledge and practice. Each presentation in PS2 is followed by a thorough discussion between the teacher and presenters in which the teacher gives detailed comments while presenters explain their choices and decisions. In both modules, presentations were carried out in English.

Methods

The study relies on an ethnographically-oriented case study, employing several qualitative data collection tools, such as observation, semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, research journal and artifact collection. Because they facilitate access “to see how language practices are connected to the very real conditions of people’s lives” (Heller, 2008, p. 250), these tools are essential to examine undergraduates’ engagement with oral presentations and offer a more in-depth understanding of what English means for participants within this specific context and how it is used. After acquiring the necessary ethical forms, seventeen presentations were observed, and eight presenters volunteered to participate in the study after they had been given detailed information sheets and consent forms. Each of these presenters was interviewed at least once following her presentation.
Data Analysis

A commonly persistent view among year-five pharmacy students highlighted having a high command of English as the most crucial element of success in seminar presentations. They believed that successful participation in PS2 depended on how good their English was. This view was shaped by the need to only rely on English while making their presentations, and it was also affected by their contrasting experiences in other courses at the university in which it was not uncommon to mix English with their first language, i.e., Arabic, when needed. While they were able to use English with relative ease in relation to scientific terms, the inclusion of Arabic in their interactions with colleagues and teachers allowed them to communicate liberally and effectively without worrying about the accuracy or sophistication of their linguistic structures. This was very useful for these undergraduates while studying for exams, making presentations and working on group projects.

Yet, participants in this case study often spoke of English as the most challenging obstacle in their studies. They repeatedly highlighted their worries about the need to develop excellent English-language skills for various reasons. First, English was a must because their courses were all English-mediated. Some of these courses, however, were slightly flexible in terms of allowing presenters to mix Arabic and English. In contrast to other classes, PS2 was shaped by strict guidelines and a constricting timeframe that surrounded these presentations and required presenters not only to present in English but also to show total control of their use of the language. Arabic was never used during the presentations. It was only used during the discussion with the teacher as many of the observed presenters mixed Arabic with English while addressing the teacher’s feedback.

The need to have excellent English language skills was also associated with students’ awareness that communicating with other professionals in hospitals while training in their practical courses and internship programs required them to engage in similar activities through which they work with a wide range of professionals who speak different languages. English was, thus, viewed as the indispensable tool needed to engage effectively with these professionals. Furthermore, the need to develop excellent English language skills reflected a socially common view in this context which often assumed that university students in scientific departments had excellent language skills in English. Success in these departments was not possible without excellent skills in English, which should be transferred to actual use beyond their studies and into their everyday lives.

This was a challenging aspect because while presenters in PS2 relied on their thorough preparation and rehearsal to carry out their English-mediated presentations, many did not feel that they could project a similar degree of control over English in other activities. Triggered by feelings of pressure and disappointment that they could not fulfill that expectation, it was not uncommon to hear year-five students repeatedly describe English as “the most difficult obstacle” that they faced while preparing and making their presentations. For them, a high proficiency level in English appeared as a key factor in their success and a sufficient guarantee that their work would be easily facilitated and positively received and assessed.

Having excellent English language skills for these students was not only directed towards showing control of linguistic and discoursal features of the language. Attention was also devoted
to other situated practices that surrounded their use of English language in this context and shaped their view of their language skills and their ability to succeed. In the following sections, the analysis highlights some of these practices, including how presenters maintain the accuracy of their linguistic and discoursal features and how they address the challenges associated with the use of writing and speech in PS2 presentations.

**Linguistic and Discoursal Features in Oral Presentations**

Because they were required to rely on English while making their presentations, many presenters complained that their English language skills were not good enough to allow them to engage easily with the required task. To work around their difficulties, presenters described their extensive efforts to prepare, practice and rehearse their presentations. They also relied on many strategies and tools which facilitated their efforts and allowed them to improve the grammatical and linguistic accuracy of their speech and writing.

**First: Regular Contact with English**

Presenters relied on their regular contact with English-mediated scientific materials, such as articles, books and handouts to represent and communicate disciplinary knowledge accurately. One of the presenters noted that

> بعد ما تقري نفس الكلمات تمسك معاك خلاص. إنتي ترجعي لا إراديا تقولي الجملة تاخديها من الـ text خلاص كدا تفتكريها.

> After you read, the same words just stick in your mind. You unintentionally say the sentence you take from the text. That’s how you remember it.

Consistent use of these materials helped presenters as they imitated the structures and employed the vocabulary with which they came into contact in these materials. This regular contact made these features an integral part of their linguistic repertoire.

Yet, despite the benefit of this regular contact, its impact did not necessarily radiate to their use of English in other activities. It was not uncommon to hear year-five undergraduates describing their use of English beyond their oral presentations as an act of engaging in unknown territories in which their language skills were not sufficient. While their familiarity with English-mediated discipline-specific materials provided a sense of ownership and control in this context, it was not available in other uses of English. According to Salwa,

> هو الانجليزي أنا عندي مو مسألة إنو مرة perfect لكن إحنا عشان presentation بتميزنا، فحاولنا ننطق الكلمات صح نضبط grammar، فحاولنا ننطق الكلمات صح نضبط scientific هو هادا اللي خلانا نعرف نتكلم أكثر، لأنه كله احنا الحاجة إحنا درسناه، فعرفنا احنا نطق هادا ونتكلم على هادا وفهمنا.

> My English is not really perfect, but because we have a presentation, we practiced. We tried to pronounce the words correctly, work on the grammar, but maybe as a conversation, a long conversation a bit difficult because our use is mostly scientific. This is what made us know what to talk about because we studied all of it, so we know how to pronounce this and talk about that and we understood.
Proficiency in English was, thus, directly related to students’ regular use of disciplinary materials.

**Second: Colleagues’ Assistance**

Reliance on assistance from other presenters represented another significant source of assistance that presenters used to make their presentations. It was a common practice among presenters to seek help and feedback from each other while preparing and making their presentations in areas, such as choosing their topics, constructing their speech, designing their slideshows and rehearsing their presentations. This was especially important for presenters who were struggling with linguistic accuracy. For these, consulting more proficient classmates provided an invaluable and highly-appreciated opportunity to ensure the accuracy of their speech and writing. According to Samya,

أول حاجة الأشياء اللي أجيب لها أنا أنا الكلام من عندي يعني أنا ألف لها الكلام يعني يبغى لها شوية جلسة، غير الكلام اللي جايبته من موقع وأحترفه. هادا الخصوص وأحترفه نوات ربط و نوشلي نوني فيه و النباقي زي مه هو ......... الأشياء اللي جايبتها من الموقع تعديلات عليها مرة بسيطة و ما تأخير وقت.

يا دوب أختصر الكلمات، لكن هادي أنا جايبة صور. يعني هم مماهم شارحينها في الموقع. أنا بعدين أروح أبحث مع نفسي أكتب كدا الكلام و بعدين أروح أروح أروح أروح نوني نوني زي كدا، و بعدين خلاص بعد ما أناك كدو اللغة الأنجليزية صحيحة أصلا هي أصلا طالعة مني، فسهل إني أقولها.

These consultations supported Samya’s work after building her argument. They appeared as an intermediate and essential, supporting stage that bridged the gap in language construction between her early preparation and final performance.

**Third: Arabic**

Arabic, as participants’ first language, was also a significant source of support that facilitated engagement with English in this event in two critical ways. It helped first while preparing for these presentations when presenters came across new concepts that were too complex to decipher initially in English. Many presenters spoke about starting their preparation for PS2 by accessing Arabic resources, such as books, journal articles and YouTube videos to examine and understand new information in Arabic first. One of the presenters explained that

ترى في أشياء ما فهمتها تكون معقدة بالانجليزي. أرجع أقرأها بالعربي و اترجمها بالسويبي، بالسويبي. أنا حاصلب أشياء بسيطة، بسيطة حلو حل
You know there are things I didn’t understand. They are complicated in English, so I go and read them in Arabic and I translate them in my way, in my way. I would use simple things, simple to reach out to my friends because I know how to reach out to them because our language is almost the same. I mean there are many things where I go to Arabic references where the scientific language is very complicated here. I read them in Arabic and then I just know what scientific stuff I am going to use.

Arabic also allowed presenters to engage efficiently with the teacher’s feedback after each presentation even though it was never used while presenting in PS2. Considering the detailed nature of feedback in this event, Arabic served as an invaluable communicative tool that came to the rescue when presenters needed to explain their choices, address the teacher’s comments and elaborate on their presented information. Knowing that their presentations were never interrupted by the teacher or students offered presenters a sense of safety and helped them to approach PS2 presentations as staged performances, which they prepared and rehearsed well before coming to class to appear as competent speakers of English.

This sense of safety and relief did not extend beyond their presentations. For many, preparing their presentations in English was not the same as discussing their work with the teacher. While they had adequate opportunities to develop and rehearse their presentations in advance, they could not predict how their discussions with the teacher would evolve. Describing the teacher’s feedback, comments and questions as “detailed and not always predictable”, many were understandably anxious that their English language skills would not support them in engaging effectively with the teacher’s feedback. To address this challenge, presenters worked to develop in-depth knowledge and understanding of their topics that would enhance their ability to address any feedback. More importantly, however, was presenters’ knowledge that resorting to Arabic was acceptable during these discussions. This was not only relevant to students who struggled with their English language skills. In fact, most of the observed presenters in this event described a sense of relief that they were able to mix Arabic and English while discussing their work. This ability seemed to liberate presenters from worrying about being able to use English accurately. Instead, it allowed them to focus on effectively representing and communicating their knowledge in English or Arabic.

It is enough that the presentation is all in English, but the discussion make it in Arabic because he sometimes asks about things that are not related, are not related to the topic.

**Four: Teacher’s Feedback**

Although the teacher did not seem to mind minor errors in language structures or vocabulary, presenters worked hard to ensure the accuracy of their speech and writing. Errors, such as subject-verb agreement and adjective-adverb differentiation, were never pointed out by the teacher.
teacher. These errors did not seem to affect presenters’ ability to carry out their presentations or communicate successfully with their audience. Errors were only pointed out when they affected presenters’ ability to make their presentations smoothly and hindered audience ability to understand. Within the 17 observed presentations in this study, the teacher pointed out language errors in only two presentations because these errors appeared to jeopardize presenters’ ability to make their presentations successfully.

Social Practices around Writing and Speech in Oral Presentations

Writing and speech represented two language-related semiotic resources in this event that were not only framed by the need to maintain the accuracy of linguistic and discoursal features. Specific situated practices also shaped these resources in this event. Writing in slideshows was used to document information that was considered significant for their work, such as definitions, symptoms and treatment plans through condensed, brief structures. Writing also served as a tool to support presenters’ memory and guide their audience throughout their presentations.

The use of writing in slideshows was, however, framed by the teacher’s strict instructions to minimize the amount of writing in slideshows. The teacher warned the presenters against overloading their slides with writing at the expense of using other visual semiotic resources such as drawings, charts and photographs. In addition to the teacher’s instructions, the minimization of writing was also associated with a common belief that overloading slides with writing had a negative effect on presenters and audience. It threatened presenters’ efforts to appear as competent speakers as it would indicate their need to rely heavily on the writing in slideshows to make their presentations. At the same time, the overuse of writing in slideshows was described as a source of distraction for the audience who would be torn between reading the slides and attentively listening to follow the presentation.

Speech, on the other hand, represented a more challenging resource to manage. In contrast to the adequate time available to prepare the writing in slideshows, speech was delivered on the spot. There were always fears and worries among presenters that they would forget parts of their speech or confuse others. Presenters addressed these fears through extensive efforts to prepare their speech and ensure its accuracy. While minor language errors were tolerated as long as they did not negatively impact presenters’ performance, certain social practices shaped how presenters approached speech in this event. The first one is related to the importance attached in this community to pronunciation, especially the pronunciation of medical terminology. In contrast to the general flexibility with which minor language errors were treated, pronunciation of medical and scientific terminology was highly prioritized by the teacher. Students worked hard to ensure their ability to pronounce every word in their presentations accurately. Because the teacher’s feedback was always given during discussion, inaccurate pronunciation disrupted that consistent practice.
especially drugs or a well-known word, if she says it wrong, the doctor will stop her and tell her it is wrong.

Presenters did not only consider the teacher’s immediate feedback as an unwanted interruption while presenting, but they also feared its negative effect on their assessment. According to Hind, the doctor once focused on pronunciation especially in medicines. I can make mistakes in speech. My pronunciation could be wrong (……………….) I lost a grade because I have mistakes in some words (.). It was not allowed, forbidden because you pronounce a medication incorrectly, one letter is wrong, we will think it is another medicine. He always focuses on medicines and even if girls, if she mispronounces a medicine wrong, he corrects it for her. While she is speaking, he corrects the name of the medicine.

Inaccurate pronunciation threatened presenters’ hard efforts to project their developing knowledge as pharmacists. However, this threat did not only spring from the teacher’s immediate feedback towards incorrect pronunciation. It also reflected presenters’ awareness of the potentially devastating consequences of mispronouncing names of medicines. Considering their efforts to appear as competent presenters in their discipline, inaccurate pronunciation of discipline-specific terminology questioned their ability to function as professional pharmacists. For Salwa, One ……… Must know how the word is pronounced. It is shameful for a person to come and say the name of the drug in the wrong way.

It was not considered appropriate for a presenter to stand in front of her teacher and colleagues and mispronounce discipline-specific terms. This was not about mispronouncing a word, but rather about the questions it raised regarding their knowledge, responsibility and competence as professionals in pharmacy.

The accent with which English was spoken represented another socially-valued aspect of speech in this event. Having a native-like accent was considered as an indication of language proficiency and competence. Its presence created a powerful impression that the speaker had excellent language skills. Although the teacher had never pointed out this issue within the observed presentations, the accent appeared for some presenters as an independent asset that seemed at times to outweigh other aspects in making these presentations. For some presenters, a native-like accent determined how a presenter was valued in this community as an English language speaker. According to Fatin,
Some girls I know them, they are not very good in English, but when she presented, she spoke English well (……………..) Maybe if I didn’t know them and heard them, I would say this girl is not even Arabic. Some girls were that good (…………….) Some people have English, but don’t have the accent. Some people have. I see this with my two brothers. They have the same level. They are twins, it is the same, but one has the accent. When he speaks, I tell him that he sounds like he has an American mother or something. My other brother no, they speak well, they are twins, it is the same, but the other one does not have the accent. He says he can’t say it like the other one. Girls who are like that, who have the accent, it is very good.

The significance attached to this aspect was rarely affected by the accuracy of the presenter’s language or the depth of her knowledge. In one of the most successful observed presentations in this case study, Salwa received very positive feedback from the teacher because of her thorough preparation and in-depth knowledge. While describing her experience with engaging in this event, Salwa talked about her hopes that she could improve her language skills beyond her studies, as mentioned above. Her hopes for improvement included her pronunciation skills and a wish to speak like Americans or British.

Despite the positive feedback that Salwa received from the teacher and her friends and her pride in her efforts and hard work, not having a native-like accent had an impact on how some of her classmates viewed her. While Salwa viewed the accent as an aspect that she wished to improve in the future, other students viewed Salwa’s accent as an obstacle that negatively impacted their view of her performance. Lamar, for example, looked at Salwa’s presentation through her accent more than anything else.

For Lamar, the accent was vital to the extent that she framed her assessment of her colleague’s language in relation to her Saudi accent, regardless of her proper language use, which made her speech accessible and had no effect on the quality of her work. In fact, the accent issue was disturbing enough for Lamar that she thought the teacher did Salwa a favor by ignoring her accent.
and paying attention to other aspects. Although the accent had no impact on the teacher’s assessment of Salwa as a presenter, it was important for some participants because of the impression it created about the speaker’s command of the language.

Discussion

As language researchers, there is an urgent need to help learners to “learn about the boundaries of a genre, and develop a nuanced understanding of how a genre (or a set of genres) organizes a particular sphere of life” (Morton, 2016, p. 61-62). These form part of learners’ needs which represent a major aim of EAP research. While these needs are often associated with identification of linguistic and discoursal features of the language, there is an increasing awareness that language learners’ needs represent “an umbrella term that embraces many aspects, incorporating learners’ goals and backgrounds, their language proficiencies, their reasons for taking the course, their teaching and learning preferences, and the situation they will need to communicate in” (Hyland, 2006, p. 73). Needs are, thus, seen as a complex and essential aspect of language learning that moves beyond decontextualized linguistic features and include the social practices that underpin learners’ use of any genre.

This article highlights how examination of social practices sheds light on learners’ use of English in academic settings. The main concern in this article was not to examine the linguistic features necessary for successful participation in oral presentations. It was rather to see how English was approached by learners as they prepared and gave their presentations. Informed by a social view of literacy to examine how year-five undergraduates in pharmacy engaged with English-mediated oral presentations in the College of Pharmacy, this study highlighted how participants consistently described English as the most essential and challenging aspect of participating in PS2. The analysis above has shown that this view was not only concerned with achieving mastery of linguistic and discoursal features of the language. It was also associated with a complex set of expectations and requirements that shaped presenters’ engagement with English in this literacy event. Effective engagement with English required presenters to recognize and address these practices that provided them with an invaluable sense of control and enabled them to make their presentations. Although this control seemed at times momentary, it helped presenters to participate successfully in this event.

In this case study, managing the linguistic and discoursal features of English did not seem to present a major concern to presenters who relied on a wide range of strategies and practices to achieve that while presenting. These strategies and practices were not always directly related to the teacher’s formal assessment. Some were, for example, related to the values that presenters appreciated, as in their appreciation of having a native-like accent and some reflected common practices as in their reliance on Arabic while preparing and discussing their presentations.

The analysis also brought to light the role that participants’ first language played in facilitating their engagement with this literacy event while preparing and giving their presentations. In addition to facilitating their access to new concepts in English, Arabic allowed presenters to engage effectively with the teacher’s feedback. Exploring what Arabic meant for presenters highlighted the momentary nature of some presenters’ control of English in this event. Although that control could not be equally extended to other activities in which English was
needed, it was sufficient enough to address the boundaries of this event. It, thus, brings to surface the need for researchers in EAP to re-question common understanding of language proficiency among language learners whose use of English is mediated by the specific contextual demands that they face. Proficiency in language use should be considered in relation to the common situated social practices that learners engage with as they use English in different contexts, rather than clear-cut features or rules that language learners either have or lack.

In relation to EAP, investigating the social practices that underpin learners’ use of English in various contexts is important to provide better pedagogical plans that support language learners in tertiary education according to their actual needs. These plans should take into account of what Matusiak (2013, p. 1579) describes as “nonvisible elements, including social relationships, values, ways of thinking, skills, and structured routines and pathways”. One way to do this is by raising learners’ awareness towards common social practices that shape their use of the language. This would be helpful, for example, in helping learners to engage with practices considered necessary for any genre such as the focus on pronunciation in this context. It can also be used to encourage learners to question the value of some of their strongly-held views as in the significance that some presenters attached to a native-like accent in this context. Although these practices are not always directly related to linguistic and discoursal features, they should be examined because they shape how learners view and use English.

Conclusion
This article relies on an ethnographically-oriented case study to examine how Saudi female undergraduates engaged with English-mediated oral presentations in pharmacy. Adopting a social view of literacy, the article highlighted some of the social practices that shaped how participants managed their use of English as a vital factor of success in their presentations. Rather than focusing only on linguistic and discoursal features of genres, the article brings to light the need to deeply examine the social practices that underpin how language learners use English in different literacy events.

About the Author
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### Transcription Conventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Bold</strong></th>
<th>Bold font is used to indicate a word that was spoken in English in the original talk.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(..........)</td>
<td>A longer series of full stops between round brackets indicates that some of the interviewee’s talk has been removed due to irrelevance to the point under discussion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 All names of participants are pseudonyms.
The Effectiveness of Multimedia Learning in Enhancing Reading Comprehension Among Indigenous Pupils

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Abstract
The development of education is growing, and the technology-infused lesson is a powerful tool to attract pupils’ attention, especially in reading. This approach can be seen as an adaptive movement to equip the learning process and the fourth industrial revolution. Nowadays, the demand of the technology-infused lesson is increasing as it is proven to help pupils learn the language better. Hence, this study explores multimedia learning as an approach to teaching reading comprehension. Besides, this study aims to answer two questions, which are the effectiveness of multimedia learning in helping indigenous pupils learn comprehension and which elements of media are effective in enhancing reading comprehension among indigenous pupils in Malaysia. Two instruments used to collect the data from 20 indigenous pupils in one primary school located in Kluang, Malaysia, and an action research design was used to achieve the purpose. The respondents were chosen through the judgment sampling technique. SPSS was used to analyse the data collected from the test, and thematic analysis was employed to analyse the semi-structured interview. The result shows that the implementation of multimedia learning in teaching reading comprehension is useful as the combination of multiple elements of media scaffolded the process of understanding. On the other hand, audio is the least effective in helping pupils comprehend the information.

Keywords: ESL learner, indigenous pupils, multimedia learning, reading comprehension, technology-infused lesson

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Introduction
Malaysian education has shown tremendous progress from year to year, especially in terms of language skills. Despite the progress, indigenous pupils did not share the same glory as others. As reported by Renganathan (2016), the current education syllabus for indigenous pupils is not suitable for them, and we are imposing our education system on them. Hence, a new teaching approach is needed to compensate for the loophole.

Reading comprehension learning is a never-ending issue for the indigenous pupils as they were having a problem in conceptualising the information taught in class. Most of them were living in a rural area and not exposed to the outside world, which leads to poor language proficiency. According to Wahab, Jaafar, Mustapha, Kamis, and Affandi (2017), the factors influencing the problems were their parents' educational background, low confidence level, and limited general knowledge. Thus, visual stimulation is perceived as a plausible way to help the children comprehend the information in the reading comprehension lesson. Malaysia has started to implement technology-infused lessons in its education system to help the pupils familiar with recent trends of global education, as stated in the research by Karthigesu and Mohamad, 2020; Rafiq and Hashim, 2018; Yunus, Yaacob, and Suliman, 2020. In their research, the teachers and policymakers are aware of the importance of technology in assisting the learning process, especially for low proficiency pupils.

Besides that, the use of technology in teaching language has become a new trend among educational practitioners. This trend can be seen among the new generation as most of them rely on technology-based devices, software, and social media (Ahmad & Yamat, 2020; Yunus, Yen, Khair, Yusof, & others, 2020). Much research on the use of technology in learning language has proven the positive effect that is deemed useful for the learner (Bani-Hamad & Abdullah, 2019; Parvin, Omar, Osman, & Tamam, 2019). Besides, exciting features offered by technology-infused lessons helped guide the pupils to visualize the information through visualisation and boosting their confidence level in learning (Dedo & Hashim, 2019).

Despite the emergence of technology in the Malaysian education system, the research or study of the technology-infused lesson to indigenous pupils was rarely seen. It happened due to a lack of exposure to the teacher, inadequate resources, and the school's location, as reported in the research by Fazil, Ehsan, & Said, 2020. Most of the pupils live in rural areas and have no internet connection, which resulted in a lack of technology-infused lessons by the teacher. This problem has arisen the need to study the effect of multimedia learning on indigenous students as its findings will contribute to policy marker in planning the education development for them.

Therefore, the problem with reading comprehension and the lack of use of technology in lessons among indigenous pupils ignited the idea of combining both things into one. The idea led to the cognitive theory of multimedia learning, which suggested that the use of technology in learning can increase pupils' comprehension skills in understanding and visualizing the lesson. The cognitive theory of learning, which focuses on multimedia learning, has been popularised by Richard E. Mayer. It explained the process of comprehension in the human brain that occurred when people build mental representations from words and pictures (Mayer, 1997). Generally, the theory addresses how the teacher may structure their multimedia instructional practices and utilise
more effective cognitive strategies to help pupils process the information efficiently. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of multimedia learning in teaching reading comprehension among indigenous pupils. It also explores the elements that influence multimedia effectiveness in enhancing reading comprehension among indigenous pupils.

**Literature Review**

**Reading Comprehension**

Children's willingness to read or comprehend the text is commonly believed to be based on the content and the excitement factor of the materials. The materials should be able to raise children's curiosity to help them read independently. Besides that, the content of the materials also has an impact on the children's reading performance and attitude (Asher, 2017). Therefore, researchers have built various theories and models to explain the process in order to understand comprehension and the processes involved. Some of the theories and models of the cognitive process have been discussed in the study by the researcher to examine the cognitive process, and the process is defining the meaning of comprehension. Comprehension is a cognitive process that the reader executes in decoding the information using bottom-up, top-down, or interactive model (Birch, 2007; Cohen & Upton, 2006; Gough, 1972; Gough & Cosky, 1977; LaBerge & Samuels, 1974). Besides that, comprehension also might be related to memorisation of the reader. The study by Carroll (1971) listed several techniques or methods to understand the comprehension process, and one of them is the reproduction of the information in other forms. The better memorization skills they have, the higher the chances for the pupils to reproduce the information in other forms. Memorisation of the information can be assisted through suitable verbal and image stimuli.

**Multimedia Learning Approach in Education**

The approach of multimedia learning is where the learners are going to be exposed to the utilisation of audio, pictures such as animation, video, and technology throughout reading comprehension lessons (Mayer & Moreno, 2002). Two components compose the process of reading comprehension, which are vocabulary knowledge and text comprehension. Besides that, multimedia learning can be used to support the children using their prior knowledge and new vocabulary to comprehend the text. Furthermore, the multiple components in multimedia learning can assist the learning process and boost their motivation to learn. Utilizing technology within the classroom is usually closely connected with the term multimedia learning, and the advancement of technology has to make the incorporation of multimedia easier and more complete. In general, the term "multimedia" is employed to indicate any sort of activity or application that used multiple types of media to present information or idea such as video, animation, and many more (Berk, 2009). The implementation of multimedia in text comprehension also able to improve memory retention, learning satisfaction, and learning achievement on the information presented using multimedia learning (Chiou, Tien, & Lee, 2015).

**Principle Design of Multimedia**

Mayer built an instructional model on how multimedia learning will help learners understand a scientific explanation by listing five principles of multimedia design (Mayer, 1997). The first principle, modality, explained the advantages of presenting information using two modes of presentation rather than one mode, such as the combination of words and picture or animation and audio narration. The modality principle can also help pupils to learn complex materials and
The Effectiveness of Multimedia Learning

Abdul Samat & Abdul Aziz

perform higher-order thinking skills (Fiorella, Vogel-Walcutt, & Schatz, 2012). The next principle is the contiguity principle, where the mode of presentation should be kept closed to make it related to each other rather than presented it separately (Fletcher & Tobias, 2005; Mayer & Moreno, 1998a). As an example, the explanation of cloud formation using picture and audio is better presented at the same time to ensure pupils can relate to both modes of presentation. The third principle, which is the split-attention principle, suggests words are better presented in auditory form rather than in text form in animation or video (Liu, Lin, Tsai, & Paas, 2012). The fourth principle is that individual differences and the effects of contiguity and split-attention differ with individuals. According to the CTML, pupils who have high-level prior knowledge will be able to create their mental image, and contiguity is not suggested for them.

On the other hand, pupils with a low level of prior knowledge might benefit from contiguity and split-attention. The last principle of multimedia learning, the coherence principle addresses the disadvantages of superfluous information in learning. According to Mayer, Heiser, and Lonn (2001), the materials presented in multimedia learning should avoid using too many words and pictures. Instead, use reasonable and essential words and pictures to foster pupils' understanding.

The Fusion of Multimedia Learning Theory and Dual Coding Theory in Reading Comprehension

The cognitive theory of multimedia learning discussed the process of comprehension with the aid of multiple media. The psychological feature of the cognitive theory of multimedia learning (CTML) targeted on the thought that learners decide to build meaningful connections between words and photos which they have learned a lot more deeply than the use of words or photos solely in the reading text (Kirschner, Park, Malone, & Jarodzka, 2017). In step with CTML, one of the principal aims of multimedia instruction is to support the learner to create a logical and reasonable mental representation from the information. The learner's job is to construct new information as an active participant ultimately. The learners can visualise and build mental images based on learning and be able to comprehend the text better using multimedia learning.

Meanwhile, the dual coding theory (DCT) by Allan Paivio attempts to prove the importance of two mental processing, which are verbal and non-verbal processing (Clark & Paivio, 1991). The theory explains how human brain processing information through the combination of verbal and nonverbal representations such as image and speech (Paivio 1986). Learning and cognitive processing are the two-issues investigated by the researcher to maximize the potential of successful learning and improving our brain ability in processing information. The dual coding theory emphasized the importance of visual cues in the learning as humans can decode the information they received effectively by linking the verbal and visual cues(Paivio, 1990; Sadoski & Paivio, 2013).

A concept of multimedia learning is closely related to the dual coding theory, as both theories accentuate the benefit of the human brain’s duality function as an aid to the cognitive process in reading comprehension. Many researchers show a promising finding in their study when incorporating dual coding theory in reading comprehension, as stated in the study by Wang, & Li (2019), where students with imagery deficit able to recall and remember the words or information better with the help from innovative multimedia application. In their study, they found that
imagery-deficit students were having problems reading comprehension because of their slow and dull imagination and led to the failure to create a mental image. The failure to link the text and image resulted in the students' behavior as they could not understand and remember the information. Then, the researcher introduced a multimedia application that helps the students relate the words and pictures and the students' performance in reading comprehension. The relationship between multimedia and dual coding theory is proven through this research by Richard E Mayer, & Moreno (1998) when they discovered a split-attention in multimedia correlate with the theory of dual-coding theory and a group of students which received treatment with two stimulus shows better performance that other group which receives only one stimulus. In a nutshell, the combination of words and image catalyzed to boost readers understanding by ensuring the reader can create a mental image and link it to the text especially for the children who have

Methodology
Research Design and Research Questions
The idea of Action research, as described by Altrichter, Kemmis, McTaggart, and Zuber-Skerritt (2002), was used to conduct this study. The study employed five cycles of research by implementing different elements of multimedia to find out the effectiveness of each element in multimedia learning. The study aimed to answer two research questions, which are "how effective is multimedia learning in enhancing reading comprehension among indigenous people?" and "which elements of multimedia is effective in helping comprehension process among pupils?"

Participants and instruments
Based on this study, action research conducted in an indigenous primary school in Johor, Malaysia. Twenty pupils were selected based on their level of proficiency and reading fluency ability. Purposive sampling was used in this research, and all the participants have a low level of proficiency but mediocre in reading fluency.

The study employed two instruments in conducting the research, which involves a semi-structured interview and test. The test given to pupils was in the form of a worksheet and consisted of eight questions testing their comprehension skills. Meanwhile, a semi-structured interview is used to explore the pupil's opinion on multimedia learning in enhancing reading comprehension skills.

Procedures
A pre-test was given to the pupils before implementing the intervention to evaluate their reading comprehension skills. After that, every week, the pupils were taught using three elements of multimedia: audio, picture, and audio, to test each element's effect on pupils’ comprehension skills. Lastly, the pupils were taught using a combination of all three media, as depicted in multimedia learning earlier. Then, the post-test was given to evaluate multimedia learning's effectiveness in enhancing reading comprehension skills. Finally, the interviews were conducted among the pupils to find out their opinion on the infusion of multimedia learning in reading comprehension lessons.

Data Analysis
Quantitative and qualitative data analyses were used in analyzing data collected from the instruments. Data collected from pre-test, post-test, and test were analyzed using SPSS software.
to compare the findings. A semi-structured interview was analyzed using thematic review. The data from pre-test, post-test, and interview were used and compared to answer both research questions.

**Findings and Discussions**

**First Research Question**

Table 1. *Pre-test and post-test score*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>PRE-TEST</th>
<th>POST-TEST</th>
<th>MARGIN OF DIFFERENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OVERALL MEAN SCORE**

From table one, it can be seen the increasing mean from pre-test (2.90) to post-test (7.65). It showed the results of pupils' comprehension skills in answering the comprehension text before using multimedia in the pre-test and after using multimedia in using the post-test. The mean difference (4.750) showed a considerable increase in the score test after the intervention implemented on teaching reading comprehension.

Table 2. *Paired sample test analysis on the implementation of multimedia learning in teaching reading comprehension*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

From table one, it can be seen the increasing mean from pre-test (2.90) to post-test (7.65). It showed the results of pupils' comprehension skills in answering the comprehension text before using multimedia in the pre-test and after using multimedia in using the post-test. The mean difference (4.750) showed a considerable increase in the score test after the intervention implemented on teaching reading comprehension.

Table 2. *Paired sample test analysis on the implementation of multimedia learning in teaching reading comprehension*
According to the paired samples test in table two, the P-value is below 0.5; thus, it is statistically significant, and the null hypothesis is rejected, which could be concluded that a significant difference does exist in this study. Furthermore, the association between the dependent variable and the independent variable is statistically significant. Thus, it has proven the assumption that the use of multimedia in teaching reading comprehension among indigenous pupils does enhance the pupils’ comprehension ability. After the post-test, the interview was conducted to explore the pupils’ opinions on multimedia learning.

Table 3. Analysis of semi-structured interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emerging Theme</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing comprehension skills</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>39.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary retention</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental image creation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning satisfaction and motivation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the findings in table 3, 39.47%, or with a frequency of 15 responses, the pupils had mentioned they felt more comfortable in using multimedia learning to optimize their text comprehension. The pupils effectively used the elements available in multimedia in associating information taught with their existing knowledge. This finding is reflected in the response provided by the pupils when they agreed that multimedia learning facilitates the process of understanding text through multimedia. The findings showed that the pupils were able to recall the memory of the words during the test. Hence, it has proven that the proper stimulus used in multimedia learning can help the pupils to recall the vocabulary knowledge through memorization with an agreement of 15.78% or with a frequency of 6 responses, as depicted in table 4.3. In another response from an interview, a pupil recalled his vocabulary knowledge while interviewed. It showed the pupil was able to memorize and store the information in short- and long-term memory and recalled them if needed to comprehend it.

Besides that, the ability to create mental images based on the information learned is also one of the effects associated with multimedia learning, as illustrated in table 3, as 26.32% or with a frequency of 10 responses agreed. The pupils declared they were able to understand the information on comprehension text by creating a mental image. This finding is supported by a response from an interview as pupils agreed the use of textbooks hindered the process of comprehension and creating mental images. However, the implementation of multimedia learning while learning reading comprehension is assisting them in imagining and building meaningful visualization of the text discussed in class. Furthermore, the pupils agreed that creating mental images was possible due to multimedia learning, and it has proven its effectiveness in assisting pupils to comprehend. This finding comes as no surprise as it illustrates how the human mind
works according to dual coding theory, as found in the study by Clark and Paivio (1991); Paivio (1986); Paivio (1990); Sadoski and Paivio (2013).

The education field nowadays demands fun and interactive lesson in the classroom to attract pupils' attention. Without a doubt, multimedia learning has its share in ensuring the pupil’s learning satisfaction and motivation are not being neglected. In order to process information, a conducive environment is needed to enhance pupils' reading comprehension, which is expertly handled by multimedia learning. In this study, the pupils revealed that they enjoyed and felt motivated to learn reading comprehension with multimedia as it offers a fun, exciting, and interactive learning experience. Given these points, it can be said that multimedia learning is effective in enhancing pupils' reading comprehension. It lessens the classroom anxiety, which conforms with Krashen (1983) and Krashen and Terrell (1983) studies on the theory of second language acquisition, which focuses on the affective filter hypothesis. The hypothesis explained the need for pupils to feel positive to acquire the second language and negative emotions such as embarrassment and fear of the unknown could hinder the acquisition (Du, 2009; Huang, 2012).

**Second Research Question**

Multimedia learning holds multiple elements of media, and a test was needed to evaluate the most effective elements in enhancing reading comprehension among indigenous pupils. The statistical test was chosen to analyse the data collected from the pupils. One-way ANOVA seems like the best option to reveal the finding which started with the null and alternate hypothesis, as stated below:

i. Null Hypothesis: There are no significant differences in the effectiveness of the three media elements in pupils' reading comprehension skills

ii. Alternate hypothesis: There are significant differences in the effectiveness of the three media elements in pupils’ reading comprehension skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4. Descriptive analysis elements of multimedia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on table four for the sample of this study (n = 20), the mean score of multimedia element effectiveness for video scored higher (m = 6.45, SD = 0.605, n = 20) compared to audio (m=3.40, SD=1.095, n=20) and picture (m=5.05, SD=0.887, n=20)
Meanwhile, based on table five, the findings revealed the \( p \)-value is < .00001; thus, the result is significant at \( p < .05 \) and indicated that the null hypothesis rejected. It can be concluded that there is enough evidence-based on 95% confidence interval to announce there are significant differences in the effectiveness of the multimedia elements in the reading comprehension skills of the pupils with \( F(2,57) = 3.15; p < 0.05 \). Henceforth, the need for post hoc analysis is needed to identify and distinguish between the three elements.

### Table 6. The Tukey Post Hoc Test analysis on elements of multimedia in multimedia learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I) GROUP</th>
<th>(J) GROUP</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUDIO</td>
<td>PICTURE</td>
<td>-1.650*</td>
<td>.280</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VIDEO</td>
<td>-3.050*</td>
<td>.280</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PICTURE</td>
<td>AUDIO</td>
<td>1.650*</td>
<td>.280</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VIDEO</td>
<td>-1.400*</td>
<td>.280</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIDEO</td>
<td>AUDIO</td>
<td>3.050*</td>
<td>.280</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PICTURE</td>
<td>1.400*</td>
<td>.280</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the result discussed so far, the findings indicated that there are statistically significant differences between the element as a whole in Table 5 but not as an individual. Thus, the result from The Tukey Post Hoc test in table six shows differences between the group. The table reveals there is a statistical difference in multimedia elements in enhancing reading comprehension between the picture and video. However, there were no differences between audio and video, as well as audio and picture.

Post hoc difference test results showed significant differences between audio group’s mean scores and picture and video group means’ scores. A negative sign of the mean difference indicates that the mean score of the audio group is smaller than the mean score of the other groups.

### Table 7. The homogenous subset for elements of multimedia in multimedia learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Subset for alpha = 0.05</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUDIO</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PICTURE</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.05</td>
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<td>VIDEO</td>
<td>20</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 20.000.
Table seven on homogenous subset clearly showed that the mean score for the audio group (3.40) is significantly smaller than the mean of the image group (5.05) and the video group's mean score (6.45). The ANOVA test result and post hoc difference test showed that the audio element in multimedia was seen as less effective than other elements in enhancing reading comprehension skills among indigenous pupils. As discussed in the theory of multimedia learning by Kirschner et al., (2017) the human brain does not decipher the information from multiple media in multimedia learning such as words, images, video, and audio simultaneously but rather the elements of multimedia were selected purposely and organized to form a logical train of thought. This statement explains the reason most of the pupils disapproved of the use of audio in multimedia learning because the improper use of audio and execution has led to a mismatch between the information and the stimulus, as depicted in the finding.

**Implication**

The research indicates the positive effect of multimedia learning in reading comprehension lessons among indigenous people. For this reason, one of the implications of this study to the teachers and school is to plan a multimedia infused lesson with a proper guideline. Besides that, the school community should incorporate multimedia in their lesson as it will let them visualize difficult abstract information easily. This recommendation is in line with Mayer and Moreno (1998). Some of the guidelines that can be taken from this study are preparing the materials suited to the learner's cognitive level and meeting the pupils' needs, especially for indigenous and lower primary pupils, which are easily attracted by an interactive and bold multimedia presentation. Besides, teachers also should be aware of their pupils’ interest before choosing the materials for multimedia presentation to avoid the failure of creating mental images in understanding the materials.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, multimedia learning plays a vital role in scaffolding the indigenous pupils learning of reading comprehension. Most of the reading comprehension lie problems lie in deciphering unfamiliar words, understanding abstract ideas, and manipulating information acquired to answer comprehension questions. All these problems can be solved with multimedia learning as it lets the pupils visualise the information presented in the text, which is useful for the indigenous pupils. Besides that, this study enlightens the other researcher, such as teachers, to plan multimedia learning for indigenous students. Furthermore, from this study, it is well aware that the visualization process in multimedia learning, assisting indigenous pupils in understanding comprehension text, and the proper combination of multimedia is essential while planning the lesson. Hence explain that multimedia learning was effective in enhancing indigenous pupil’s comprehension skills as it helps them visualize the information quickly without relying much on their existing knowledge. Some recommendations for further study would include enlarging the scope of the study to more than reading comprehension. The use of audiobooks is widespread and well-known, but according to the study's findings, it has been shown that students are less fond of audio as a teaching aid during the reading class. Therefore, studies on the use of audio, audio setting, and the appropriate types of audio when teaching reading should be conducted to assist teachers in the country.
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The Effectiveness of Multimedia Learning

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Summarizing as a Strategy to Enhance Grammar and Writing Skills: The Case of First Year LMD Learners at the Algerian University Dr. Tahar Moulay-Saida

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Abstract
Writing is a major language skill that should be the concern of teachers and students. Some first-year English language students seem less interested in writing correct sentences and paragraphs because of the lack of grammar and writing practice in the classroom. They mostly encounter grammar use difficulties, which impede their written communication. The research question that arises in this respect is: does summarizing strategy help learners improve their grammar and writing skills? The aim is to raise teachers’ awareness about the importance of summary as a strategy to help learners apply grammar rules correctly when writing. The participants were first-year students from the department of English, Dr. Tahar Mouley University- Saida. To achieve the work, the researcher applied the quantitative and qualitative research methods that resulted in excellent productions. Yet, findings displayed recurrent errors as tense verb agreement, articles misuse, and irregular verb past simple tense, in addition to mechanics and style problems. The purpose was precisely to cure these problems. Nevertheless, students showed interest and found it enjoyable to write summaries, for it offered them the opportunity not only to practice grammar rules but also to produce complete sentences, including mechanics. Subsequently, summarizing a movie, a book, an event, or a discussion could be recommended.

Keywords: 1st year English language students, difficulties, grammar use, strategy, summary, writing skills

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Introduction

English language in Algeria is present at every level in its respective educational systems (school and university) for decision-makers, and syllabus designers emphasize its importance regardless of streams (i.e., literary or scientific stream) to encourage students to learn it. It also helps them become aware of world development and challenge cultural obstacles. Thus, they prepare themselves to confront future life. Consequently, teaching English as a foreign language in Algeria has been subject to different views, research works, and studies. Writing skills that are acquired from the early stages of the learning process are of significant complexity owing to the cognitive and metacognitive process implied. According to Gilbert and Graham (2010), “writing is a skill which can be learned in the early stages of our study, starting from the primary schools up to universities” (as cited in Khazaal, 2019, p.414). To write effectively becomes prominent as learners need enough abilities in the foreign language mainly, non-native students. In his part, Leki (2001) “writing is a crucial component of language performances. English writing in both educational and professional settings is increasingly important in countries of non-native speakers of English” (as cited in Khazaal, 2019, p.414).

These abilities reside in general and intellectual skills to organize ideas into logical, meaningful, and correct sentences and paragraphs during their studies. Khazaal (2019) states that “most of our students need writing skills in their fields of research during their academic years of study” (p.414). However, weaknesses appear once the teacher assigns written activities. He notices grammar and writing problems. Subsequently, the researcher considers the following research questions:

a) Why do learners have difficulties with grammar and writing skills?
b) What strategy can be introduced to nurture students’ grammar and writing competencies?

The hypotheses underlying these questions may be:

a) Some students lack interest and practice in grammar and writing activities.
b) Summary as a writing strategy should be implemented to enhance grammar and writing competencies.

On that account, the purpose of this study is to introduce summary writing as a teaching strategy to help learners apply grammar rules correctly when writing sentences and paragraphs.

Accordingly, students had to be committed to the assigned activity using their abilities as writing skills imply the use of thinking and reading skills, and attentiveness to overcome hindrances met.

Writing Skills

Writing is the productive skill that seems the most challenging, even for native speakers of a language since it includes coherence, grammar structures, and appropriate mechanics. Nunan (1999) claimed that “research on this issue indicates that creating a good piece of writing was considered a challenging skill, even in one’s native language” (as cited in Haghi & Pasand, 2012, p.77). Arapoff (1967) viewed that “writing is not only symbols and orthography. It is a matter of selecting and organizing ideas: thoughts, facts, opinions, whether acquired firsthand (through direct perceptions and/or actions) or secondhand (through reading or hear say)” ( pp. 33-39). It is
for this reason that learners believe that they lack language background and firmly think that they must produce a correct piece of writing from the first draft.

Writing is a complex intellectual activity that comprises several necessary skills, some of which our learners may lack, some of which they may acquire partially. These skills include:

- Reading comprehension
- Writing mechanics: spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.
- Grammar
- Analytical skills
- Organizing ideas effectively
- Communicating ideas concisely.

Accordingly, writing and grammar practice is fundamental to consolidate what students learn. Khazaal (2019) affirms that “without sufficient practice, students cannot develop their writing skills to a higher level” (p.416).

Furthermore, learners often have meta-cognitive skills deficiencies to understand the areas where they lack knowledge and thus competencies they have to enhance. As learners lack those skills, their writing may be sparse from grammar and syntax to an ambiguous organization to feeble argumentation and reasoning. According to Khazaal (2019), “students use their writing skills to help them to think through, clarify, and develop their new ideas about how they might respond to the title that been set” (p. 416). Learners may not become good provided that they use both their receptive and productive skills. Writing is not a skill that learners can acquire apart. What learners should learn, apart from the particular difficulties of speaking or writing, is a counterpart of what has to be determined for the mastery of listening comprehension, reading, and speaking the core of linguistic knowledge. The activity of writing allows learners to manipulate structures and combine lexical elements. It also allows them to consolidate learning for use in other areas.

**Grammar Weaknesses**

Writing improvement should be based on some rules and conventions. Besides, learners should internalize large amounts of language input that may allow them to enhance their linguistic proficiency through reading and writing. So, writing ability is not achieved, provided that the rules and conventions mentioned are respected and implemented. They include a good mastery of grammar and vocabulary structures as well as coherence to get correct and meaningful sentences and paragraphs. Right (2018) asserts, “In order to communicate, a learner should know the grammar of the language. It is important to be able to express yourself, but this should be done in a way that people find easy to understand”(para.1).

Grammar is often the most sensitive part of language learning that learners find bothering. However, mechanics and grammar are the devices for effective written and spoken communication, without which, the English language would just be a set of words put together meaninglessly. To learn grammar means to be able to construct sentences applying rules. Rules and examples describe how language should be used.
Grammar and written expression teachers generally observe weaknesses of tense verb agreement, present simple third-person singular conjugation, misuse of articles, etc. In this sense, the researcher thought of a writing strategy that could enable students to consolidate and practice grammar structures, including conjugation and mechanics. Thence, what could be this strategy?

**Summary as a Strategy to Improve Grammar and Writing Skills**

Seifert (1993) says, “A strategy is a mental experience done by the learner to achieve a purpose as remembering an event or a fact. Accordingly, students need to be active processors of information if learning is to occur” (para.1). Some parameters are to be present in this case. Seifert (1993) also sees that:

First, students must attend to information to be learned. Second, students must create an understanding of the material by creating or identifying relationships amongst to-be-learned ideas. Third, students need to relate new ideas to prior knowledge. Fourth, students need to understand that learning requires mental effort—good learners are strategic and poor learners are not, and that strategy use is the means by which learning occurs. (para.1)

Therefore, when learners are involved in a task relating information to prior knowledge, they are engaged in strategy use. Regarding our strategy, it consisted of summarizing short stories. A summary is a brief and precise text that relates the main points of the original story, event, report, or discussion without giving any detail.

This writing strategy is useful to both teachers and learners. It should be used in foreign language classrooms as it fits learners’ needs and teaches them how to distinguish the essential ideas of a text. The summary helps learners read a text many times and memorize what they read. “Writing a summary requires students to read more closely. Since they must read a text more than once to get a sense of the ideas presented, students will recognize and maintain more information than they would from just a single read” (provide the title since there is no author, para.1-2). Summary writing implies a mental process that teaches them how to eliminate irrelevant ideas and keep those they need according to the text’s theme. “As students read the text more closely, they’ll also take notes and search for the important points needed to write a summary” (TITLE, para.1-2).

Summarizing is a double-edged sword as it allows learners to constantly read, write and improve their prior knowledge on writing rules and strengthen their grammar skills.

**Methodology**

The researcher thought of summarizing as a learning strategy after teaching some grammar lessons as articles, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, tense verb, and adverbs. She assigned practice activities where students sometimes failed in applying grammar rules, i.e., structuring sentences. Hence, the teacher required them to select short stories, read and summarize them. Some documents were well written, while the remaining ones were weak. Students failed in constructing sentences, besides punctuation, spelling, and conjugation problems.
Data Analysis and Discussion
A sampling population of 117 students divided into four groups; each group includes 30 students. During T.D. (Travaux Dirigés) session, the teacher involved students in the activity demanding them to read and discuss a story freely selected, then write a summary. They showed pleasure in achieving the task.

Nevertheless, the teacher noticed a considerable number of errors in students’ documents. Despite some correct documents that were error-free, learners in the four groups did not focus on their work, which resulted in the following errors. *Spelling* errors gleaned from summaries were basic. The table below illustrates some examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Errors</th>
<th>Correction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wase- untoll-refered- poisoned-husband-</td>
<td>Was- referred-poisoned- husband- where-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were- the litel boy- wont to help you- verry-</td>
<td>the little boy- very- added- unfortunately-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aded- infortanly- familly-wich-diamonds-</td>
<td>family-which-diamond-Sindbad-marvelous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marveles-Sindbad</td>
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As students were writing, they did not concentrate properly on the summary. For instance, the word *familly* frequently appears with double *l*, yet they should write it with one *l* *family*. Further, they wrongly wrote the word *litel*, though, we usually use it. They must write it as follows: *little*. Besides, the spelling of the words *wont, verry, infortanly*, clearly shows that learners were not careful about what they wrote. It is important to emphasize that learners still confuse the orthography of the verb *want*, and the future negative auxiliary *won’t*, which results in meaningless words. The other confusion that remains is the one of past simple third person plural *were* with the relative pronoun *where*: learners are reluctant when to use both *were* and *where*.

As for *style* errors, some examples can be cited:

- *The dwarfs allows him to takes* her.
- *She was groning up.*

The above examples affirm that learners did not center their attention on the sentences. Students themselves admitted that they did not proofread what they wrote. Therefore, during the correction session, the teacher recommended her students to rewrite incorrect sentences. Thus, they could write:

- *The dwarfs allow him to take* her.
- *She was growing up.*

The most striking errors appear in grammar, where there was a mixture of present and past tense within the same text. Students are aware that it is a short story. This implies the use of the past tense. In addition to the major problem of conjugation, they still cannot discern irregular from regular verbs.
Table 2. Students’ grammar errors

<table>
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<th>Errors</th>
<th>Correction</th>
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<tr>
<td>Becamed- she thinked- she gived- to cooked- this story talk- a very loud sounds- on hot day- the spring- the winter-</td>
<td>Became- she thought- she gave- to cook this story talks- a very loud sound- on a hot day- spring- winter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table two displays the recurrent errors the teacher observed in learners’ written productions. Though they learned regular and irregular verbs with their different tenses and rules, there are still these types of errors that lessen summary value. The verbs become, think, and give are known to be irregular verbs; even though there is ed at the end. Besides, there is an infinitive with ed.

Because of these errors, English teachers have to care about the English language from its early learning process stages.

The teacher observed another weakness, article misuse. Learners studied rules of articles use, even though; they still fail to put definite and indefinite articles.

Ninety percent of students’ documents contained punctuation and capitalization problems. The following examples explain that:

- ……water on the ground, he continue………
- there was a boy who………………
- In the first day he hammered…………
- …….his mouth wide open, the traveller ran away…………..

Almost all students started their paragraphs with a small letter. They still neglect capitalization at the beginning of sentences or paragraphs. The teacher asked about this problem, and students showed carelessness to start sentences with a capital letter.

After gleaning these errors, the teacher advised students to correct their piece of writing, focusing on grammar rules and sentence structure. They admitted that they would not enhance their skills if they did not use the target language effectively. Summary writing activity encouraged students to deploy more efforts for further activities.

The teacher continued to assign such tasks as she notices that learners showed great interest because the written expression teacher assigned the same activity. Thus, they may write with more care, motivation, and concentration because teachers could penalize them for the same mistakes.

Teachers have to encourage learners by introducing learning strategies as summary writing strategy that proved to be beneficial because they allow learners to write not only relevant information, but practice rules and conventions: mechanics, grammar, spelling, etc., in addition to other types of activities that enhance their thinking and writing competencies as all language aspects are inextricable.
English language teachers should familiarize learners with summary writing as a strategy to compel them to use their language skills accurately. They should also devote extra sessions to review grammar rules that connect with immediate written or spoken communication activities. Writing and rewriting allow learners to memorize words’ spelling, sentence structures, and punctuation. Teachers should implement summary writing activity at every level of the learning process to help learners use the correct language, notably with the overuse of computers that hampered them from using language effectively. Accordingly, we may cite some recommendations that teachers can apply in their classrooms.

1) Summary of a discussion where learners may sum up the topic being discussed by first giving, for example, the definition of the debate, then saying whether the question was interesting, annoying, difficult to understand, controversial, etc. avoiding to express one’s opinion.

2) Summary of a movie: after watching a movie, the student may speak about the event stating the most critical points and the characters without introducing his viewpoint in a well-structured and clear paragraph.

3) Summary of a book: learners need to read the book, understand it, and break it down into sections that should be bound. Each section has to contain the main ideas. Proofreading is the last step; hence they have to check mistakes and be careful about being subjective because what they do is to state what they have read.

4) Summary of an event where students highlight the most important facts about the event. For example, they could speak about the best presentation if the event is a conference. Besides, they may state what they learned from this event, etc. It is worth noting that students should be as concise and transparent as possible.

Conclusion

All in all, errors made by English language learners are due to lack of motivation and interest, first. If learners read without interest, they will probably meet difficulties in comprehension, which is noticed among learners. In this respect, the teacher has to work more to urge his learners to read with motivation and care to enable them to use their thinking skills and reflect them on their productions. Then, classroom practice lacks from the very first stages of the learning process until university, where learners do not have enough time to practice oral as well as written activities, considering syllabus length and time shortage. Still, the result is lived: learners experience various weaknesses to achieve their communication proficiency.

To conclude, foreign language students struggle for weak language skills, which impede comprehension and communication. Ergo, English teachers should organize study days, seminars, and conferences to discuss students’ writing issues. For instance, they moot and search for beneficial strategies that may open the gate to further research to nurture learners’ proficiency level. Furthermore, learners should be encouraged to integrate writing and reading clubs to improve their written and spoken performance.

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Using Strategic Reading Techniques for Improving EFL Reading Skills

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Abstract
The present study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the strategic reading techniques for improving EFL reading skills. The present study utilized the quasi-experimental research design. The researcher divided the participants into two groups. The innovative group used strategic reading techniques, while the control group did not receive any training except for the regular method. The main question raised in this study was to what extent were the strategic reading techniques effective in improving reading skills for Jazan University students? To this end, the researcher collected data through a questionnaire and a strategic reading test. Furthermore, a model of teaching program, based on using strategic reading techniques, is improved and tested with a group of learners in the chosen university in Saudi Arabia. The findings revealed that the learners need an innovative strategy to help them improve their reading. The application of “clarifying, prediction, questioning, and summarizing” CPQS strategy as a pedagogy helped the learners improve their reading skills. The conclusion of the research recommends that there is a need for using new techniques for providing feedback to EFL learners in reading, such as peer-review, reading conferences, and self-correction.

Keywords: EFL reading skills, reading techniques, strategic reading

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Introduction

Reading is one of the important skills in teaching English as a foreign language. EFL experts viewed reading as a receptive and a productive skill. In reading, students receive and perceive the content of the text, and then produce their comments, interactions, and suggestions. They also express viewpoints and proper solutions to some expected challenges in the text that require them to be creative in solving these situations to understand the reading content. Reading is an extremely complex activity since an authentic reading comprehension implies deep understanding, ability to infer, analyze, apply, and evaluate, (Yurika, 2008). EFL students need to know how to read and be able to deal with a text independently.

Reading is a way of thinking, evaluating, judging, imagining, reasoning, and problem-solving, (Okasha, 2004). That is why the students actively interacts with the author’s ideas in a dynamic process. When good readers make decisions about the text, they may set their purpose for reading, engage in a dialogue with the author, and thus become active readers (Maria, 1990). Reading is a problem-solving situation that involves taking all the text cues and information from prior knowledge into account. Learners need to become active readers by solving problems if they are truly to understand texts. Comprehension depends on probe questions following a silent reading exercise. Probe questions should reflect different levels of cognitive complexity, such as the following, who was the main person in this text? Where did the event take place? What was the main idea of the reading? Retell what you have read in your own words. Abdul-Alhaq, et al. (2013) pointed out that reader who can use reading strategies effectively to construct meaning, can achieve independence and use literacy for lifelong learning. Zoghi, et al. (2010) pointed out that reading strategies can be any comprehension-enhancing action taken by the readers, such strategic readers can draw on a variety of strategies to accomplish a purpose in reading.

Strategic Reading

Research indicates that effective or expert readers are strategic. They have purposes for their reading and adjust these purposes for each reading task. Strategic readers use a variety of strategies and skills as they construct meaning (Okasha, 2009). A strategy is a plan selected deliberately by the reader to accomplish a particular goal or to complete a given task (Paris, 1992). The goal of all reading instruction is to help students become expert readers so that they can achieve independence and can use literacy for lifelong learning and enjoyment. Learning to use strategies effectively is essential to constructing meaning. Readers who are not strategic encounter difficulties in their reading (Paris, 1992). These early difficulties in reading may influence the way readers learn throughout the rest of their lives. Strategic readers use a variety of strategies to construct meaning, such as predicting and questioning strategies. Students can learn strategies in a variety of ways. Some strategy learning takes place through reading and writing experiences. Strategic readers have strategies for dealing with many different learning tasks (Harris &Sipay, 1990). Therefore, learning to use strategic reading skills effectively is a crucial part of becoming a strategic reader. Helping students learn to use these skills requires continuous reading practice to help students become independent in their learning (Yurika, 2008).
Reading Strategies

Before teachers expect their students to read strategically, they must invest the needed time in properly training them how (Okasha, 2009). Regardless of the strategy are about to learn, research supports and suggests the following six-step plan to apply a reading strategy (Jeanette & Sharon, 1999, Okasha, 2009).

Preparation

The focus should be on teaching one strategy. After stating the strategy, the teacher should choose a reading selection material. He should read the text carefully, and mark points where he can use strategy. He should make notes to guide the explanation, and choose another text, passage, or portion of the text for guided practice. He should read the text carefully, and mark points where he wants the students to stop. He should list the stopping points on either individual practice sheets or the board.

Description

The teacher should define the strategy clearly. Students can predict the text to make guesses about what will come next. When the students can use the strategy, they can predict before, and during the reading.

Demonstration

The teacher should model the strategy. He should start by reading the selected text aloud. When he gets to his marked spot, stop, and begins to think aloud. He should tell the students that he has made a prediction. He should read to confirm or reject his prediction. He should continue reading until he sees his prediction outcome, and tell the students about the outcome.

Interactive practice

In this phase, the teacher should tell the students that now they will take part in making predictions. He should continue reading aloud until he arrives at the next marked stop point. He should stop and invite the students to make predictions with him orally. Example: “What do you think will happen next in the passage, and why?” The teacher should give the students opportunities to share their predictions, and positively respond to these predictions.

Guided Practice

The teacher should lead the students into a guided practice of using the strategy. He should hand out the text selection to the students to read silently, and stop at designated spots to use the strategy. Students can do this technique in small or big groups.

Independent Use

In this phase, the teacher tells the students that they will be using the strategy they learned while they read silently. Example: “Today we learned about the strategy __________. While you read silently, I want you to think of this strategy and use it as you go along.” As a means to connect with the text, proficient readers ask questions. They question the actual version, the author, and themselves before, during, and after reading. According to Okasha (2009), “Active reading depends on reading silently and quickly. Good readers must develop the ability to understand new words.
from the context, the main versus supporting ideas and make inferences and predictions from the written text.” (P.5).

**Strategic Reading Activities**

The researcher strongly agrees with the researchers Jeanette & Sharon, (1999), Okasha, (2009), who focused on the following activities to practice during the reading process. These activities are as follows:
1. Read and Summarize:
2. Write down the main ideas in the written text.
3. Read for specific information
4. Guess the meaning of the words
5. Infer the moral lesson out of the read text.

**Strategic Reading Studies**

Lara & Jean (1999) conducted a program for advancing reading comprehension skills. The problem of lacking comprehension skills was clear through teacher observations, student and parent surveys, comprehension checklists, teacher journals, and reading inventories. The analysis indicated that many factors influence a student's reading comprehension such as poor questioning techniques by the teacher, lack of student motivation, and lack of self-monitoring during reading. They recommended that teachers should teach comprehension strategies to their students. The problem setting resulted in the development of several reading comprehension interventions. This program taught students how to self-monitor their reading to increase direct instruction of comprehension strategies. This program helped students to use comprehension strategies well to understand the content of the reading material.

Jeanette & Sharon (1999) explored the influence of using collaborative vital text on reading comprehension. They used the collaborative strategic reading as an instructional approach for multilevel classrooms. In this approach, students learned four strategies as a part of collaborative vital text: preview, click and clunk, get the gist, and warm-up. Students used preview before reading the entire text for that lesson and warm-up after reading the whole text. The other two strategies click and clunk and get the gist are used repeatedly while reading the text after each paragraph or two. Results indicated that the target students achieved significant progress in reading comprehension than those who followed the traditional method.

Abdul Alhaq, et al. (2013) experimented the correlation between vital reading and reading comprehension skills in English language for first-year secondary school students. The study sample consisted of 72 students from El-Ramla El-Moshtarak Secondary School in Benha, Qalyoubia Governorate, Egypt. Tools of the study were a vital reading questionnaire, vital reading interview, vital reading checklist with think-aloud protocol and reading comprehension test prepared by the researchers. They tested the students, and calculated the Pearson correlation coefficient. Results showed that there was a positive correlation between vital reading and reading comprehension skills in English language in favor of the target group.

Zoghi, et al. (2010) attempted to probe into the effectiveness of a reading instructional approach called "Modified Collaborative Strategic Reading" based on a pretest-posttest design. The sample
of the study was 42 university-level EFL freshmen. They met once a week and received EFL reading instruction according to MCSR for 90 minutes over six weeks. The researchers assigned a developed reading comprehension test for both groups as a pre-test and post-test. Quantitative results indicated that participating students did not demonstrate significant gains in reading comprehension skills. However, the qualitative evaluation revealed that students did have positive attitudes towards Modified Collaborative Strategic Reading.

**The experimental Design**

**Design of the study**

The present study utilized the quasi-experimental research design, and a pre-post control group design for conducting the survey. The innovative group and the control group had a pre and post-test. The innovative group received training via using a strategic reading technique while the control group did not receive such training.

**Sample of the Study**

The sample of the present study consisted of 70 Students from Jazan University. They were 35 for the innovative group and 35 for the control group.

**Variables of the Study**

**The independent variable**

The use of strategic reading techniques included (clarifying- predicting – questioning – summarizing).

**The dependent variable**

EFL reading skills.

**The purpose of the study**

The study aimed at improving students' EFL reading comprehension skills via using strategic reading techniques.

**Research questions**

The present study was an attempt to answer the following main question:

To what extent are the strategic reading techniques effective in improving reading Skills for Jazan University students?

From this question, the following questions emerge:

1. To what extent are the strategic reading techniques effective in improving reading clarifying skill?
2. To what extent are the strategic reading techniques effective in improving reading questioning skill?
3. To what extent are the strategic reading techniques effective in improving reading predicting skill?
4. To what extent are the strategic reading techniques effective in improving reading summarizing skill?

**Hypotheses of the study**
The present study attempted to test the following hypotheses:

1. There would be a statistically significant difference between mean scores obtained by the students of the innovative and the control groups on the post-performance strategic reading questionnaire in favor of the innovative group.

2. There would be a statistically significant difference between mean values obtained by the students of the innovative and the control groups on the post-performance test of the strategic reading techniques in favor of the innovative group.

3. There would be a statistically significant difference between mean values obtained by the students of the innovative and the control groups on the post-performance test of the strategic reading sub-skills (clarifying – predicting – questioning - summarizing) in favor of the innovative group.

**Instruments of the Study**

The tools of the present study were:
- An EFL strategic reading questionnaire
- An EFL vital reading checklist.
- A reading test.

**Research Program**

The strategic reading program designed for the present study consisted of fourteen sessions. The first session was devoted to the introduction of the application to the innovative group students. The remaining sessions were instructional. The program included some reading activities to the innovative group through the implementation of self-reflection, teacher and peer feedback, formative and summative feedback, individual conferences, and self-understanding for weak and good points…etc. At the beginning of each meeting, the researcher set the objectives of the session, the teacher's role, and the instructional materials. The teacher asked the students to perform reading tasks. At the end of each session, the teacher gave the students some tasks to achieve.

**Duration of the Implementation**

The program lasted for seven weeks: two sessions per week, and each session lasted for about 45 minutes.

**Instructional Aids**

The researcher used the following instructional aids in implementing the program: white and smartboard, paper and pencil to allow students to take notes and interact with each other.

**Strategic Techniques for improving Reading Comprehension.**

The researcher used CPQS strategy technique for improving reading comprehension skills. CPQS stands for clarifying, predicting, questioning and summarizing as explained below:

- **Clarifying** is simplifying the meaning of the text to the readers via asking questions, rereading, restating, and making the text more comprehensible.

- **Predicting** is using students' power of expectations to know what is coming next in the text. This strategic reading technique was competent enough to let students interact positively with the
reading text. In this stage, students can share their ideas, thinking, discussions in pair work, small groups, teamwork, workshops etc. The researcher noticed that the students' interest increased as they were passing their ideas together. The researcher used prediction technique before and during reading.

**Questioning** involves collecting information from students before reading the text in the form of brainstorming to support and encourage the students to interact with the given paragraph. The researcher used this technique during reading to increase students' positive involvement with the paragraph. The more students ask questions about the given paragraph, the more they get detailed information about the given reading material. Post-reading questioning is a strategic reading technique to prove that students mastered the paragraph and comprehended it thoroughly as a whole or as one unit.

**Summarizing** is guiding students to organize and restate information of the reading passage in written form as an indication of their understanding of the assigned paragraph. The researcher used this strategic reading technique during and after the reading process. The researcher tested both groups; innovative and control group before implementing the strategic reading program and after applying the experiment.

**Reliability of the test**

Reliability of the Strategic Reading test and questionnaire

The researcher used the following method for estimating the authenticity of the reading test.

**Inter-rater reliability**

Two raters corrected the strategic reading test. The first was the present study researcher. The second rater was a university colleague, who is expert in the field. The researcher used the correlation coefficient between the scores of the first and the second rater by using Pearson Formula. The reliability coefficient was 0.760 in the strategic reading questionnaire and in the strategic reading test was 0.720, which were statistically significant at 0.01 level hence; the questionnaire and the test were reliable.

**Findings**

**Hypothesis 1**

The first hypothesis of the study predicted that there would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores obtained by the students of the innovative and the control groups on post strategic reading questionnaire in favor of the innovative group. The following two tables showed the differences between students' performance on the EFL strategic reading questionnaire.

**Table 1. “T” pre-test scores of the strategic reading questionnaire**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>61.18857</td>
<td>6.4204</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>62.6254</td>
<td>8.6254</td>
<td>-.126</td>
<td>.319</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is evident from table (1) that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-test of the two groups. The mean scores of the innovative group is (61.18857). The mean scores of the control group is (62.6254). Hence, the two groups are homogenous in the strategic reading questionnaire as illustrated by the t-value (.319) which is not significant according to the distribution table.

Table 2. “T” post-test scores of the strategic reading questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>77.2286</td>
<td>10.3159</td>
<td>4.249</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>67.3143</td>
<td>9.1740</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from table (2) that there is a statistically significant difference at 0.01 (one-tailed) between the two groups. The mean scores of the innovative group is (77.2286). The mean scores of the control group is (67.3143) in the post-test of the EFL strategic reading questionnaire. The mean scores is in favor of the innovative group as indicated by the t-value (4.249) which is significant at 0.01 (one-tailed).

**Hypothesis 2**
The second hypothesis of the study predicted that there would be a statistically significant difference between mean values obtained by the students of the two groups on the post-strategic reading test in favor of the innovative group. The data in the following two tables will show the differences between students' performance on strategic reading test for both groups.

Table 3. “T” pre-test scores of the strategic reading test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>55.9197</td>
<td>11.3399</td>
<td>-.113</td>
<td>.910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>56.1944</td>
<td>9.3803</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 indicates that the mean scores of the innovative group is (55.9197). The mean scores of the control group is (56.1944). They are approximately the same. The t-value for both groups is (-.113). This means that there are no significant differences between the innovative and the control groups in the pre-test in overall strategic reading test according to the t-distribution table (2.683). It is evident that both groups are homogenous.

Table 4. “T” post-test scores of the strategic reading test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>126.5278</td>
<td>13.86</td>
<td>5.884</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>102.2778</td>
<td>20.47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from the table (4) that there is a statistically significant difference at 0.01 (one-tailed) between the two groups. The mean scores of the experimental group is (126.5278). The mean scores of the control group is (102.2778) in the post-test of the overall strategic reading test. The mean scores of the both groups is in favor of the innovative group as indicated by the t-value.
These differences prove the effect of the strategic reading techniques program with the innovative group.

**Hypothesis 3**

There would be a statistically significant difference between mean values obtained by the students of the innovative and the control groups on the post-performance on the test of using strategic reading sub-skills techniques (clarifying - predicting – questioning – summarizing) in favor of the experimental group. The following data in the two tables show the differences between the two groups.

**Table 5. “T” pre-test scores of the EFL strategic reading sub-skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Sub-skills</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12.0278</td>
<td>4.4432</td>
<td>-.085</td>
<td>.932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12.1111</td>
<td>3.8156</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predicting</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8.0278</td>
<td>2.2739</td>
<td>-.243</td>
<td>.808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8.1667</td>
<td>2.5579</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9.2778</td>
<td>2.6034</td>
<td>.184</td>
<td>.855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9.1667</td>
<td>2.5242</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarizing</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8.9722</td>
<td>3.1576</td>
<td>.225</td>
<td>.823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8.8333</td>
<td>1.9494</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from table (5) that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups in the pre-test in each strategic reading technique sub-skill. It is evident that the two groups are homogenous and equivalent.

**Table 6. “T” Post-test scores of the EFL strategic reading sub-skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Sub-skills</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>t-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29.13</td>
<td>4.4432</td>
<td>6.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>21.18</td>
<td>5.8156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predicting</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11.08</td>
<td>2.2739</td>
<td>4.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8.58</td>
<td>2.5579</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>19.22</td>
<td>2.6034</td>
<td>4.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15.51</td>
<td>3.9015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarizing</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>18.97</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>16.83</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table (6) indicates that the t-test results statistically show that there are significant differences between the mean scores of the two groups in favor of the innovative group in both four sub-strategic reading skills.

**Discussion of the Results**

The findings of the present study showed that strategic reading techniques were effective in improving EFL reading skills for the target group. This progress indicated to some factors. One of these factors was that the students in the innovative group had the opportunity to practice a lot of reading activities during the application of the strategic reading techniques. Another factor was dividing the innovative group students into sub-groups and assigning rules to the students to do. The above-mentioned technique created a sense of duty and cooperation within the group. A third factor was that there was a sense of positive competition among class groups to do the assigned tasks correctly. There was a positive interaction between students within the same group; good students exerted much effort to help weak students to rank their group in the first level.

The design and execution of strategic reading techniques used in this study helped students improve their reading skills. Training students on how to use strategic reading and clarifying the meaning of the text to the readers via asking questions, rereading, restating were very constructive and made the textual materials more comprehensible.

Predicting skill to the given paragraph was sufficient to let students interact positively with the reading material. In this stage, students shared their ideas, thinking, discussions in pair work, small groups, teamwork, workshops, etc. Exchanging ideas within the groups encouraged the students to continue their work.

Questioning skill enabled students to develop their reading comprehension to the given paragraph by asking many questions related to the nature of the content before tackling the paragraph, e.g., what is the paragraph about? What do you know about this title? Do you like this title? Can you give some examples about this topic? What do you think will come in the content of this paragraph? The researcher divided his class into five groups and set the first task to each group. The researcher talked about the topic. The topic was about “Sports and Obsession.” The researcher used some questions to motivate students to tackle the paragraph, e.g., games are very essential for everyone. There are many kinds of games. Why do people practice their games? Where do people practice their games? How do games help people to be healthy? Each group started to form some questions about the paragraph, and interacted with each other. The above-mentioned technique created a sense of cooperation and support within groups. It was effective and beneficial.

The fourth strategic reading technique is summarizing. It means organizing and restating reading information in a written form as a sign of students’ understanding of the given paragraph. This strategic reading technique was beneficial as it enabled students to focus on main and sub-main ideas of the given reading passage.

**Conclusion**

The strategic reading techniques were beneficial and effective in developing and improving EFL reading skills. These techniques provided a useful framework for developing reading skills.
Students should focus on teaching reading in the English language as a process, not as a product. There is a need for using new techniques for providing feedback to EFL learners in reading, such as peer-review, reading conferences, and self-correction.

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References

Appendix A
Strategic Reading Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Reading</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Completely agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Completely disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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**Before Reading**

- I look through the text before I read it to see what it is about
- To find something specific, I know where to look to find it
- I use the information I already know about the text.
- I make my picture of the text I read

**During Reading**

- I ask self-questions about the reading text
- I can identify which information is important
- I can make a connection about the parts of the text
- I guess the meaning of the difficult words

**Post Reading**

- I can judge the reading text.
- I can summarize it in points
- I can relate it to other texts I have already read

**Source:** Leisa G., (2005) The Effects of Collaborative Strategic Reading and Direct Instruction on Sixth-Grade Students Persuasive Writing and Attitudes. The University of Maryland, College Park in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
The Application of Visual Vocabulary for ESL Students’ Vocabulary Learning

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Abstract
Vocabulary is often neglected despite being one of the most crucial aspects of language acquisition. Due to the lack of emphasis on vocabulary learning, ESL students have issues in learning the English language effectively, which resulted in low-level language proficiency. Hence, this paper attempts to address this problem by introducing Visual Vocabulary to learn the target words. The main research question: How effective is the use of the Visual Vocabulary to learn vocabulary for Form Two learners? To investigate the effectiveness of the use of the Visual Vocabulary, 60 students of Form Two from sub-urban schools in Ipoh and Teluk Intan, Perak, were selected. These students were instructed to learn a total of 45 target words and Visual Vocabulary was applied to assist them to learn and simultaneously understand the meaning of the target words. The independent sample t-test, paired sample t-test, and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the scores of the pre and post-tests. The score comparison and total improvement score in percentage were also presented. The paired sample t-test results are (t=17.85, df=29, p<.05) for the experimental group and (t=-4.85, df=29, p<.05) for the control group. Based on the stated results, both experimental and control groups improved significantly (p=.000*) in the post-test with a mean difference of 15.62. The results of this study confirm the effectiveness of Visual Vocabulary in learning and understanding the target words. This approach is proven to increase the success rate of vocabulary learning among ESL learners.

Keywords: Visual Vocabulary, vocabulary learning, ESL students


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Introduction

A recent study highlighted that vocabulary knowledge is also one of the solid foundations to master the English language apart from grammar and pronunciation (Viera, 2017). This is supported by Yovanoff, Duesbery, Alonzo, and Tindal (2005) and Sovakandan, Jaganathan, and Hussin (2017), as they mentioned that without sufficient vocabulary knowledge, effective communication could not be conducted. However, vocabulary is often neglected despite being one of the critical language components. This is because, many teachers only focus on the four skills which are listening, speaking, reading, and writing while teaching in class (Mohamad Nor, Mazlan & Rajab, 2015). Nevertheless, vocabulary teaching is an integral part of an ESL lesson. This is essential for them as they are required to have an extensive English vocabulary at their disposal.

In the Standard Based Curriculum for Secondary Schools (KSSM) English syllabus in Malaysia, vocabulary is one of the crucial parts that support students in mastering the English language. Reading, writing, listening, and speaking are the four skills of language learning that allow students to practice their vocabulary knowledge. Teachers at schools teach the target language tacitly coincide with grammar and sound system. As a consequence of this, several issues associated with vocabulary learning have arisen among learners. The first relates to failure in producing in-depth word knowledge because one does not understand every word in a text. In-depth word knowledge can be defined as the quality of understanding of a word which helps learners to have a thorough knowledge of a word’s meaning (Teng, 2016). As an example, the learners face difficulty in determining alternative definition for unfamiliar words in a text, mainly because they could not identify the meaning of the word and its spelling. This situation has become an issue since the learners are unable to recognize the difference.

Other than that, errors in word choice are also common among learners. Making relatively few errors might be related to the method used in the classroom, whereby learners are expected to identify the unfamiliar words found in a text on their own as implicit learning of vocabulary takes place. This generally happens because the target words could not be defined adequately by the learners. In acquiring a language, one should require the opportunity for output or oral practice and the use of new knowledge. It is also parallel with Swain (2000), where he mentioned, the probability of learning will increase when learners reflect upon the form and meaningful communication. Hence, it shows that vocabulary is one of the essential elements of language that will make writing useful. Teng (2016) revealed that new words could be learned accidentally while reading texts. However, the newly acquired vocabulary knowledge would have decayed significantly after two weeks. He suggested form recognition, meaning recognition, memorization of meaning and memorization of form as the easiest knowledge to acquire vocabulary.

To cope with this issue, a suitable program for vocabulary intervention or vocabulary instruction should be developed at school. The teachers should choose the appropriate technique to be used in the classroom to decrease the students’ lack of vocabulary because if the teacher did not use a useful method, the students could not follow the lesson. One of the ways to increase vocabulary knowledge among students is by conducting the teaching and learning activity in a meaningful way. Teachers are encouraged to use engaging and fun ways to teach vocabulary (Sheridan & Markslag, 2017). It can increase students’ interest and help with both memorization and retention. As stated by Nezhad and Shokrpour (2012), vocabulary instruction is crucial to learn
a language. To sum up, deliberate vocabulary learning is essential to enhance English language learning, and to add fun ways to teach vocabulary words can help keep the process of teaching to be fresh and entertaining. This idea might also help students to enhance their level of proficiency because vocabulary knowledge is crucial to improve one’s language input and output. Koizumi and In’nami (2013) discovered that vocabulary knowledge leads to an increase in speaking proficiency. The result stated that novice and intermediate levels of students with excellent vocabulary knowledge could produce a variety of alternative meanings and enabling them to have advanced language proficiency.

Previous studies by Viera (2017), Mohamad Nor et al. (2015), Teng (2016), Sheridan and Markslag (2017), Nezhad and Shokrpour (2012), and Koizumi and In’nami (2013) show that there is a lack of studies on the area of active vocabulary learning using visual images for the students to learn new words. Thus, this study intends to examine the application of the Visual Vocabulary for vocabulary learning among English as a Second Language (ESL) learners in the Malaysian classroom as the focus is on observing the achievement in terms of vocabulary knowledge that occurs among learners. In line with the objective, this research question was posed: How effective is the use of the Visual Vocabulary to learn vocabulary for Form Two learners?

**Literature Review**

**Importance of vocabulary learning**

In the context of learning English as a second language (ESL), it has been stressed that adequate knowledge of vocabulary is required for English language learners to be able to function effectively using the language. Vocabulary refers to either a single word item, word phrases, or word chunks that are necessary to make meaningful use of the language (Alfaki, 2015). Despite its unusual importance as the most basic form of utterance, vocabulary is not evaluated as other English-language components such as speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Besides, vocabulary is merely and implicitly taught to learners, and vocabulary development is assumed to occur as learners practice other language skills. Hence, it is not a surprise that vocabulary acquisition continues to be one of the areas of concern among English language practitioners, due to the great impacts that it might have on the ESL learners. Nayan and Krishnasamy (2015), for example, claimed that learners with vocabulary problems could find it challenging to make progress in their studies, mainly when subjects they learn are taught using the English medium. Also, when these learners advance to the tertiary education later, they will need to conduct many presentations in English, not only for the language subjects but for all the topics under their area of specialization. If they have acquired a limited and minuscule collection of vocabulary, these students will have difficulties performing well and advance significantly in their educational pursuit.

**Vocabulary learning problem among Malaysian students**

As previously mentioned, one aspect that should be given urgent consideration to ESL students is their limited vocabulary in English. This is because, English teachers, in general, have concluded that their students have vocabulary-related problems with each of the four primary language skills, namely speaking skills, writing skills, reading skills, and listening skills. This will then profusely impact their performance in these skills. Yovanoff et al. (2005), for example, insisted that “vocabulary knowledge is a significant and constant predictor of overall reading
comprehension irrespective of grade level” (p.4). Sovakandan et al. (2017) concurred with this while acknowledging that limited vocabulary in the English language and grammatical inaccuracy pose significant challenges in writing for the low skilled ESL students.

In a study with students from a tertiary institution about their vocabulary problems, Mutalib, Kadir, Robani, and Majid (2014) found that the problems were caused by a multitude of factors. These students, for example, have indicated that they had a lack of time to learn vocabulary, and the process of learning it can only be done during their leisure time as they read novels and playing games. They also put a heavy reliance on rote-memorizing techniques, which proved to be extremely difficult for students with poor memory-retention skills. Then there was the teacher factor, in which some teachers were rigorous where the students were forced to redo and memorize vocabulary exercises. The students even described these sessions as ‘torturous’ (Mutalib et al., 2014). Apart from that, the students’ attitude was not helping the cause either. When they were asked why they had not reverted to dictionaries or other means of finding definitions of words, they replied that they were “too lazy and checking for words was considered as time-consuming” (Mutalib et al., 2014, p.367).

Mohamad Nor et al. (2015), on the other hand, investigated the English Language teachers’ perceived difficulty of English skills faced by their ESL learners. Through a set of questionnaires administered to these teachers, they pointed out that for Speaking Skills, for example, the statement with the highest mean is the statement ‘Students have difficulty in using varied vocabulary and expressions’ (M= 3.37). Besides, for the Writing skills, the account ‘Students have limited vocabulary knowledge’ has the highest mean (M=3.29). Furthermore, limited vocabulary is again a challenge for their learners in terms of the Reading Skills, with the statement ‘Students could not understand the meaning of the words written’ produced the highest mean (M=2.89). As for the Listening Skills, the issue did not get any better, as the statement ‘Students have problems because they do not understand the meaning of words’ has the highest mean (M=3.07).

The problem does get particularly vexing as these learners progress to tertiary education. Ideally, in terms of vocabulary knowledge, Read (2000) recommended that the ESL learners who are enrolled in university-level programs should have a vocabulary knowledge between 5,000 to 10,000-word families. Nation (2006) seemed to agree with this while suggesting that university students need vocabulary knowledge of about 8,000 to 9,000-word families to understand a written text without assistance and vocabulary from about 6,000 to 7,000-word families to understand a spoken text.

However, the situation on the ground is notably dire, as it has been established that insufficient vocabulary knowledge is one of the challenges facing Malaysian undergraduates in tertiary education. AbManan, Azizan, and Nasir (2017), for example, conducted a Vocabulary Level Test based on Nation’s (1990) Vocabulary Test to a group of Diploma students in a Public University in Malaysia. They discovered that for a passing rate of 83 percent, for the 2,000-word level, 86 percent of the students had passed the test for receptive vocabulary. For the 3,000-word level, only 53 percent had passed. At the 5,000-word level, less than half (47.8%) of the students had passed. Finally, only half of the students had passed the academic word-level. The number of students who have successfully achieved the threshold of 83% for productively known words for
the 2,000-word is 53.7 percent, while at the 3000-word level, only a meager 3 percent had passed the test.

More recently, another study which examined the knowledge of English vocabulary among the first-year undergraduate at a public university in Malaysia at the five-word frequency level, specifically at the 2000-word level, the 3000-word level, the 5000-word level, the academic word-level and, the 10000-word level also produced an alarming result. By using Schmitt, Schmitt, and Clapham’s (2001) Vocabulary Level Test, Lateh, Shamsudin, and Raof (2018) found that there is a substantial deficiency in students’ knowledge of academic vocabulary, as 93 percent of students found that they did not master the academic word-level which they are required to know as university students. Not only that, but most of them also have not mastered the rest of the word-levels; 57 percent fails to learn the 2000-word level; a worrying 83 percent fails to learn the 3000-word level; a dismaying 93 percent fails to learn the 5000-word level; a shocking 100 percent of students do not learn the 10000-word level.

These startling findings need to be urgently addressed, as the failure to do so will impede students' ability to cope with the use of English at the university, which will hinder them from achieving their full academic potential (Kaur, 2013). It might be argued that the findings presented here only involved tertiary level students. However, it must not be conveniently forgotten that these students were once primary and secondary school students. Perhaps, a more significant case to be established here is the ineffective and inadequate vocabulary teaching and learning instructions in schools, which has a damaging impact on the students’ vocabulary knowledge as they advance to a higher educational level.

Learning English vocabulary using visual aids

Ab Rahman and Shah (2016) argued that the employment of appropriate vocabulary learning strategies could lead to a bigger size of vocabulary bank, better performance in reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills and English proficiency on the whole. Various vocabulary learning strategies have been employed by ESL students, such as guessing the meaning of a single vocabulary object, guessing the meaning of contexts, guessing the meaning by examining the form of words, using the English-English dictionary, using the English-Malay dictionary, asking classmates or colleagues, asking English subject teachers, asking others, such as family members or friends. However, this paper intends to focus on how visuals, particularly images and pictures, can facilitate students’ vocabulary acquisition.

Wright (1990) generally believed that the learning experience of a target language would become more significant and meaningful with the inclusion of visuals, as the students can make some sense out of the visuals. He further asserted that visuals also provided interest and motivation while offering an understanding of the context of the language and a specific reference point or stimulus. Al-Rahmi, Alias, Othman, Marin, and Tur (2018) echoed this, as they insisted that visuals and pictures are mainly found to draw the attention of students when they are involved. They further claimed that this strategy is found to be more frequently employed by the lower level students.
Many studies have attempted to shed some light on how the use of visuals could help in vocabulary acquisition. Vedyanto (2016), for example, experimented with the use of pictures in a test format to evaluate vocabulary achievement among 41 secondary schools in Indonesia. He provided two forms of tests, with and without the picture. The one with the pictures required the students to complete the missing letters and then match the photos with the English words by drawing the lines. In contrast, the one without pictures was simply dealt with by translating the Indonesian vocabulary into the English vocabulary by completing the missing letters. He reported a positive and excellent correlation ($r=.84$) between the use of pictures in a test format and vocabulary achievement of the students. He also observed that the students seemed to be more relaxed as they dealt with the test format with pictures. On the contrary, when they were completing the task by referring to the incomplete words without any images, “they seemed very slow in answering the questions and looked anxious and perplexed” (p.56).

A study conducted in Malaysia by Mukundan, Mahvelati, Mohd Amin Din, and Nimchisalem (2013) revealed that Form Four students’ writing skill performance related to vocabulary, content, organization and mechanic scores had shown ‘fair to poor’ levels. It shows that lack of adequate vocabulary knowledge mainly caused by their low language proficiency can bring to poor writing skills among these secondary school students. This means that most of the students failed to explain their ideas smoothly following a logical and cohesive consequence (Ashrafzadeh & Nimchisalem, 2015). The learners lacked in terms of paraphrasing skill, creating their arguments due to effects on first language (L1) transfer. This L1 habits made them fail to notice the prominence of having well-organized and cohesive writing. Chang, Lin, and Abdul Rashid (2014) mentioned that understanding written text is one of the most critical skills in learning the English language.

In the context of the teaching of English as Foreign Language (EFL), the use of visuals has also been indicated as one of the very effective vocabulary learning strategies. Saad, Yaacob, and Shapii (2017) examined the vocabulary learning strategies of a group of Saudi secondary stage learners in a Saudi International School in Malaysia. With regards to the use of pictures in guessing the meaning of a particular English word, the participants have revealed that visual images have helped them to understand the meaning of a word through either cartoons or picture images. One of the participants acknowledged that only 20% of the attention paid was paid to the sentence, while 80% to the photo. The participants further admitted that pictures “helped their imagination and assisted in learning new vocabulary items, particularly by the use of dictionaries” (p.1253).

In the Malaysian context, Ab Rashid (2011) used children’s stories to assist vocabulary learning among a group of less proficient young adults in Malaysia. He chose these stories as he believed that these stories offer visual support that could help the participants of the study to understand better. The pictures helped the young readers to grasp and remember the words which appeared during the reading. Changes in vocabulary proficiency were analyzed through the comparison of the results of the Pre and Post-test, as well as their writing in the learning diaries. He found out that after using these stories, all participants scored better marks in the Post-test compared to the Pre-test, with about 20% of them showing a very significant improvement in the Post-test. Also, all the participants gave positive feedback on the use of children’s stories to learn new vocabulary. Apart from that, the English teacher involved in this study had positive
perceptions regarding the use of children’s stories to increase vocabulary learning among less proficient students. However, they also reminded that “the selection of the texts must be done carefully so that only good quality children’s stories would be given to students” (p.9).

Visuals were also found to be one of the motivating factors in enhancing the students’ interest in reading literary texts, which are laden with new vocabularies. According to a study by Yunus, Salehi, and John (2014) on the Malaysian Secondary School teachers’ perception on the use of visual aids in motivating students to read literary texts, 92.6 percent of the teachers surveyed believed that the students were better engaged with literary texts when the visuals accompany the texts. This is because videos and pictures allow the students to comprehend better since they will be able to see what is exactly happening in the literary texts. They don’t rely on listening where they might lose their concentration (Yunus et al., 2014). Besides, the use of visual aids promoted the students' interpretation of abstract ideas in the text. Furthermore, 94.2 percent of them also felt that the use of visual aids could improve their students’ performance even though they are of different English proficiency levels. Colorful graphics and exciting pictures make the word more memorable for them. These pictures will increase the incentive of pupils to learn as they are drawn to the visual aids. Visual representation of the words can help the students to make sense and process the information (Yunus et al., 2014).

Apart from that, Jazuli, Din, and Yunus (2019) utilized pictures in the form of digital flashcards to help a group of low proficiency primary school students in acquiring new vocabulary. The data was collected based on the marks obtained during the Pre and Post-intervention worksheets that contained seven new verbs and 21 new nouns that were answered by the pupils. A survey of eight items was conducted where the pupils responded to the scale of "Yes or No" that reflected their feeling in learning vocabulary through this method. It was found that there was a significant difference between the Pre and Post-test marks when pupils learned using these digital flashcards. It was also suggested that the participants had a higher motivation to learn and apply new words by learning about it visually.

The introduction of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) in the English Syllabus of Malaysian schools meanwhile presents an additional challenge to an already uphill battle on vocabulary acquisition among Malaysian students. However, Krishnan and Yunus (2019) reported that the use of visuals in learning vocabulary could provide some much-needed relief to this situation. Questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, Pre-and Post-test, and observations were used to collect data from 20 students aged 14 in a semi-urban secondary school in exploring the use of blended learning to expand the acquisition of vocabulary among low-proficient students and enable them to move gradually into the CEFR band. They disclosed that for one of the items in the questionnaire ‘I learn better with pictures from online resources’, the mean score is sky-rocket high (M=4.60). They later indicated that this has shown that low proficient students learn much better in acquiring CEFR vocabulary by using pictures, specifically from the internet.

In summary, based on the previous studies in the literature review, it is evident that the studies in vocabulary learning are still lacking, and future research should investigate the effectiveness of vocabulary instructions for the students to learn the target words. The present study that the researcher conducted is intended to fill in the gap mentioned above. This is mainly
in the context of the Malaysian classroom, where the use of Visual Vocabulary is applied to help students learn new words. The application of Visual Vocabulary also reflects the use of new material in using visual aids to help students learn the intended vocabulary to replace the materials such as conventional pictures or images.

**Methodology**

This study employs a quasi-experimental research design. As mentioned by Creswell (1994), the experiment is an extraordinarily measured method. This design is the most suitable method due to the limited time and number of participants in the study. The experiment stretches valuable data for the researcher in mediating and associating the variations in the scores between the experimental group and the control group in the Pre and Post-tests.

**Subjects**

The sample in this study comprises of two groups of Form Two students (60 students) from two different schools situated in the suburban area of Ipoh and Teluk Intan, Perak. They are a low level of English language proficiency learners. Non-probability or convenient sampling technique was chosen to select these students.

**Research Instruments**

**Pre-test**

This test is proposed to decide the earlier score of each learner who participates in the study. The word list in the test must be chosen based on the unknown words recognized earlier. This test also functions as an instrument to guarantee the word list identified from the New Words Test is unfamiliar to the learners. Hence, the list of words in the Pre-test is the new words that the learners do not have any prior knowledge about.

In the Pre-test, learners are allocated with fifteen short reading texts where the synonyms or same meaning phrases of target words are used in the sentences. The synonyms or same meaning phrases are also emphasized, highlighted, and numbered so that the learners can select the target words, which are the words to be learned in the form of multiple-choice answers for each synonym or the same meaning phrase in the reading text. There are 45 multiple choice type of questions created for the Pre-test; Text One until 15 include three multiple-choice questions each. Participants are supposed to answer the 45 multiple choice questions in half an hour. The maximum score for the test is 45. Answers nor responses are not prepared for the learners after the test.

**Visual Vocabulary**

To train the target words to the learners in the experimental group, they are prearranged with a Visual Vocabulary worksheet. The worksheet contains the target words, space to draw pictures, and explanations of the target words. This is strengthened by Nassaji’s (2003) idea of the weakness of deducing the meanings of unknown words from pictures and by Plass, Chun, Mayer, and Leutner’s (1998) proposition of using both visual and written explanations. Target vocabulary items can be provided with their similar pictures and written explanations, as cited in Jihyun (2010). Phillips (2016) stated that using pictures together with words in language classes has proven to be useful, especially in adult learners. Learners are requested to draw the images that they can relate with the target words in the Visual Vocabulary worksheet to encourage active
involvement among them. This should be able to help them to learn and remember the target words better.

**Post-test**

Once all the processes for both groups are executed, an immediate recall test (Post-test) is steered. To avoid learners giving memorized answers from the Pre-test since the Post-test uses the same items from the Pre-test, variations have been made in terms of the organization of the texts. In the Post-test, the learners are allocated with fifteen short reading texts where the synonyms or same meaning phrases of the target words are used in the sentences. The synonyms or same meaning phrases are also emphasized, highlighted, and numbered so that the learners could select the target words, which are the words to be learned in the multiple-choice type of answers for each synonym or the same meaning phrase in the reading text. Similarly, with the Pre-test, there is 45 multiple choice type of questions created for the Post-test; Text One until 15 comprise of three multiple-choice questions each. Participants are requested to answer all 45 multiple choice questions within 30 minutes. The maximum score for the test is 45. The Post-test purposely uses the same questions in the Pre-test so that the researcher can compare the learners’ scores before and after they undergo the process. The difference in terms of counts of Pre and Post-tests regulates whether the learners show improvement or vice versa from the application of Visual Vocabulary for vocabulary learning. To designate the efficiency of Visual Vocabulary, these scores are used as an indication.

The answers nor feedback are not given to the learners after the test. The Pre and Post-tests are tools used to determine the learners’ ability to learn the target words as the scores of the Pre and Post-tests are compared among participants in this study. To decide whether the scores are significantly different or otherwise, the scores of the Pre and Post-tests are also measured.

**Data Collection**

After the researcher acknowledged 45 to-be-learned words, all participants sat for a vocabulary test, which the researcher used as the Pre-test in the formal study. In the formal investigation, the participants in the experimental group were presented with the Visual Vocabulary, where they learn the target words by using the Visual Vocabulary worksheets. The vocabulary directives were divided into nine sessions. Subsequently, nine sessions of regular English lessons were executed for the control group, where the participants in this group indirectly studied the target words.

After the final session, all participants sat for an immediate recall test (Post-test) comprising of 45 prearranged target words registered by the researcher. The Post-test was intended to determine their comprehension of the word meaning from multiple-choice questions and the aptitude to recollect a word in context dinamically. After the Post-test, a follow-up Semi-structured Students’ Interview was executed to elucidate the results from the Pre and Post-tests.

**Data Analysis**

The quantitative data was analyzed using the statistical software SPSS version 25. The effectiveness of using Visual Vocabulary to learn the target words among the participants was revealed by differentiating the mean scores of the Pre and Post-tests. The results specify whether
there is a substantial improvement or vice versa, at the end of the study (Mohd Tahir & Tunku Mohtar, 2016). Besides that, the vocabulary scores of the Pre and Post-tests were also analyzed using the independent sample t-test, paired sample t-test, descriptive statistics, with mean scores and standard deviation offered as well as the total development score in percentage was calculated to measure how the participants accomplish in their achievement tests of vocabulary respectively.

**Results**

This research is conducted to investigate the effectiveness of learning vocabulary among the participants by using the application of Visual Vocabulary. To see the difference in the Pre-test results of the experimental and control groups, an independent sample t-test was run. The result of the t-test is as shown in Table One.

Table 1 *Independent sample t-test for the pre-test of the experimental and control group*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Mean score (M)</th>
<th>Standard deviation (SD)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental group (N=30)</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>1.024</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>.314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control group (N=30)</td>
<td>15.23</td>
<td>6.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the table above, the experimental group scored a higher mean of $M = 16.67$ as compared to the control group, which scored the mean score of $M = 15.23$. This marks the mean difference ($M$ difference) of 1.44 for both groups. Also, there is an insignificant difference ($t=1.024$, $df=29$, $p>.05$) based on the statistical results of the independent sample t-test which shows the absence of significant difference between Pre and Post-tests for the control and experimental groups; hence the Pre-test results of the participants for both groups are almost similar. The experimental treatment was conducted for participants who were of the same level of knowledge regarding target words.

Next, the scores of the Pre and Post-tests based on Form Two learners’ performance were learned in finding out the effectiveness of the treatment in this research. Both scores were then transformed into mean scores to ensure the quality of both the validity and reliability of the scores. In comparing the improvement of learners’ scores, the total improvement score is calculated for both groups. The results of learners’ mean score, total improvement score in percentage, and standard deviation of the Pre and Post-tests (Descriptive Statistics) are as presented in Table Two and Three for both groups, respectively:
Table 2 Descriptive statistics for the pre and post-tests of the experimental group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experimental group</th>
<th>Mean score (M)</th>
<th>Standard deviation (SD)</th>
<th>M difference</th>
<th>Total improvement score (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>131.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 Descriptive statistics for the pre and post-tests of the control group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control group</th>
<th>Mean score (M)</th>
<th>Standard deviation (SD)</th>
<th>M difference</th>
<th>Total improvement score (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>6.01</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>10.45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Two indicates the descriptive statistics for the Pre and Post-tests of the experimental group. The mean score obtained for the Pre-test of the experimental group is M = 16.7. The mean score obtained for the Post-test is M = 38.6, and the result is influenced by new knowledge on target words that the group has learned by using Visual Vocabulary. This shows there is an improvement (M difference) of 21.9 between Pre and Post-tests of the experimental group. Besides, in percentage, the total improvement score is up to 131.1%.

Simultaneously, the descriptive statistics for the Pre and Post-tests of the control group are as demonstrated in Table Three. As shown, the mean score obtained for the Pre-test of the control group is M = 15.2. The group inherently learns the target words before sitting for the Post-test. The mean score obtained for the Post-test is M = 21.6. There is an improvement (M difference) of 6.4 marked for the Pre and Post-tests. However, in percentage, the total improvement score is only 42.1%.

Also, the scores obtained by both the experimental and control group in Pre and Post-test are compared. The outcomes (improve, decline, and same score) are then recorded respectively for both groups in Table Four:

Table 4 Score comparison between the pre and post-tests of the experimental and control group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Learners with an improved score (%)</th>
<th>Learners with a declined score (%)</th>
<th>Learners with the same score (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table Four indicates the score comparison (improve, decline, or same score) between the Pre and Post-tests of the experimental and control group. For the experimental group, it is shown that all learners (100%) were able to achieve improvement after Visual Vocabulary was used to learn target words. This shows the effectiveness of using Visual Vocabulary to learn target words for the experimental group as they have all improved in their scores for the Post-test.

However, the number of learners who achieved higher scores in the control group was only 24 (80%), followed by the declining scores by five learners (17%). The remaining of one learner (3%) obtained the same score in both Pre and Post-test. They have all intrinsically learned the target words before sitting for the Post-test. Although the highest percentage of the control group was with those who obtained higher scores, there was still a learner (3%) who had not improved in the post-test, and surprisingly, five learners (17%) achieved lower scores. The results recorded in the control group are inconsistent after they had intrinsically learned the target words by following regular English lessons. This proves that the approach used is not suitable and sufficient for all learners in the group, especially for those who obtained lower or the same scores in the Post-test compared to the Pre-test.

Tables Five and Six demonstrate the results of the paired sample t-test for the Pre and Post-tests of the experimental and control group. The results of the test are presented below:

Table 5 *Paired sample t-test for the pre and post-tests of the experimental group*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experimental group</th>
<th>Mean score (M)</th>
<th>Standard deviation (SD)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test (N=30)</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>-17.854</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test (N=30)</td>
<td>38.63</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 *Paired sample t-test for the pre and post-tests of the control group*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control group</th>
<th>Mean score (M)</th>
<th>Standard deviation (SD)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test (N=30)</td>
<td>15.23</td>
<td>6.01</td>
<td>-4.851</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test (N=30)</td>
<td>21.57</td>
<td>10.45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table Five presents the results of the paired sample t-test for the Pre and Post-tests of the experimental group. The mean score obtained by the learners for the Pre-test is $M = 16.67$, while for the Post-test, the mean score is $M = 38.63$. This records the mean difference ($M$ difference) of $21.96$ between Pre and Post-tests. There is a significant difference ($t = -17.854$, $df = 29$, $p < .05$) based on the statistical results of the paired sample t-test, which has also led to the substantial increase of the scores obtained by the participants in the experimental group after the experimental treatment.

Meanwhile, the results of the paired sample t-test for the Pre and Post-tests of the control group is as demonstrated in Table Six. A mean score of $M = 15.23$ is recorded based on the results of the learners’ Pre-test, while for the Post-test, a mean score of $M = 6.34$ is obtained. There is a significant difference ($t = -4.851$, $df = 29$, $p < .05$) based on the statistical results demonstrated by the paired sample t-test. Therefore, the scores after the experimental treatment have increased significantly among participants in the control group. However, the score improvement ($M$ difference) for the experimental group exceeded the control group by $15.62$. This points out the effectiveness of the treatment used for the experimental group, which is better than the control group due to the number of target words that learners from both groups have learned within the same period.

Discussion

Concerning the research question on the effectiveness of the use of the Visual Vocabulary to learn vocabulary for Form Two learners, both groups demonstrated an increment of the mean scores in the Post-test. Although both groups have shown improvement, the total improvement score in percentage for the experimental group exceeded the control group by a staggering $89\%$. The score improvement ($M$ difference) for the experimental group also exceeded the control group by $15.62$. Besides that, the participants in the control group showed inconsistent results as not all of them improved in their scores of the Post-test compared to the Pre-test. This indicates the effectiveness of the use of Visual Vocabulary to learn the target words among the participants in this study.

The same result was attained by Saad et al. (2017) with regards to the use of pictures in guessing the meaning of English words where visual images have helped the students to understand the meaning of a word through either cartoons or picture images. In the current study, the experimental group surpassed the control group in terms of their improvement score in percentage. This shows that the application of Visual Vocabulary is more useful for the participants to learn the target words compared to the implicit approach. Thus, the learners learn more effectively using Visual Vocabulary, where the teachers can apply Visual Vocabulary in their English language lessons so that it can enhance the learners’ ability to determine the target words. Eventually, it will contribute to the development of the learners’ vocabulary knowledge when the numbers of English words learned to increase significantly, which will enable them to use and comprehend the English language in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. As a result, this will contribute to the development of English language proficiency.

The current study included the use of Visual Vocabulary worksheet for the learners in the experimental group to assist them in learning the target words. This is aimed to scaffold the
learners’ needs to learn the target words better. Visual Vocabulary worksheets are included with annotation and connotation of the target words. This will help them to remember and comprehend the target words better for them to store the learned target words in their long-term memory. As a result, the effectiveness of learning the target words can be optimized among the learners. However, the learners need to use the target words learned from time to time so that the use of the words is automated, and it will not be easily forgotten.

Since the use of Visual Vocabulary addresses the existence of learners with different abilities (language proficiency), learners with a low level of vocabulary knowledge benefited significantly. Based on the findings, it is evident that the teachers should consider using Visual Vocabulary for the learners with low language proficiency to learn the target words as it is effective based on the results of the current study.

**Interpretation**

Based on the research question on the effectiveness of the use of the Visual Vocabulary to learn vocabulary among learners, the results of this study have proven that the use of Visual Vocabulary is effective among the participants. The mean difference of 21.9 is recorded between Pre and Post-tests of the experimental group, where the total improvement score in percentage is up to 131.1%. On the other hand, the mean difference of 6.4 is marked for the Pre and Post-tests for the control group, and the total improvement score in percentage is only 42.1%.

A previous study by Vedyanto (2016), for example, experimented with the use of pictures in a test format to evaluate vocabulary achievement among 41 secondary schools in Indonesia in which he provided two forms of tests, with and without the picture. The earlier study is different from the present study in terms of how the researcher conducted the vocabulary instructions. The current research focuses on using a new material (Visual Vocabulary) to help students learn the target words. In contrast, the previous study implemented tests with or without the picture to help learners acquire new vocabulary.

The present study can be an added value to the knowledge of the field in vocabulary learning as future research should use the results of this study to conduct further investigation to improve the learners’ ability to learn new words. Future research can compare the use of Visual Vocabulary with the new material or approach in vocabulary instructions, which aimed to help learners increase their vocabulary knowledge. Thus, the result of the present study is crucial for future research in the field of vocabulary learning and vocabulary instructions.

**Conclusion**

The findings from this study suggest that the use of Visual Vocabulary is useful in learning the target words among Form Two learners to a great extent where participants’ overall improvement score of the experimental group recorded 89% higher than the control group in terms of the total improvement score in percentage. The mean difference between both groups also indicates that the performance of the experimental group exceeded the control group by 15.5. Thus, the experimental group’s performance improved vastly compared with the control group. Learners’ attention to vocabulary items can be drawn by using productive vocabulary tasks (Folse, 2006). Teachers are advised to use Visual Vocabulary for the students to learn the target words,
which results in better retention. In the future, researchers may also consider inventing new materials or methods of instruction to increase learners’ ability to learn new vocabulary. The period of research can also be changed so that the results of a long-term study that involved vocabulary learning can be investigated, and the effectiveness can be compared to the short-term study.

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References


The Application of Visual Vocabulary


Implementation of the Sheltered Instructional Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model in the Saudi Classroom: EFL Teachers’ Perspectives

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Abstract
This study evaluates the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model and its application in the Saudi classroom from the English language teachers’ perspective. The study used a descriptive study design, with a selected sample of 300 male and female English language teachers from elementary and middle schools. The research conducted a group-wide comparison using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Findings illustrate that educational qualification, career status, job experience and training courses substantially affect application of the SIOP model in the classroom. Results also show that technical, financial capabilities and teachers’ qualifications enable the SIOP implementation in the Saudi classroom. The study suggests the implementation of the SIOP model for the sake of transitioning from the traditional English language education system to more advanced methods concerned with the systematic evaluation of English language teachers and classroom environment standards. The recommendation includes training teachers on the SIOP model and emphasizes providing other countries with the guidelines related to SIOP implementation in the English classroom.

Keywords: classroom environment, EFL teachers, sheltered instruction observation protocol (siop), English language learning

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Introduction:

Globally, the population of English language students is substantially expanding (Abdulmughni, 2019; Alrashidi & Phan, 2015; Daniel & Conlin, 2015). For instance, the current enrolment of language learners globally is about 1.5 billion (Beare, 2018). This vast number is particularly significant in Arab countries, where English is the sole foreign language used (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). The use of foreign language is significantly increasing, where an increasing number of Saudi citizens aim to improve their English competence (Al-Seghayer, 2014). However, understanding and learning become substantially challenging as the language differs from that of their native language.

Most studies confirm that these language difficulties lead to substantial achievement differences among the students (Alrashidi & Phan 2015; Daniel & Conlin, 2015). This situation is prevalent internationally between students who are less proficient in the instructional language, especially for first- and second-generation immigrants (Abdulmughni, 2019; Daniel & Conlin, 2015; Schneeweis, 2011). Different models are used for mitigating the educational gap between the native and the language learners, developing their subject-related skills as well as improving their language simultaneously (Daniel & Conlin, 2015).

Various studies highlight the significant role of the teachers in the classroom, who devise the educational goals creating a favorable environment and teaching new and related tasks (Koc, 2016; Valle et al., 2013). Abdulmughni (2019) also emphasized the role of teachers in facilitating language learners. Koura & Zahran (2017) advocate that instructions should be clear and specific, focused on providing a safe classroom environment aimed at improving student performance. One such approach deployed is of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model, an observational research-based instrument to measure sheltered instruction. SIOP is a concept-based methodology in teacher training that evaluates the teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom (Nitiprateep, 2015). SIOP uses several activities to help develop students’ second/foreign language competence and proficiency (Macías et al., 2012).

Saudi student enrolment in English learning courses continues to increase in public schools. However, the overall academic performance of English Language Learners (ELLs) is considerably low. Empirical evidence suggests that the use of the SIOP model serves as a useful model for enhancing ELLs’ academic performance (McIntyre et al., 2010). Applying it, teachers present curricular content concepts using tactics and methods that aid in improving content knowledge while simultaneously improving academic English skills. These strategies are employed by incorporating listening, writing, speaking, and reading skills into the curriculum. Its application is flexible as the teacher can adapt these strategies per the classroom configuration and students’ needs. These features of the SIOP model help improve the English language learning capacity of the students (Short, 2000).

Given the significance of the SIOP model, this study strives to (1) highlight lack of comprehensive research concerning SIOP use for teaching English and (2) highlight use of SIOP to improve students’ foreign-language acquisition. Currently, there are no research investigations into SIOP and its use for grammar learning, especially for improving listening skills and acquiring vocabulary knowledge. This is because the number of researchers who are studying student
achievement of English language acquisition is notably low (Ebtesam, 2017; Faraj, 2017; Gamlo & English Institute, 2019).

An improved classroom environment not only helps make school environments conducive to learning but also helps students engage in communication other than that in a classroom, i.e., in a natural setting. However, the SIOP model implementation in Saudi Arabia, related to language learning, has remained limited; primarily with regard to information concerning the perception of teachers related to SIOP. To bridge this gap, this study intends to identify the availability of the appropriate environment for SIOP application in the Saudi classroom, which is significant given the importance of the English language in daily life.

At present, proficiency in English is no longer a mere luxury or a status symbol but rather a necessity in all walks of life. SIOP application contributes by providing a solution to English language learning difficulties for middle school students. It also helps the ELLs, who are entering Saudi schools with low English proficiency as well as with educational background gaps. Most Saudi curricula, as well as instruction, are formed on the common misconception that students are already competent in speaking English upon starting school. Therefore, use of SIOP is an recommended approach for sheltered instruction, which is likely to assist English language learners in improving their overall language competence.

**SIOP Model Overview**

The eight components of the SIOP model include (1) lesson preparation, (2) building background, (3) comprehensive input, (4) strategies, (5) interaction, (6) practice or application, (7) lesson delivery and (8) review and assessment (Murillo & Alejandro, 2013). In lesson preparation, the teacher examines the planning process of the lesson, taking into consideration the content objectives and language, supplementary use of materials and activities’ meaningfulness. By building a background component, the teacher intends to focus on connecting the student’s background experience and prior learning as well as focusing on the development of students’ academic vocabulary. Comprehensive input includes the teacher’s consideration towards his/her speech, modeling of academic tasks, and the use of multimodal strategies for enhancing comprehension. In the strategy component, the teacher highlights the significance of the learning strategies, scaffolding instructions and higher-order thinking skills. The interaction component focuses on the encouragement the teacher supplies to the individual student for their use of oral language as well as promoting group interaction using appropriate language and content development (Murillo & Alejandro, 2013). Concerning the practice/application component, the students engage in teacher-instructed activities encouraging them to communicate with each other. Lesson delivery refers to the teacher’s presentation of the planned lesson objectives, which enables the students to engage in it as well as pace the learning. The last component of review and assessment is the stage at which a report is prepared based on the teacher’s progress with regard to the content concepts, students’ learning and students’ feedback.
Research Questions

This research concentrates on the following questions:
1. Are there statistically significant differences at the level 0.05 among the views of EFL teachers on the application of the SIOP model attributed to the classroom environment?
2. Are there statistically significant differences at the level 0.05 among the views of EFL teachers on the application of the SIOP model in general?
3. Are there statistically significant differences at the level 0.05 among the views of EFL teachers on the application of the SIOP model attributed to teacher qualifications?

Research Hypotheses

- H1: There is a significant difference in the teachers' perceptions toward implementing the SIOP model with regard to the classroom environment.
- H2: There is a significant difference in the teachers' perceptions toward implementing the SIOP in general.
- H3: There is a significant difference in the teachers' perceptions toward implementing the SIOP model with regard to teachers' qualifications.

Literature Review

The SIOP model is considered to be a practical approach for improving the academic performance of ELLs. According to Echevarría & Vogt (2010), sheltered instruction is a teaching method used for strategically teaching content to ELLs, improving their understanding of subject matter concepts. Various studies have shown that teachers need to be adequately trained and
provided with a coherent method for delivering mainstream classroom ELS instruction (Fregeau & Leier, 2015; Song & Samimy, 2015). Echevarria & Short (2014) recognized SIOP to be more effective than a content-objective teaching strategy.

Valle, Waxman, Diaz, & Padro (2013) stated that mathematics lesson plans based on SIOP are useful for improving ELLs’ performance. This provides students with a clear understanding of the directions, instant feedback, and better communication between peers and teachers. Phan’s (2015) research using the inductive approach showed how teaching conditions at an institute impact EFL teaching. The SIOP model emphasizes the use of different interactive strategies for deriving effective results. In the same context, Alsalihi’s (2020) research showed that use of visuals, such as posters, helped improve students’ interaction as well as vocabulary learning results.

Lowenstein & Brill (2010) explain how the SIOP framework enables teachers to view various group configuration practices while carrying out critical reflection on their practices and identifying their assumptions, which appear to be more favorable to them when compared to the students’ learning. Ross & Ziemke’s (2016) study notes that many educators disregard the traditional English-language-development standard, preferring to use the instructional model of language teaching instead. This model encourages teachers to consider their accountability and revamp their strategies for improving their students’ language development and literacy outcomes. Short (2013) argues that the use of coaching practices in the SIOP model implementation helps overcome difficulties related to its deployment.

The SIOP model systematically weaves content as well as language objectives into a grade-level curriculum, which is presented by English language teachers using modified instructions (Batt, 2010). Teachers consistently develop the academic language proficiency of the students in their lesson planning related to the developmental needs of ELLs. The model’s eight components are critical for ensuring that content is comprehensible for limited English proficient (LEP) students.

Korrin (2011) notes that teachers can learn how to use the SIOP model in their lesson planning through training and mentoring. This also helps them learn about techniques that they can later use in their classrooms. The SIOP model enables the application of content and language knowledge to the students in the classroom by integrating different activities. It also helps these students practice using new content knowledge and activities that encompass all language skills (i.e., writing, reading, listening, speaking) (Hayden, 2019).

In his paper, *Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol: Overview, Misconceptions, and Considerations for Implementation*, Prabjandee presents a historical overview of the SIOP model, discusses misconceptions and investigates the applicability of SIOP in the Thai context. The author argues the potential of the SIOP approach to develop language learning achievement and support English language learners in Thailand to become successful language learners (Prabjandee, 2016).

model. The findings showed that the CIPP model is based on four elements, C for Context, I for Input, P for Process, and P for Product; which is useful for evaluating the quality of education in schools (Pillay, 2011).

The Environment of a SIOP Classroom

The classroom environment refers to the learning environment that is created in the classroom. An effective classroom environment should maximize instructional time, support students, and motivate them to learn and succeed (Echevarría & Graves, 2007). Banks points to the formation of a positive learning environment using strategies that help manage classroom behavior of the students. These strategies are useful for reducing problematic behaviors that occur in the classroom (Banks, 2014). As Stewart explains in Classroom Management in the Online Environment, when appropriate preventive management strategies are applied, these strategies help to make the online learning environment as enriching and productive as that of the traditional classroom (Stewart, 2018).

Parsonson studied this point in Evidence-based Classroom Behavior Management Strategies (Parsonson, 2012). The techniques in the paper are consistent with those of the Saudi Ministry of Education’s Positive Behavior for Learning (PB4L) initiatives. The classroom environment is a significant factor affecting the learning of the student (Shernoff, Ruzek, & Sinha, 2017). A positive classroom environment is one in which students feel a sense of affiliation, where they trust others, and where they feel supported when tackling challenges, taking risks, and asking questions.

Teacher Role in the Classroom Environment

Various types of research on the classroom environment focus on the behavior of the teachers, particularly on their professional development, as well as the school’s cultural development, and its impact on the classroom environment (Hayden, 2019). Some researchers suggest that the complexity of a productive classroom environment exceeds the scope of a first-year teacher and advise that a new teacher’s training must include intense monitoring and mentorships, which can decrease their level of isolation and encourage productive as well as meaningful relationships within the school community (Patrick et al., 2007).

Measuring the Classroom Environment

Classroom environment measurement is based on three essential dimensions:

- The Relationship Dimension: Interpersonal relationship development of the students and the teacher in a classroom.
- The Personal Development Dimension: Each member’s personal characteristics.
- The System Maintenance and Change Dimension: Teacher attributes (i.e., control of classroom and order and change responsiveness).

These three dimensions and their various combinations are the focus of several types of research.

Teacher Professional Development (PD)

Teacher Professional Development (PD) is recognized as an instrumental tool that helps to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in Saudi schools. Traditionally, PD policy highlights
teaching from a deficit perspective, focusing on facets to be fixed. In PD, teachers work from a surplus of pre-existing knowledge, practices, skills, and teacher-related identities. The purpose of PD is to adopt novel methods for talking to, relating with, and acting towards students and other teachers (Battey & Franke, 2008). The SIOP model of teacher PD is designed to address the reality in the classroom that teachers confront when dealing with the need to provide both language instruction and content instruction simultaneously (Echevarría et al., 2011; Echevarría & Vogt, 2010).

Methodology

Study Design

This study followed the descriptive analytical approach to conduct an exploratory study on a proposal to establish a classroom environment in Saudi Arabia using the SIOP model. The descriptive approach was used to illustrate this feasibility, analyzing data collected from questionnaires that were designed to test the hypotheses of the study.

Study Population and Sample

The study sample consists of teachers who taught English Language courses in Saudi Arabia from 2018 to 2019. This sample was selected based on the set study objectives and their relevance for providing accurate findings. The inclusion criteria of the study required the respondents to be an English Language teacher in elementary and middle schools during the school year 2018/2019. A total of 73 middle schools and 55 elementary schools that follow multiple strategies and models in teaching English language were selected. The teachers from these schools were then grouped into two sub-groups, where the middle and elementary school teacher perceptions and differences concerning SIOP were explored.

Data Collection

A survey-based questionnaire gathered the data. This questionnaire was divided into four axes. Demographic characteristics were collected in the first axes. In contrast, the other axes dealt with the testing of the study hypotheses, where the questionnaire was presented for arbitration to a group of professors specialized in the field of study. The items of the questionnaire were based on a 5-point Likert scale. Table 1 shows the quantitative weights of the answers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>4–5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3–3.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral or conservative</td>
<td>2–2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposed</td>
<td>1.0–1.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Opposed</td>
<td>0.00–0.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The level of significance is High 3.67-5, Medium 2.34-3.66, and Weak 1-2.33.

The scale was calculated by using the equation (a), where the answer 1.333 was added to the final category.
After modifying the questionnaire’s clauses that evaluate its ability to test the hypotheses, it was distributed to the English language teachers, referred to as the intermediate stage. At the intermediate stage, three questionnaires were distributed. Of 350 forms distributed, 50 were considered invalid for analysis and were excluded. Thus, the net sample was comprised of 300 individuals, equivalent to 85.7% of the study population. This percentage is considered representative of the entire population, according to the scientific research standards.

To begin, a workshop was conducted where the teachers were introduced to the SIOP method, its uses and its effectiveness for improving language learning competence. After this workshop the questionnaire was provided to the teachers, which included questions related to the classroom environment axis. The researchers also asked questions related to the axis of using the SIOP model through the courses they received in the curricula and English-language teaching methods.

**Instrument Validity and Precision**

Questionnaire distribution among respondents with teaching experience tested its validity. The reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed using the Cronbach alpha, where the value of 0.958 was achieved. For all the queries, since they exceed the Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient, the acceptable percentage is 0.70. This means that the results, the responses from the English language teachers, of the questionnaire indicate its reliability in achieving the study objectives as shown in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>No. of items</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom environment</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The extent of application of the SIOP model</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The applicability of SIOP</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>0.958</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The questionnaire consisted of 51 statements to include all study variables. Statements 1-19 measured the classroom environment, statements 20-34 measured the SIOP model implementation, and statements 35-51 measured the SIOP applicability with regard to teacher qualifications.

**Statistical Analysis**

IBM software SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 23.0 was used for the analysis. Average and standard deviations for analyzing the answers of the sample members, along with the validity test, were performed. The groups were compared using a one-sample t-test, where the statistical significance was determined to be p-value <0.05. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was used to determine the extent to which the data followed a normal distribution.
Results and Discussion

Demographics of the respondents are presented in Table 3. With regard to the gender of the respondents, 55% were male and 45% were female. The majority of the respondents, 62.3%, hold Bachelor’s degrees, while 34.7% hold Master’s degrees. With regard to the teachers’ career levels, 46.67% were experienced teachers, 28.89% were practicing teachers, 22.22% were advanced teachers and 2.22% were expert teachers. These career levels indicate the respondents’ ability to understand the questionnaire’s queries and the study subject.

The results showed that 35.56% of the respondents possessed six to ten years of teaching experience, the most significant percentage of the study sample. Respondents with 11-15 years of teaching experience were second, 31.85%. This indicates that the majority of the respondents’ experience ranged from a moderate degree of experience to a relatively long period of teaching experience. This was followed by 21.48% with 5 years or less of teaching experience and 11.11% with sixteen years or more of experience.

Table 3
Respondent Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>No. Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced Teacher</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>46.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicing teacher</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>28.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced teacher</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert teacher</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five years and under</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>21.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 6 to 10 years</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>35.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 11 to 15 years</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>31.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 years and over</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
First Hypothesis

Null hypothesis 1 was tested based on respondents’ answers to questions 1 through 19 of the questionnaire. Table 4 depicts the statistical analysis of the issues related to the classroom environment in schools across Saudi Arabia as well as the importance of the role of the classroom environment in applying the SIOP model.

According to respondents of this study, the classroom environment in Saudi Arabia is conducive to activate and implement the SIOP model. The SIOP model provides the classroom environment with behavioral patterns that help teachers continuously improve their performance. The classroom environment in Saudi Arabia utilizes illustrative tools (dictionary, student books, etc.) and modern technology (e-education) and encourages building positive relationships between teachers and students. Such responses averaged between 4.11 and 3.66, with standard deviations ranging between 0.89 and 0.77. Previous research by Macías et al. (2012) supports the use of interactive tools and activities in students’ learning.

Table 4
Application of the SIOP model and Classroom Environment in Saudi schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Importance Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The classroom environment encourages implementation of the SIOP model.</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The classroom environment in schools provides social patterns to assist teachers in continuously improving their performance.</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The classroom environment in schools provides illustrative tools and modern technologies.</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The classroom environment has a role in building positive relationships between the teacher and the students.</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The classroom environment provides cognitive and non-cognitive goals.</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Importance Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The classroom environment provides patterns of critical thinking.</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>SIOP implementation needs to focus on the student, not the curriculum.</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>A classroom environment requires an effective teacher.</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Grouping students by age leads to a suitable classroom environment for English language learning.</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The classroom environment - in your school - provides mutual respect.</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The design of the classroom environment makes the SIOP model easier to implement.</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The classroom environment in schools encourages conversation and communication in L2.</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The classroom environment in schools makes it easy to apply the SIOP model in language teaching.</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The classroom environment contains the material items (desks, chairs, smartboard, etc.) that are needed for language learning activities.</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The classroom environment contributes to the acquisition of the four English language skills.</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The classroom environment meets the requirements for implementing new English language vocabulary and adds to the professional growth of the teacher.</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The location of the teacher is suitable for supervising the observation process inside the classroom.</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>The classroom environment in schools across Saudi Arabia enhances the capabilities of newly-graduated English language teachers.</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The classroom environment in schools across Saudi Arabia, through participation-observation and guidance, works to reduce the isolation of new teachers.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Importance Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>The classroom environment in schools across Saudi Arabia, through participation-observation and guidance, works to reduce the isolation of new teachers.</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Classroom Environment

According to the respondents, the classroom environment in Saudi Arabia provides students with the opportunity to achieve cognitive and non-cognitive goals. The classroom environment, using participation, observation, and guidance, works to reduce the isolation of new teachers when applying SIOP. Such responses averaged between 4.08 and 3.11, with standard deviations ranging between 1.10 and 0.68. A one-sample t-test was performed to verify the statistical significance of the first hypothesis. Table 5 shows the first hypothesis test results.

Table 5
t-test Assessment of the First Null Hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Null Hypothesis 1</th>
<th>Tabulated t value</th>
<th>Calculated t value</th>
<th>Indication Statistical</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Test result Hypothesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No statistically significant differences between teachers when it comes to the classroom environment (as shown through</td>
<td>1.984</td>
<td>13.482</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>Null H 1 is rejected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the views of the study sample at
the \( \geq 0.05 \ \alpha \) level of
significance).

Table 5 shows that the calculated \( t \) value of 13.482 is higher than the tabulated \( t \) value of 1.984. The statistical indication is 0.000. The rule of decision indicates acceptance of the null hypothesis when the calculated \( t \) value is below the tabulated \( t \) value. Conversely, it means the null hypothesis is rejected if the calculated \( t \) value is higher than that of the tabulated \( t \) value. Accordingly, rejection of the null hypothesis 1 is shown.

The alternative hypothesis, which states that there are statistically significant differences between teachers when it comes to the classroom environment in Saudi Arabia, as shown through the views of the study sample at the \( \geq 0.05 \ \alpha \) level of significance, is accepted.

**Second Hypothesis**

Null hypothesis 2 tested statements 20 through 34 from the questionnaire. Table 6 shows the statistical analysis results of the problems related to the issue of the SIOP model.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Importance Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>SIOP model implementation requires teacher effectiveness in classroom management.</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Providing teachers with training courses before applying the SIOP model is useful in the success of the model.</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Some teachers and researchers consider that the weakness of the curriculum is the reason for not applying the SIOP model successfully.</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>SIOP model implementation helps the training of teachers in educational and cultural psychology, language theory, and knowledge of scientific content.</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>The application of SIOP creates a culturally diverse classroom.</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>SIOP model implementation encourages students to use new content of English language knowledge practices.</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>The application of SIOP in Saudi Arabia needs legal support.</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Importance Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>The application of the SIOP model develops the teacher professionally, as it provides both language and content education.</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>The form of the SIOP model allows the teacher to teach students at different levels using different language skills.</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>The use of the SIOP model can handle large numbers of students in the classroom and within the school.</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>The SIOP model improves classroom management.</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>The SIOP model supports MALL* practice in the classroom.</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>The SIOP model accommodates gifted students in language learning.</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>The SIOP model overcomes the isolation students feel when using the Internet to learn language skills.</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>The SIOP model supports parameter behavior in the classroom.</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL)

*Note:* Numbers 1-15 above correspond to statements 20-34.

*Figure 3. SIOP Model View*
Table 6 shows that the responses to statements 20 through 34 had an average of 1.08 with a standard deviation of 1.32. Responses to statements 24, 25, 26, 27 and 30 had mean averages of 1.11, 1.06, 1.28, 1.23 and 1.27 respectively, with standard deviations of 0.95, 1.21, 1.37, 1.32 and 1.42 respectively.

This confirms the awareness of respondents regarding the implementation of the SIOP model in schools in Saudi Arabia. However, the views of the study sample demonstrate a low rate of approval from the respondents. This indicates that the application of the SIOP model in schools in Saudi Arabia is still in its initial stages; primarily regarding the availability of financial, material, and human capabilities necessary to implement it. This is confirmed by the responses to the queries of the third hypothesis, which emphasize the need for continuous improvement and development measures. At the same time, the responses of the respondents to the rest of the statements met with acceptance and an average level of importance, with the average ranging from 2.41 to 3.7, and the standard deviation ranging from 0.92 to 1.51. This confirms that the respondents are reluctant to agree to the implementation of the SIOP model.

This can be attributed to the lack of interest in continued education and training for teachers. The results from analyzing the data related to this hypothesis show, in general, that the respondents had a limited idea of what the SIOP model entailed. Thus, the mean of the combined questions reached 2.31, with a standard deviation of 0.68. A one-sample t-test was used to verify the statistical significance of the above results and to test the second hypothesis, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Null Hypothesis 2</th>
<th>Tabulated t value</th>
<th>Calculated t value</th>
<th>Statistical indication</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Test results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There are no statistically significant differences between teachers when it comes to applying the SIOP model in the classroom as indicated by the respondents at the level of considerable significance (≥ 0.05 α)</td>
<td>1.984</td>
<td>1.076</td>
<td>0.040*</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>Null H (2) is accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The differences are not statistically significant at the level 0.05 ≥ α

Table 7 shows that the calculated t value is 1.076, which is less than the tabulated t value of 1.984, establishing the statistical significance between the teachers when it comes to applying the SIOP model in the Saudi classroom and, therefore, indicating acceptance of the second null hypothesis.

Third Hypothesis

Null hypothesis 3 states that there is no statistically significant effect of the applicability of SIOP through the classroom environment in schools as shown in Table 8. Null hypothesis 3 was tested using statements 35 through 51 from the questionnaire. Table 8 shows the statistical analysis results of items related to the possibility of applying the SIOP model in the classroom environment in schools in Saudi Arabia.
Table 8
The application of the SIOP model and Teacher Qualifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Importance Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Teachers have the basic teaching skills necessary to implement the SIOP model.</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Teachers have clarity when applying the SIOP model.</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Teachers have knowledge and awareness of the SIOP model.</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Saudi teachers are familiar with the use of modern technologies to teach the English language.</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>If the SIOP model is applied to teaching the English language courses, there will be a significant cost to prepare teachers to understand the model.</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>The classroom environment in schools helps to teach the English language using the SIOP model.</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Teachers can apply the SIOP model to teach English.</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Teachers can analyze an SIOP model when teaching English.</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Schools in Saudi Arabia have access to financial and non-financial resources to enable teachers to apply the SIOP model in teaching the English language.</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Schools in Saudi Arabia are developing their information systems and databases.</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Schools in Saudi Arabia have the authority to apply all strategies and models for teaching the English language.</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Teachers are allowed to be creative in the classroom environment.</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Schools rely on long-term plans to train teachers on curricula and teaching methods within the classroom environment.</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
No | Statement                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Average | SD  | Importance Level |
---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-----|------------------|
48 | Teachers can differentiate between strategies and models when teaching English.                                                                                                                                  | 3.33    | 1.32| Medium           |
49 | Teachers can integrate students into the educational process creatively using various teaching methods to teach the English language.                                                                       | 1.48    | 3.42| Medium           |
50 | Teachers seek to develop and improve the methods of teaching the English language with available capabilities.                                                                                               | 1.28    | 3.95| High             |
51 | Teachers are trying to reduce the cost of implementing the SIOP model.                                                                                                                                          | 1.31    | 3.98| High             |
Total                                                                                                                                       | 2.63    | 2.26| Medium           |

Note: Numbers 1-17 above correspond to statements 35-51.

**Figure 4. SIOP Application Possibility**

Table 8 pertains to those statements regarding teachers having the skills and qualifications necessary to implement SIOP. It also addresses the application of advanced strategies, the clarity of application procedures, and the practical steps to use them. It provides insight into the teachers’ knowledge and skills concerning the importance of using the SIOP model and of the advantages.
in achieving the appropriate classroom environment. It also addresses the provision of vocational, educational staff based on procedures at various stages of the application of the SIOP model. It further reflects the financial and technical ability of the education system to utilize the requirements and capabilities of the SIOP model to achieve the English language teaching goals.

The results also emphasized the importance of the availability of measures to develop and improve performance in the short- and long-term levels as well as raise the parameters and level of excellence during the implementation stages. This is confirmed by the increase in the mean of the average questions combined, 2.63 with a standard deviation of 2.26. Statements 50 and 51 confirmed the interest of teachers in Saudi Arabia to develop and improve measures in methods of performance. These two statements had an average of 3.95 and 3.98 respectively, with a standard deviation of 1.28 and 1.31 respectively. A one-sample t-test was used for statistical significance verification of the results and to test the third hypothesis, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9
\textit{t-test Assessment of Third Null Hypothesis}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Null Hypothesis 3</th>
<th>Tabulated $t$ value</th>
<th>Calculated $t$ value</th>
<th>Statistical indication</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Test results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No statistically significant effect of the possibility of applying SIOP due to teacher qualifications in Saudi Arabia classrooms per the views of the study sample at the level of significance ($\geq 0.05 \alpha$)</td>
<td>1.984</td>
<td>5.653</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>Null H 3 is rejected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in Table 9, the calculated $t$ value is 5.653, which is more than the tabulated $t$ value of 1.984. The statistical significance is 0.000, indicating null hypothesis rejection.

\textit{Normal Distribution Test}

Utilizing the responses of the sample members to confirm or deny the study hypotheses, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was used. It tested the extent to which the data followed a normal distribution. The significance level of the study variables was higher than that of 0.05. This indicates that the data follows a normal distribution. Table 10 shows the significant value for each hypothesis.

Table 10
\textit{Normal Distribution Test}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Null Hypotheses</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number one</td>
<td>0.063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number two</td>
<td>0.078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number three</td>
<td>0.093</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall study findings showed that optimal results concerning the implementation of the SIOP model have not yet been achieved. This might be due to the fact that teachers have never
been trained in the SIOP model in their course curricula and English-language teaching methods. Therefore, they are not familiar with the SIOP model.

Conclusion

Educational qualifications, career status, job experience and training courses are each of great importance for teachers when it comes to applying the SIOP model to the classroom environment in schools. Stakeholders have materialistic, technical and financial capabilities that make it possible to implement the SIOP model. Findings indicate that English-language teachers surveyed during the 2018/2019 academic year gave incorrect or other responses, which suggests that they did not have a good understanding of processes related to the classroom environment. Specifically, the level of the teachers’ knowledge of the subject area ranged between 35–56%. This shows that 95% of the teachers cannot identify and distinguish between concepts related to the classroom environment.

Recommendations

The findings of the research emphasize the need to consider teachers’ qualifications concerning the application of the SIOP model. Similarly, different awareness programs should be executed for better implementation of the SIOP methods. This research should prove useful for countries that apply the SIOP method; helping them to consider the many factors that affect SIOP application. Implementation of the SIOP model supports the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s ongoing efforts to move away from a Western educational system and towards a more advanced, Arab system of English language learning - an improved and enhanced pedagogy with a compelling portfolio of proven academic benefits.

Based on this study’s results, the importance of the classroom environment and the SIOP model for English language teachers is evident. Overcoming the difficulties that hinder the implementation of the SIOP model and applying the model properly are important tasks. The Saudi Ministry of Education could address these tasks by sponsoring the preparation and development of training explaining the SIOP model as it should be used in the classroom environment.

These findings suggest that the SIOP framework should be implemented at a sizeable school-based level, where teachers can familiarize themselves with it and understand it as a part of their academic responsibilities. Policymakers can also introduce coaching and mentorship programs for improving this study’s results, extending language support services as well as creating subject-specific content for enriching the students’ learning experience.

Limitation

Despite the significant results of this study, there exist certain limitations. The generalizability of this research is low, given its inclusion of only teachers in Saudi Arabia. This can be improved by performing more research on a population with different demographical characteristics. The study also suggests conducting more inquiries on this model, taking into consideration teaching facilities and the possibility of applying it to other scientific disciplines and in other countries. Future research can also explore the perception of the students and the impact of the teacher’s training on the SIOP method.
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References


Omani Students’ Coping Strategies in an English Medium Engineering Programme

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Rustaq College of Education, Oman
Department of English Language & Literature

Abstract
This study explores how Omani engineering students utilised coping strategies whereby they negotiated the challenges inherent in studying through the medium of English (EMI) both the students and their teachers utilised several coping strategies to overcome EMI-related problems and difficulties. A qualitative research design with a semi-structured interview with twelve engineering students as the main method of data generation. The interview data were coded thematically and analysed inductively. Key theories were chosen to inform the study design and help in interpreting and understanding the study data. The study seeks to answer the following question: How did Omani engineering students respond to EMI challenges? The data analysis and interpretation are presented according to the emergent themes and a priori themes. The identification of themes offers insights into understanding Omani students’ learning experiences through the medium of English and presenting the participants’ stories about their challenges and difficulties in college. These experiences are categorised and presented here based on the themes rather than through ascription to the individuals to which they relate.

Keywords: coping strategies, English medium, EMI challenges, engineering programme, Omani students

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1. Introduction

1.1 The role of English in engineering education in Oman

In Asian and Gulf countries, policymakers responded to an initiative for educational reforms and the internationalisation of higher education by adopting the English medium of instruction despite the challenges it manifested (Nyguen et al., 2016). This motivated the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) to expand their higher education and adopt EMI. EMI is defined as “the use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language of the majority of the population is not English” (Macaro et al., 2018, p.37).

Higher education (HE) in Oman is undergoing rapid expansion and transformation in the GCC and Oman in particular (Baporikar, 2012). This growth demands good English language education and resources. However, proficiency in English language and mastering its skills have been identified as a major challenge in HE (Al-Shemli, 2009). Public and private higher education institutions (HEIs) in Oman teach their science-based and humanities, majors, in English (Al-Mahrooqi, 2012) and English is playing a vital role in Oman as a tool for the country’s integration into the wider world and for the ‘Omanisation’ process as the government endeavours to replace the expatriate workforce with Omani nationals (Al-Mahrooqi and Tuzlukova, 2010, p.13). Advancements in engineering and technology are of the utmost importance for the 21st century in the globalised world (Tamtam et al., 2010). It has been argued that “engineering graduates require an ever-increasing range of skills to maintain relevance with the global environment of the new millennium. Multi-lingual skills are considered a salient element in the make-up of the new global engineer” (Riemer, 2000, p. 91). Research has shown that there is a significant knowledge gap concerning the requirement for international communication among engineering graduates in the Arab world (Tamtam et al., 2010).

In this global context of a growing tendency for English to be used as a medium of instruction in educational contexts, even when the majority of the population speak a local language (Vu, 2014:2), the English language has been receiving political, economic and legislative support from the Omani government (Al-Issa, 2014). The German Engineering Association (VDI) urges engineering graduates to know foreign languages, cultural awareness and teamwork skills (cited in Schulz, 2008, p.146). Adopting English-medium higher education encourages universities towards internationalization (Phillipson, 2009). Moreover, research findings in EFL/ESL generally, and in the Gulf region, in particular, assumed that learning core subjects through the medium of English will help students to develop their language mastery and proficiency (Holi, 2020; Ekoç, 2020; Jiang et al., 2019; Jiang and Zhang, 2019; Chapple, 2015; Macaro, 2015; Al Mahrooqi and Tuzukova, 2014; Belhiah and Elham, 2014; Shohamy, 2013; Ali, 2013; Becket and Li, 2012; Chang, 2010).

When Omani secondary school graduates join colleges of technology to study on one of the technical courses they are expected to join their specialties on arrival, but because of the adoption of EMI in their target professional programmes and because their English language proficiency is often inadequate, they generally have to join the English foundation programme to improve their abilities in that language (Al-Husseini, 2009). Most of the Omani students entering HEIs are required to sit a placement test, however, students who perform exceptionally well on the placement test (86% or above) qualify to sit for a Level 4 Exit Exam. Upon passing this Exit
Exam, students go directly to the credit programmes, provided that they meet all the other admission criteria for the target specialisation, including the minimum test of English as a foreign language (TOEFL) score. If they fail to pass the Level 4 Exit Exam, students are enrolled in Level 4 and then take the general foundation programme, which contains language skills, basic mathematics, Information Technology (IT), and general learning skills (Carroll, 2009; Al-Mamari, 2011 cited in Baporikar, 2012:15). Additionally, the foundation programme aims to equip the students with the skills required to cope with their specialities and to meet a pre-requisite for the post-foundation programme. Upon the completion of their foundation programme, they need to opt for the post-foundation English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses which are credit courses that function as an extension to the foundation programme. These EAP courses aim to provide students with report writing, presentation, public speaking and communication skills (http://www.hct.edu.om/centers/english-language-center/programmes-and-courses).

These courses are expected to bridge the gaps between students’ existing proficiency and the linguistic demands of their specialisations and EMI challenges. Despite this, many Omani students have been experiencing multiple difficulties in coping with EMI in their academic programmes. This study considers their experiences and perspectives on the use of EMI and their coping strategies in their engineering education better to inform the EAP and EMI provision and pedagogy and to gain a greater understanding of the challenges they face.

2. Theoretical background
2.1 The socio-cultural perspective
This study draws on two main theories which include socio-cultural theory as an overarching framework of reference to help to illuminate, conceptualise and understand engineering students’ learning experiences through EMI and their coping strategies in HE in Oman. Other theoretical perspectives, which were also considered to make sense of the data in this study, were associated with classroom translanguaging. Wang (2006) points out that socio-cultural theory draws heavily on the work of Vygotsky (1978), and others such as Lemke (1990), Rogoff (1990) and Wertsch (1991). Vygotsky, (1978) views learning as something which is embedded within social events and which takes place when a learner interacts with people, objects and events in the environment. One of the fundamental concepts within the sociocultural theory is mediation, which refers to the part played by other significant people in the learners’ lives, whereby their learning is enhanced by selecting and shaping their learning experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). This concept was used to inform my thinking about engineering students’ learning experiences in a particular college, which was the site for my fieldwork. Many people played a significant role in the engineering students’ lives including, importantly, EAP teachers, family members, engineering teachers, and the students’ classmates in the context in question. Vygotsky (1978) claims that the secret to effective learning lies like the social interaction between two or more people who possess different levels of skill and expertise. Therefore, mediation and collaboration are of vital importance in knowledge acquisition and appropriation through interaction. In the context of the present study, the world that socio-cultural theories refer to is the academic world, and the culture involved refers to the academic culture in which this study was conducted. Specifically, that is learning engineering through English as experienced by a group of students in a particular college in Oman. Fieldwork revealed that engineering students in the present study used their first language (L1) in some situations in their classrooms as a means to mediate their learning and as a strategy to cope with
their EMI challenges and difficulties. Socio-cultural perspectives on learning conceptualise learning as a social act and language are considered as the fundamental tool mediating knowledge acquisition and development. Issues related to interaction, collaboration and peer support that enable learners to be engaged in their learning are central to this study.

2.1 Translanguaging perspectives on learning
The learning experience is one of the main factors that influence students to study engineering in addition to the choice of careers in engineering after graduation (Balakrishnan and Low, 2016). Emergent bilingual students face the challenge of developing their disciplinary knowledge and this can be particularly challenging in content areas such as science (Esquinca, 2014). There are two main types of classroom translanguaging: student-directed and teacher-directed. They both have pedagogical value in the bilingual classroom, and they are used for scaffolding and enabling learning and promoting dialogic teaching (Melo-Pfeifer, 2015). Therefore, exploring Omani engineering students’ learning experiences through the medium of English is of vital importance for informing EMI pedagogy in general and the EAP in particular. One aspect of the Omani engineering learning experience is the students’ use of L1 and translanguaging to cope with their English-medium engineering programmes and to communicate with their classmates. Translanguaging is increasingly used within the academic community as a medium of communication and as an approach to the teaching of science-related courses in the field of bilingual education (García, 2009). It is defined by Canagarajah (2011) as “the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system” (p. 401). Moreover, it refers to the interrelated discursive practices and “forms of hybrid language use that are systematically engaged in sense-making” (García et al., 2011. p.5). However, it has moved away from the traditional terms code-switching, code-mixing, code-meshing, borrowing, etc. Translanguaging can facilitate communication and interaction among students and their teachers, and it can also help students to express their ideas. In this regard, as García and Leiva state (2013):

The concept of translanguaging goes beyond code-switching. Code-switching refers to the mixing or switching of two static language codes. Translanguaging, resting on the concept of transculturation, is about new languaging reality, original and independent from any of the ‘parents’ or codes, a new way of being, acting languaging in a different social, cultural and political context. Translanguaging brings into the open discursive exchanges among people in ways to recognize their values of languaging. In allowing fluid discourses to flow, translanguaging has the potential to give voice to new social realities (p. 216).

Researchers have claimed that translanguaging opens the door for new understandings of the bilingual classroom and learning in general (Mazak and Herbas-Donoso, 2015). Translanguaging is different from code-switching and code-mixing. In this regard, García and Sylvan (2011) explain:

Translanguaging includes code-switching – defined as the shift between two languages in context – and it also includes translation, but it differs from both of these simple practices in that it refers to the process in which bilingual students [and we would add,
According to García and Kleifen (2010) and Esquinca et al. (2014), translanguaging mediates learning for bilingual learners and includes practices such as shifting between text in one language and discussion in another language, discussing in one language but checking comprehension in another language and using both languages flexibly. It has potential pedagogical implications (Gort, 2015). As mentioned above, the Omani engineering students who participated in this study were using both English and their L1 (Arabic) during their engineering lectures to communicate and help each other to understand concepts and instructions. Translanguaging practices could become mediational tools to create and expand zones and opportunities for learning (Martin-Beltran, 2014). Additionally, it seeks to promote pedagogical practices that consider bilingualism as a positive resource rather than as a problem (Lasagabaster & García, 2014). It goes beyond the traditional concept of bilingualism as it seeks to include the minority language and its community whilst ensuring that it and the language of instruction is not seen as competing. It claims that bilingual speakers have a unique repertoire which they can use strategically to facilitate effective communication (Lasagabaster & García 2014). Translanguaging is not just about mobilising one language to reinforce the acquisition process of another, or to enhance the understanding of unknown structures or words by relying on familiar ones. It is crucially about employing multiple semiotic resources to create meaning and to give meaning to the learning and teaching process. It has the potential to empower the critical voice and consciousness of the learner and to impact classroom participation positively (Melo-Pfeifer, 2015). It can help learners to figure out the meaning of a particular vocabulary item or scientific concept (Sayer, 2013). Moreover, Baker (2006) suggests potential educational and pedagogical advantages of translanguaging, namely, it may promote a deeper understanding of the subject matter; it may help in developing the language, and it may help to bridge and create cooperation between home and school. Further, Lewis et al. (2012) claim that translanguaging promotes biliteracy.

The present study draws on the theoretical perspective on translanguaging due to its pedagogical value for developing teachers’ and learners’ awareness to the importance of students’ L1 as a mediating tool which fosters learning and the teaching process (Langman, 2014). Wahi (2013) conducted a study on English as a second language (ESL) engineering English language academic literacies in Malaysia and he noted that in the process of struggling to understand the course materials and unfamiliar subjects, students adopted translation strategies and other strategies, such as relying heavily on dictionaries, to aid comprehension and construct their utterances and compositions. Students acknowledged the fact that they were thinking cognitively in their mother tongue and subsequently translated their ideas into English to meet their academic requirements (Wahi, 2013). The study suggests that learning English language literacy is a complex and highly contextualised process, particularly in the multi-lingual context of Malaysian engineering education (Wahi, 2013).

It could be argued that EFL/ESL higher education institutions need to accept the need to adopt a policy that accommodates L1 use, particularly among learners with a low level of English as a second language (L2) proficiency. This could ease the transition for the students into tertiary education, which requires them to adapt to a very different culture of learning to their previous
Arabic-medium schooling (Mouhanna, 2010). A study conducted by Kim, Kweon and Kim (2016), investigated Korean engineering students’ perception of EMI and L1 use in three major engineering universities. Their results make compelling arguments against EMI while demonstrating students’ invariable support for L1 use in the EMI classroom. Most of the students did not select EMI classes voluntarily. They showed low confidence in their English ability and consequently did not feel that their English skills were sufficient for EMI classes. Additionally, many students were not convinced that EMI classes helped them to improve their English skills. The study suggested that students’ and their teachers’ involvement in EMI must not be compulsory as their English might be inadequate for EMI classes. Furthermore, the benefits of L1 use in EMI classes need to be recognised by instructors, students and administrators. They argued that from second language acquisition, L1 use has been considered detrimental to learners’ acquisition of L1, limiting their exposure to L2. However, numerous studies have shown that L1 can function as an effective academic tool for clarification, emphasis and repetition of valuable content, as it may help to strengthen the rapport between students and their instructor, which is a key strategy for classroom management. They argued that the use of Korean in EMI engineering classes would accelerate students’ comprehension of complex materials. They claimed that L1 use in a bilingual and multi-lingual situation is a natural phenomenon and must be recognised and utilised as a legitimate, effective instructional strategy (Kim, Kweon & Kim, 2016). L1 use in EMI classes has always been fraught with controversy; however, both L1 and L2 can provide important communicative support for both students and teachers (Lasagabaster, 2013). Moreover, Auerbach (1993) claimed that L1 use in the classroom offers a sense of security and validates the learners’ lived experiences, allowing them to express themselves clearly. Macaro (2009) states that the use of L1 in teaching has been challenged by research findings. Firstly, because it has been observed that the vast majority of teachers use L1 to varying degrees, even in those contexts where an only-L2 language policy is expected to be implemented; secondly, because the L1 can function as a cognitive tool in L2 learning and teachers can facilitate learning by making reasoned references to the L1; and thirdly, because code-switching is a natural part of bilingual interaction. So, the use of LI in EMI classes can tackle many disciplinary issues (Lasagabaster, 2013).

Despite research findings that demonstrate that teachers make ample use of the L1 (Littlewood & Yu, 2011), practices such as code-switching and translanguaging are still controversial. The use of L1 EMI and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), if judicious, can serve to scaffold language and content learning in EFL/ESL contexts, as long as learning is maintained primarily through the L2 (Lasagabaster, 2013). Teachers need to be able to appropriately interpret bilingual phenomena and use students’ L1 as a resource for learning in their classes (De Jong and Harper, 2015).

3. Methods
A qualitative research design which was underpinned by a case study approach was employed in this study to offer the opportunity to study people in their natural settings and to make sense of and “interpret the phenomena in terms of meaning people bring to them” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008, p.4). Drawing on the interpretivist qualitative paradigm, the study adopts an explorative descriptive case study that focuses on the experiences of a group of Omani students and their accommodation strategies they used to handle EMI challenges. Semi-structured interview with twelve engineering students from a college of technology was used as the main methods of data collection.
Semi-structured interviews are considered as one of the most powerful ways we have of understanding others" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.168). The interview data was coded thematically and analysed inductively. The study attempted to address the following fundamental question: What were the coping strategies used to handle those challenges? A qualitative methodology was utilised to help developing understandings of participants’ experiences and views in detail and depth. Purposive sampling entails studying information-rich cases and yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalisations (Patton, 2002, 230). Therefore, this study utilises a purposive sampling procedure usually used with a multiple structure population of many groups. All these measures were applied with regards to the interviews. The cooperation of participants was requested, their voluntary participation was obtained, and they were informed of their right to withdraw at any time should they so wish. All participants were provided with a voluntary consent form, which included the purpose, and nature of the study, outlining ethical procedures that protected their identities and guaranteed their anonymity and privacy. Informed consent includes the purpose of the study, who the information is for, how it would be used, what would be asked in the interview, how the information would be handled and what benefits were involved for participants being interviewed (Patton, 2002). The analysis was undertaken through the identification of the main themes and codes which offered a thorough and in-depth understanding of the issue under investigation.

4. Findings
4.1 Omani engineering students’ EMI coping strategies

The Omani engineering students participating in this study utilised several coping strategies to handle their EMI language-related challenges and difficulties. The issue of coping strategies appeared as a recurrent theme in both the interviews and observational data analysis. Some of these strategies seemed to be more effective and widely used than others. This section presents Omani students’ coping strategies which are divided into the use of mother tongue as a compensatory strategy; use of translation dictionaries and technology; in-class task-related strategies; the use of social support from peers, groups and family members; use of personal strategies and lecture comprehension-related coping strategies.

4.2 Using the mother tongue (Arabic) as a compensatory strategy

Students frequently used Arabic, their mother tongue, as a compensatory strategy to avoid communication problems and breakdowns when they asked and answered questions. Some of the students referred explicitly to their use of Arabic or translanguaging, in their engineering classes. This was also noticed during observations where students were interacting and discussing questions with their classmates in Arabic.

S3 thought that Arabic was useful for his study:

To some extent, Arabic has helped me. If I haven’t understood anything or a point, I can ask my friend to explain to me in Arabic. If I were asked to study engineering in English or Arabic, I would go for English because if I study in Arabic, I wouldn’t find a job to secure my future. Some engineering professors are Arabic speakers who can simplify things and say them in Arabic and we have found that much more useful and beneficial for us. Some of my friends use Arabic to explain the new
instructions and machines’ manuals to us. Friends use Arabic to write their assignments and then translate them into English using translation technology (S3).

S3 realised that the Arabic-speaking engineering professors were using Arabic to mediate learning and to explain things which the students could not understand in English. In cases like this, translanguaging can promote a deeper understanding of the subject matter (Baker, 2006). In addition to using Arabic as a useful coping strategy, students also relied on peer support as another coping strategy. Using Google Translate was yet another coping strategy whereby the students translated English engineering texts which were required for their assignments and projects into Arabic.

Other engineering students identified holding the same view of additional roles of Arabic in their engineering classes as a compensatory coping strategy:

It has several roles to play in the classroom and outside. People learn better when they are instructed in their mother tongue and several countries, such as Japan and China, have been using their local languages as medium of instructions. They have been developing in education, technology, industry, etc. Arabic should be used even as an auxiliary language besides English to help students to understand the content. I usually use Arabic along with English to discuss content with my classmates and argue with them. On some occasions, we mix Arabic and English when we study in groups. We use Arabic when we study for our exams and write our assignments and projects. Sometimes we write everything in Arabic and then we use machine translation to translate it into English. Arabic was beneficial for us (S4).

Translanguaging interactions were plain to see and regularly evident during classroom observations as a student carried out their engineering-related tasks. Another of the interviewee stated:

My mother tongue has played many positive roles such as in mathematical calculations. Moreover, some teachers use Arabic to explain difficult concepts and problems which relate to engineering. We use Arabic with each other to discuss problems and how to solve them. We use Arabic to give examples from real life to explain stuff and relate them to our everyday life (S5).

Another student highlighted the wide use of Arabic among students both on campus and in their hostels and its role in engineering education:

Arabic is widely spoken across the campus and in the hostel as well. We use Arabic to discuss technical things in some cases instead of English because it is our mother tongue and it helps us sometimes to comprehend abstract things and concepts in a better way. We sometimes translate the whole handout to understand it in a better way. Arabic-speaking teachers are more likely to digress to Arabic to explain complicated things to us. Moreover, they give examples from reality to explain or demonstrate ideas for us. The equivalent of certain technical words is given in Arabic and then just remembered as we studied it during our school days. Arabic
has helped us in studying not only engineering but also studying the English language as well (S7).

Some of the students showed that they had thought about EMI and its role and necessity. On the other hand, some were against EMI. They repeatedly stressed the importance of studying engineering through the medium of their mother tongue (Arabic).

I think engineering should be taught in Arabic and there should be an English course taught along with the degree to help to communicate with companies (S6).

One of the students interviewed, however, favoured the opposite view with regards to the use of Arabic in engineering classes:

I am against the idea of using Arabic as a medium of instruction for several reasons: first, if you work for big companies then you will be sent for courses and training abroad, so how would you cope with courses because they will be run in English... Second, the vast majority of engineering textbooks, references and machine manuals are in English. Third, high proficiency in English is one of the requirements in joining big companies in Oman such as Petroleum Development Oman (PDO), Occidental Petroleum (OXY), Schlumberger, etc. I did not use Arabic to cope with engineering difficulties though. I sometimes find it difficult to understand some of the exam questions. I try to read the questions several times and sometimes I asked the teachers about some of the keywords in the exams (S1).

S1 and a quarter of the participants illustrated the stance against the use of Arabic as a medium of instruction in engineering education in Oman.

The above cases demonstrate the importance and significance of the students’ mother tongue, Arabic, in their engineering study. It is not always possible for students to use only English to study or to cope with their engineering tasks and this can give rise to a range of conflicting perspectives as well as, perhaps, some inner conflicts. However, the majority of the participants interviewed, 7 out of 12, were firmly in favour of studying through English; 4 out of 12 were committed to it, and 2 were ambivalent.

4.3 Using translation, dictionaries and the internet

The Omani engineering students participating in this study utilised a variety of coping strategies during their engineering course. These strategies were shaped by the type of task and activities required by the engineering classes. However, they reported that they used Arabic translation, bilingual dictionaries and websites to cope with EMI-related challenges and difficulties. One student pointed out:

Arabic has helped us in knowing difficult concepts and terms. I usually used research engines and Google translators to find out meanings of new terms and concepts. Some teachers use Arabic to help us to write such assignments and they
translate them into English using technology. Lack of exposure to terms was a problem for us but Arabic has helped us a lot to know new terms and concepts. Sometimes the content is easy but the language used is very difficult so Arabic could help us complete assignments without clear guidelines and rubrics, and we use it concerning that issue. However, the translation process of the technical terms and concepts is time-consuming. We chat together with our classmates in Arabic to discuss things related to lectures before we go to the classroom or ask questions to our teachers and professors (S8).

The interview extracts above further highlights the role of the mother tongue (Arabic) as one of the most prominent coping strategies used by students to handle their EMI challenges and difficulties. Points such as those made here were frequently repeated and make clear that recourse to Arabic was made within a range of contexts to clarify thinking. Teachers were aware of this, and Arabic-speaking tutors were particularly valued because of their capacity to directly engage with their students in their mother tongue.

The use of Arabic was a prominent coping strategy used by students to handle their EMI-related challenges and difficulties. Students stated that they frequently used Google Translate for finding out meanings and writing their assignments and projects. Additionally, Arabic helped them to discuss and revise concepts and technical terms with colleagues before their classes. Moreover, they used Arabic in some cases to ask questions and seek clarification from their Arabic-speaking professors.

S6 stated that:

Yes, our mother tongue was a great help for us in translation and interpreting technical terms and concepts. I use dictionaries to help me translate technical words into Arabic. Most of our engineering studies and courses related to physics and therefore I had to know all the physics-related terms in Arabic. The teacher was an Arabic speaker and I used to understand and comprehend 97% of the lectures (S6).

S10’s interview revealed that bilingual dictionaries were a great help for them:

For technical terms, I used to seek help from my father, consult [bilingual] dictionaries and use technology to find out about their meanings and pronunciations. They have been helpful to me. Some of friends and classmates have been helpful in group discussions and presentations (S10).

An engineering teacher confirmed that students sometimes used their mobile dictionaries to find out meanings of technical words and concepts during their classes:

Sometimes you would be surprised that they don’t know the very basic words, which I think they should have. I just don’t know what the structure of their high school curriculum is. It should have been discussed way, way back. When students
encounter one word that’s not familiar to them they just did they take their phone, punch the word in and know what the meaning of that word is (Eng. T4).

Bilingual mobile dictionaries seem to have been frequently used as a compensatory strategy to help students cope with their discipline-specific terms and concepts. Both the participating students and the teachers were aware of the importance of using bilingual dictionaries in their engineering studies.

4.4 Usage of peer, group and family support

Students spoke about their use of peer, group and family support as significant coping strategies in their engineering studies. This was indicated by one of the interviewees:

I sometimes seek help from teachers and friends. Moreover, family members who are educated can help in this regard. I talk to my friends in Arabic and they explain everything in Arabic and this has been helpful for me. Going to a teacher during office hours and asking them to repeat what they have taught is another useful coping strategy (S8).

This social support was considered as an effective coping strategy for this particular student, though not all would have similar cultural capital within their family network. Observational data revealed that students were utilising various cooperative learning methods to help and support each other in their engineering classes.

One student stated:

I usually seek help from my elder brother who is an engineer. Additionally, my friends and classmates help me to understand things which are not clear enough for me. I sometimes ask my teachers for further help and explanation (S5).

He had access to friends and family members who were able to help him with assignments and projects. He considered this support network an effective way to cope with his study. Other students stated:

As for assignments, I usually seek help from friends and teachers, and they have been helpful for me. My brother is a civil engineer and he sometimes helps me with my projects and assignments (S3).

I used to go to my uncle to chat with him in English and he has been helping me with my English and assignments too. I believe that nothing is easy in life and there is no gain without pain (S6).

It hasn’t been easy for me to overcome such challenges, as some of these were there since my schooling. My friends were a great help to me in terms of explaining difficult things for me in Arabic and simplifying equations in English. Some of them were helping me with projects and lab reports. We sometimes organise group reading and discussions and they have been helpful for me to overcome such problems. Translation technology was a great source of help for me in some cases (S7).
In some cases, students resorted to hiring an English tutor to improve their English to cope with their EMI-related challenges. The help of family members is usually referred to as ‘mediation’ in Vygotsky’s terms, one of the fundamental concepts in sociocultural theory. It highlights the role played by other significant people in the learners’ lives. Mediation and collaboration are of vital importance in the process, whereby knowledge is acquired and appropriated through interaction. In short, the data reveals that students utilised various cooperative learning paths, many informal and outside the institutional sphere, to help and support themselves and each other in their engineering studies.

4.5 Opting for English tuition classes
One of the coping strategies employed by students, in addition to hiring a personal tutor, was that of attending English tuition classes.

Some students participating in this study had been involved in English courses for nine years, including full-time language instruction (not less than 15 hours a week) for one and a half years in the foundation programme. In other cases, the language deficiencies may have been made worse by ineffective instruction, inadequate curricula, demotivated or ill-prepared teachers and a scarcity of real-life and ‘push-and-pull’ factors to use correct English, etc. However, to assess the incidence of these variables would require further research into factors such as Intelligence Quotient (IQ), college preparedness, motivation, socio-economic background, policies, college infrastructure and facilities, funding, personal study habits, recruitment criteria, assessment methods and curriculum design. What may well be asserted is that some of the students encountered many language-related difficulties in their engineering study and sought help from their relatives, friends, teachers on campus, private tutors and each other. Indirectly, this indicates that their college English classes were not enough (objectively and subjectively) to help them to develop the kind of English which is needed to successfully study engineering courses in English. English tuition classes are quite common in Oman at all educational levels, however, not all students can afford them – which both creates and perpetuates educational inequality. Consequently, many students felt the need to access private tuition classes during their free time to improve their English to meet their study needs. Such students did not feel able to rely on their college English classes alone. These classes are not affordable for all students; however, some of them had the necessary financial capabilities.

Having discussed tuition classes as a coping strategy, the analysis will now move on to look at the personal coping strategies which the participants considered to be important, necessary and effective for dealing with their EMI challenges and difficulties.

4.6 Using personal coping strategies
The issue of the use of personal coping strategies emerged from the analysis and the data set as a salient and recurrent theme. All students emphasised the importance of their strategies in helping them to cope with their EMI-related problems and difficulties.

S6, a student, pointed out:

One of the most effective coping strategies which I have been using is my effort. I usually write a list of words and I keep repeating them all day until I internalise them (S6).
This quote illustrates that some students develop their coping strategies which, incidentally, is a natural and necessary dimension of becoming an autonomous learner. In this case, the strategy meant glossaries and repeating words, concepts and terms throughout the day. Engineering students do not complete their secondary schooling knowing detailed engineering jargon. However, in the case of Omani students, the enculturation process must happen in a foreign language. And it is more difficult for Arabic-speaking Omani students to deduce the meaning of technical words, many of which are often etymologically linked to two other completely unknown languages, namely Greek and Latin.

In the same vein, a student reported:

We usually use many strategies to cope with such language difficulties. I do some reading and revision of the materials given before my class. We asked senior students to help us. I approach other teachers to help me understand the point. I used Google translator to translate the texts or instructions into Arabic and then I can understand them in a better way (S8).

The fact that some of the students are doing this shows that they are (gradually) taking charge of their learning.

Another student who used personal coping strategies to handle his EMI language-related difficulties stated:

For technical terms, I used to seek help from my father, consult dictionaries and use technology to find out about their meanings and pronunciations. They have been helpful to me. Some friends and classmates have been helpful in group discussions and presentations (S10).

S8, a student, added:

I used many strategies to overcome my writing problems. I kept writing many drafts and submit them to my teachers to get feedback. After that, I rewrite the draft and now I feel my writing is far better than before. I sometimes feel that I don’t have enough ideas while writing and I think that academic writing is boring and difficult. I find it difficult to construct a sound argument which can be supported by evidence and examples. Moreover, I feel writing is time-consuming. During exams, I write a lot to express myself clearly for simple things which could be expressed in simple sentences. Seeking help from friends and classmates has been a common strategy. I think the ‘over-writing’ [writing at length, including several drafts] strategy has been the most effective strategy which has helped me to deal with writing problems. Repetition has been an effective strategy to help us to deal with my writing problems (S8).

The above interview extract illustrates yet another coping strategy which is a study that students normally develop on their own. S8 was in the habit of writing drafts and submitting them to his teachers and then reflecting upon their feedback. In this way, the student seeking to improve his writing. He did this even though he found academic writing difficult, boring and time-consuming. For exams, he would over-write a simple thing and use simple sentences to make his arguments...
clear. It seems that writing essays over and over again worked for him, too. This suggests that rewriting is important for mastering writing, and students could learn (and be encouraged) to write effectively by rewriting good and useful texts.

S9 also revealed that he combined two of the above-mentioned strategies: rewriting and making glossaries:

For my writing, I am working hard on it by rewriting and getting comments and feedback from my teachers but the spelling problem is still there. For technical terms and vocabulary, I developed my own technical terms glossary and it has been helpful for me (S9).

To sum up, the students’ responses demonstrated that Omani EMI engineering students use a variety of personal strategies to overcome their EMI-related problems. They use these strategies to manage their challenges and cope with their study needs and requirements. Although their collaboration and interaction with their classmates, teachers and family members in a shared practice were significant for their learning, they still developed their coping strategies to handle their EMI language-related difficulties. This suggests that it was not enough for them to depend on others to help with their study difficulties; they also needed to proactively and creatively develop personal coping that worked for them.

5. Discussion
5.1 Omani engineering students’ coping strategies
My data shows that engineering students developed their mainly own intuitive/informal coping mechanisms to help themselves study in English. For example, they frequently resorted to their mother tongue (Arabic) as a compensatory strategy, used online translation applications and bilingual dictionaries, sought the support of their peers, group and families, and hired English tutors. At the metacognitive level, they also developed their strategies and applied lecture comprehension strategies.

Something that repeatedly emerged during the interviews was that the students (and occasionally also the teachers) continuously switched between English and Arabic, especially when explanations were needed and certainty was paramount. However, Wilkinson (2005) found that EMI can lead to ineffective content learning if the instructional technique of code-switching between L1 and L2 is adopted.

The findings of the present study seem to be consistent with other findings related to coping strategies used by EFL/ESL students (e.g. Holi, 2020; Al Zumor, 2019; Tsai, & Tsou, 2015; King, 2014; Joe and Lee, 2013; Marie, 2013; Suliman and Tadros, 2011; Alginahi et al., 2009; Saat and Othman, 2010; Hung, 2009; Peacock, 2001; Spack, 1997; Flowerdew and Miller, 1992). Students tend to use similar coping strategies whenever they have to study in English as a foreign language. For instance, Marie (2013) found this when examining the coping strategies of multi-lingual students in Rwanda who were studying in English. One of their most common strategies was translanguaging, i.e. the use of other languages at their disposal to handle their academic tasks. In the Omani case, a telling example of translanguaging was given by S11.
When sometimes we have group discussion or reading we use Arabic to exchange information and aid understanding and comprehension. Some concepts were really difficult to be understood in English, therefore, my friends explained them in Arabic and we were able to understand them quickly and in a better way. Arabic translation was useful in assignment writing and when practising exams (S11).

S11 exemplified the extent to which L1 was used by students in their engineering classes. Students were supporting each other through the medium of Arabic even though the lectures were delivered in English. This implicitly suggests that translanguaging could be used in some cases to scaffold learning as it can help learners to figure out the meaning of a particular vocabulary item or scientific concept (Sayer, 2013). L1 need not be completely excluded from college. On the contrary, its use in EMI classes ought to be recognised by instructors, students and administrators. Second language teaching practitioners have often believed that L1 use is always detrimental to learners’ acquisition of L2 as it presumably limits their exposure to the target language. However, numerous studies have shown that L1 can function as an effective academic tool for clarification and emphasis, and to summarise and repeat important content. It can also help to strengthen the rapport between students and their instructors – which is a vital strategy for classroom management. The use of L1 in EMI classes can even help with many disciplinary issues (Lasagabaster, 2013).

The findings of this study showed that teachers adopted some other (besides the use of L1) coping strategies to deal with the challenges presented by EMI. For example, they simplified materials, code-switched, repeated their exposés and re-emphasised key points. These findings are consistent with Saat and Othman (2010), who studied Malaysian students’ EMI coping strategies in an undergraduate programme. Their findings are consistent with those of the present study. S11 stated that:

I often asked teachers to repeat the taught points and concepts several times and to simplify the content and materials. Moreover, I seek help from my father’s electricians and mechanics [the father was an employer]. They explain things practically for me. In lab sessions, I sometimes ask my friends to explain things for me in Arabic. For my writing, my sister was a great help. She sometimes helps me with my reading tasks by explaining the main ideas of texts. I used the internet and online dictionaries to know the meaning of technical terms and I sometimes ask friends to help me with the meaning of unknown technical words (S11).

The study at hand, focusing on the engineering discipline in Oman, corroborated what previous EMI studies conducted in the other disciplines in other parts of the world have indicated, that is that EFL/ESL students tend to employ a range of coping strategies to deal with English-medium lectures. For instance, Evans & Morrison (2011) reported that Hong Kong University students were able to study in English by developing learning strategies, relying on peer support and working hard. King (2014), too, found that both EFL students and teachers in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) used several strategies in English-medium programmes, including avoidance, simplification of materials, reduction of content and code-switching into Arabic. Additionally, Flowerdew and Miller (1992), as well as Airey and Linder (2006), showed that the most salient
coping strategies used by EFL students were asking questions after lectures, reading the sections related to the lecture before class, asking for the help of peers or lecturers, attempting to concentrate harder and note-taking. In short, it transpired from the literature and my findings that EFL/ESL students in different disciplinary and geographical/cultural contents tend to use similar coping strategies to deal with the challenges posed by English-medium higher education programmes.

6. Conclusions, implications and recommendations

Omani engineering students participating in this study revealed that they adopted several coping strategies to deal with EMI language-related challenges and difficulties. The key coping strategies used were the use of their mother tongue (Arabic) as a compensatory strategy; using translation, bilingual dictionaries and the internet; usage of peer, group and family support; opting for English tuition classes; using personal strategies, and some other lecture comprehension-related strategies. Some of these strategies were used more than others. For example, the use of the mother tongue (Arabic) as a compensatory strategy was the most widely used coping strategy. This acknowledged the role of mother tongue on learning content subjects when delivered in English. Therefore, it could be argued that the use of mother tongue (L1) in content classes is not always problematic; it could be used to help students understand some of their content courses which they could not fully understand in English. Additionally, mother tongue (Arabic) was used by students to help each other during lectures and this was noticed during classroom observations. The translation was also another widely used coping strategy used by students to overcome their EMI challenges and difficulties.

Students reported that they used technology-driven translation machines to translate their assignments, engineering textbooks and materials to have a good understanding of them and make sense of them. These machine translation tools were perceived by students to be effective in helping them to translate the engineering content written in English into Arabic. It was evident that translation was creating opportunities for learning within content courses. However, teachers believed that these translation tools were not effective and that they mistranslate concepts in some cases, which might mislead students and impede their comprehension and understanding of those concepts and ideas. In the literature, it is evident that translation is one of the widely adopted coping strategies used by EFL/ESL students to handle their EMI-related challenges and difficulties (Querol-Julián & Camiciottoli, 2019; Sayer, 2013; Lasagabaster, 2013; Marie, 2013; Saat and Othman, 2010). This study suggests that mother-tongue had a positive impact on studying engineering through the medium of English and these students recognised its importance and significance in helping them to study engineering. It scaffolded students’ learning, particularly those with low language ability and proficiency levels. In considering whether it is appropriate for students to use their mother tongue in content classes, Langman (2014) argued that the reason for using L1 (translanguaging) is its pedagogical value for developing teachers’ and learners’ awareness and its importance as a mediating tool which fosters learning and the teaching process. It could be argued that EFL/ESL higher education institutions need to accept the need to adopt a policy which accommodates L1 use, particularly among learners with a low level of L2 proficiency. This could ease the transition for the students into tertiary education, which requires them to adapt to a very different culture of learning to that experienced within their previous Arabic-medium schooling (Mouhanna, 2010).
Evidence also indicated that students used their group and family support as a coping strategy. They sometimes sought help from friends and family members in dealing with EMI and engineering-related challenges. This social support, which Vygotsky (1978) called ‘mediation’, is one of the fundamental concepts within the socio-cultural theory, which refers to the part played by other significant people in the learners’ lives, whereby their learning is enhanced by selecting and shaping their learning experiences. The cooperation within groups and help from family helped Omani students to learn, to complete their assignments and to effectively address their engineering tasks. Additionally, Omani engineering students used L1 in some situations in their classrooms as a means to mediate their learning and as a strategy to cope with their EMI challenges and difficulties. Moreover, students employed a range of personal strategies in addition to including opting to pay for English tuition classes to overcome the challenges presented by studying through the medium of English. These were the key strategies employed by Omani engineering students to minimise their EMI-related challenges and carry out their engineering tasks and activities successfully.

The study also provides an insight into students’ coping strategies, revealing unexpected strategies used to handle their EMI-related challenges, such as L1 was being utilised by EFL/ESL students to cope with their English-medium programmes. Moreover, the study shows that there is clear evidence that EMI in practice operates in a complex web of informal language switching. The study makes another essential methodological contribution. It provides a crucial contribution with regards to qualitative methodology in this context as most of the studies, which were carried out in this particular context, were survey-based studies. The study contributes to EMI research as most studies conducted in this area were from critical perspectives. Those studies were focused on problematising EMI and its use and implementation in EFL/ESL contexts.

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References


The Effect of Cultural Schemata on EFL Learners’ Reading Comprehension Ability

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Abstract
This research study aims to investigate the impact of cultural schemata on the process of reading culturally-loaded texts, and whether the use of pre-reading activities recompenses for the absence of cultural familiarity. In this regard, EFL readers bring to the text a wide range of experiences. Consequently, such diversity of prior knowledge influences their perception and interpretation of foreign language texts. Here comes the role of cultural schemata, which is indeed a very critical role. How do cultural differences in background knowledge influence student’s reading comprehension ability? To recognize the effect of cultural schemata on comprehension, it is essential first to understand the significant role that background knowledge plays in the reading process. Therefore, to carry out this research, a selection of reading comprehension tests was assigned for an experimental and a control group in a quasi-classroom experiment of first-year EFL students at Ibn Khaldoun University (Tiaret). While the experimental group was provided with pre-reading tasks to activate their background knowledge, the control group received no treatment. We collected data from 40 participants, and the results show that many EFL learners belonging to the control group display a lack of cultural schemata since their prior-knowledge is not activated, which may well impact negatively on their reading practices. By contrast, participants of the experimental group performed better in the comprehension test than those in the control group. In brief, there is a correlation between activating students’ background knowledge and the increase of reading comprehension ability.

Keywords: cultural schemata, conceptual knowledge, interactive process, reading comprehension, schema theory

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Introduction

Reading comprehension is one of the fundamental language skills that EFL students should efficiently learn. Mainly, at the university level, a considerable concern is devoted to EFL students since they encounter various complex reading materials gradually than ever before. English as a foreign language (EFL) reading process is complicated since it requires the interplay of diverse factors, and absence or presence of any one of these factors can lead to success or failure of the reading process. Students in Algerian universities encounter deficiencies and reading obstacles in language skills, which are necessary for successful comprehension. Limited exposure to cultural-based texts, lack of motivation and cultural schemata, the inability to make inferences, analyzing concepts are some factors that have resulted in an inadequate performance of Algerian students in the reading skill. Although some learners master the English language appropriately, they cannot comprehend the meaning of written texts. The vocabulary and grammar are the basic units of any word. Without appropriate knowledge about these units, it seems impossible for learners to comprehend the topic they are reading. Furthermore, cultural experience influences the process of reading comprehension of cultural-based content. At least, readers’ cultural schema is the crucial point in reading. If students hold sufficient cultural schemata, they will quickly understand the contents of the text. Therefore, there is a need to improve EFL reading practices in Algeria.

Scholars Anderson, Reynolds, Schallert, and Goetz (1976) studying the reading process have shown that participants’ schemata affect their reading comprehension. Among other reading approaches, schema theory plays a significant role since it brings tremendous satisfaction to individuals. It enables readers to understand and learn how to attach meaning to reading materials. However, no study has been carried out in the Algerian context to investigate the effect of cultural schemata on EFL reading comprehension of first-year university students. There is a gap in the literature, and the present study aims to fill it.

Theoretical background

Reading skill

Harmer (2001) states that a reader uses a variety of clues to understand what the writer is implying or suggesting, in that way the reader is able to see beyond the literal meaning of the words. Schema, which is defined as background knowledge that enables the reader to make predictions for more successful interactions, plays a vital role in that interpretation since successful interpretation depends to a large extent on shared schemata Harmer (2001) states that a reader uses a variety of clues to understand what the writer is implying or suggesting, in that way the reader is able to see beyond the literal meaning of the words. Schema, which is defined as background knowledge that enables the reader to make predictions for more successful interactions, plays a vital role in that interpretation since successful interpretation depends to a large extent on shared schemata

This section reviews some of the theoretical perspectives on EFL reading before looking at the studies conducted in the use of schema theory for promoting reading comprehension. Reading methods have been in a state of change in the preceding century. The outcome is a multiplicity of definitions. Traditionally, experts in reading (Ruddell, 1976; Clarke and Silberstein,
1977) consider reading as a mere passive process in which the readers decode or decipher the written symbols without conveying their prior knowledge to interact with the text. Lately, reading has started to be described as interactive rather than simply being active. Kim (2010) argued, “a text by itself does not carry meaning, but rather guides readers in retrieving meaning based on their prior knowledge.” (p. 36). For that reason, EFL readers may vary in the interpretation of the intended meaning. The reader contributes more information to comprehend what they read, relying on specific concepts that are already stored in their memories. This view is strengthened in the light of Harmer (2001), who claims that a reader uses a variety of clues to understand what the writer is implying or suggesting, In that way the reader can see beyond the literal meaning of the words. Schema, which is defined as background knowledge that enables the reader to make predictions for more successful interactions, plays a vital role in that interpretation since successful interpretation depends on shared schemata.

Several studies Anderson and Pearson (1984) Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) and others believe that readers’ previous experiences, knowledge about the world play a significant role in comprehending texts. This was known as “schema theory.” This paper takes into account those studies that deal with the impact of schemata on the process of EFL reading comprehension.

**Schema Theory**

Schema theory is one of the essential doctrines of learning that is applied to language skills learning and teaching. In this regard, the term schema was firstly introduced by the philosopher Kant (1781) and by the British psychologist Bartlett (1932). The philosopher Kant (1781) used the concept schema. He suggested that concepts could have meaning only when they were related to something the individual already knew. That is to say, the individual possesses general concepts to which he refers more specific ideas. Subsequently, Rumelhalt (1980) introduced the term in reading. In this vein, schema theory assumes that written texts do not carry meaning by itself. Instead, a text-only provides hints for readers as to how they should construct meaning relying on their previously acquired knowledge. This prior knowledge is identified as the readers’ background knowledge or schema, which contributes fundamentally to the process of comprehension. In this respect, schema can simply refer to the connection of mental structures, signifying readers’ understanding of everyday activities (Brown, 2001; Harmer, 2001; Nassaji, 2002). Moreover, An (2013) highlights the role of schema theory in reading comprehension. She proposes that a reader is involved in the process of constructing meaning through the interaction of pertinent schemata and elements of the text.

**Schema Theory and Its Implication in Teaching Reading Comprehension**

Different scholars conducted a variety of experimental studies, and the achievements have revealed that the theory plays a considerable role in improving learners’ reading ability. It is the background knowledge that allows the reader to make expectations about the text and contribute to text comprehension and interpretation. This paper takes into account those studies that deal with the impact of cultural schemata on EFL learners’ reading comprehension.

Gagné, Yarbrough, Ueidemann, and Bell (1985) conducted a study about the effects of text familiarity on recall. They find through this experiment that reader’s exposition to highly familiar passages made sense to them, and they can learn as well as recall data in a meaningful way.
other words, Gagné (1985) affirms that the knowledge a reader has about a subject promotes elaborative processing of novelties, which helps when reconstruction is required at recall or retrieval. This view is reinforced in the light of the experiment carried out by Johnson (1982). She inquired students to read a passage that enclosed familiar and unfamiliar information about the topic of Halloween. Half of the text is about things that they have experienced two weeks before and half about the facts of Halloween that are unknown even for native speakers. Results showed that students recall and comprehend texts significantly with familiar themes more rapidly than books with unfamiliar items. When the writer and the readers’ cultural schemata are different, the readers usually do not comprehend the texts appropriately. Readers are estimated to reach the intended meaning by linking prerequisite knowledge with what they read (Nuttall, 1998; Anderson, 1999; Alderson, 2000; Grabe and Stoller, 2002).

Accordingly, Carrel (1987) examines the effects of both contents and formal schemata on the process of reading comprehension of EFL students. The results indicate that students encounter more difficulties with unfamiliar content than a familiar one. Furthermore, Students find the texts easy to read and perform better on the tests when the content and the form are both familiar, and even when the form is unfamiliar, but the content is acquainted.

All the studies reviewed in this section reinforce the importance of text familiarity and prior knowledge for comprehension and retrieval. In this light, the lack of background knowledge causes difficulty for the learners, especially while reading culturally-loaded texts with unfamiliar concepts. If the reader has no experience and prior knowledge about the content, then he or she will not be able to achieve the intended meanings that of the text.

**Cultural Schemata and Reading Comprehension**

Significant number of scholars (Anderson, 1979; Johnson, 1982; Steffenson and Joag Dev, 1984) have shown that cultural knowledge – which is part and parcel of background and topic knowledge is enormously significant in comprehending texts. Cultural schemas are interchangeably labeled cultural models, are schematic representations of generic concepts allocated among cultural members. Moreover, the anthropologist Palmer (1996) speculates that cultural schemata involve rituals like funerals, weddings, national holidays, and a host of other cultural phenomena. In this path, students belonging to different cultural groups may interpret the same text differently. So, it is vital to be aware of cultural diversity and its impact on the learning process. Another closely related view about the close relationship of cultural schemata to reading comprehension is the one suggested by Ozyaka (2001) that the concept of cultural schema is culture-specific world knowledge. This specific knowledge depends on ceremonial as well as historical culture.

For EFL learners, cultural-specific knowledge is fundamental in text comprehension owing to cultural differences between the target language and the native language. To illustrate, readers who have not grown up in American culture will encounter difficulties when reading, “I found coal in my stocking, cocked the tree over which started a fire, and my grandfather wore a red suit…” Readers with the cultural knowledge of Christmas morning in the U.S.A would have few problems understanding. In contrast, others might encounter serious problems, for they have no prior concept about Christmas experience schema that they can activate, which will hamper them...
from processing the information they are reading more effectively. Thus, to comprehend a text, appropriate cultural schemata and scripts are considered necessary.

Unfortunately, in most Algerian EFL classes, teachers do not apply adequately warm-up activities to activate the reader's background knowledge or schema. When teachers use reading materials about the target culture or any topic, it is necessary to give background knowledge to students. Due to the shortage of research in this area in Algeria, this study seems significant. The primary purpose of the study is to determine whether schema activation has any effect on the reading comprehension ability of cultural texts among Algerian EFL learners or not.

**Research Questions**
The present research study attempts to answer the following research questions.

**Q1** Does the cultural familiarity of EFL learners affect the process of reading comprehension?

**Q2** Does the lack of cultural background knowledge of EFL learners affect their reading comprehension ability?

**Q3** Does the activation of background knowledge of learners ensure a better understanding of reading comprehension texts?

**Q4** Does the use of pre-reading activities influence the process of reading comprehension?

**Methodology**
For the sake of investigating the validity of the research questions mentioned above, empirical research conducted in the English language teaching department of Ibn Khaldoun at a state university in Tiaret.

Subjects recruited in this experiment are first-year university students of English. Participant’s ages vary between 18 and 22 years old. Most of these participants are females. These EFL learners studied English as a compulsory school subject for almost seven years. (Four years at Middle School and three years at High School). They came from surrounding villages as well as nearby cities of Tiaret. They are assigned to different sections to form mixed-ability groups. Moreover, the participants belong to two groups experimental and control group, and each group involves 20 students.

An experiment conducted to examine the influence of cultural familiarity, and schema activation on learner’s reading comprehension ability. Participants in both groups received the same tests; the only difference is that the experimental group received pre-reading tasks to activate their background knowledge on the topic. However, the control group doesn’t receive any pre-reading tasks.

**Procedures of the study**
The researcher attained the permission of the head of the department to conduct the research with first-year EFL students. The researcher was a participant teacher because she was a part-time teacher in the English department. Thus, the participants (experimental and control group) received a reading comprehension test. The researcher exposed students in the experimental group to a text entitled "why people get tattoos?". The text portrays the story of Jack getting a tattoo, and tackles the various reasons behind getting a tattoo in North America. It entails cultural
information to furnish an image of the use of symbols by youth referring to peer pressure, media influence, and personal expression as the most common reasons for wearing tattoos. The students in the experimental group received pre-reading tasks. Prediction questions, pictorial context. Also, a picture was shown to the students to make them more familiar with the aspect of tattoos.

The researcher administered the while-reading task and post-reading task to check any potential short-term memory effects. While the experimental group was going through a treatment of pre-reading tasks, the control group received no particular treatment.

**Results and Discussion**

In the pre-reading task, the participants of the experimental group expressed their opinions about tattoos freely. Based on the answers, the majority of them said that they like tattoos to express their beliefs, feelings, and fashion too. One of the participants indicates that if she is allowed to wear a symbol, she will put a butterfly sign on her body. In addition to that, all the participants revealed that they do not have any tattoos on their bodies. In this case, the majority of EFL students like to have a tattoo on their bodies. However, they are not allowed by their religion. Indeed, this was the ultimate obstacle for EFL respondents to wear a symbol. Moreover, most of the participants (girls) demonstrate that they use another form for tattooing, which is called (Henna) with its reason of practice, such as in ceremonies of marriage,…etc.

In this vein, the question of wearing a tattoo has been raised, but this time is more particular to the learners’ belief. Thus, the respondents belonging to the experimental group expressed their opinions differently as well as vividly. The majority of their answers reveal that they hold the view that tattooing is not only found in American society; it also exists in their culture. Despite the alleged religious prohibition, tattoos are common among people of Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey, and some Maghreb countries. Another participant states that the fact of doing a tattoo is a sign of imitating non-Muslims. Also, one of the respondents claims, “tattoo is a symbol of imitating ‘Kuffar’ because only non-believers adorn themselves this way.”

Concerning learner’s reactions to this question, we notice a firm rejection of the act of wearing a tattoo. One participant indicated that “wearing a tattoo causes a lot of diseases.” So, another category of students considers it as something dangerous and not suitable for their health. By contrast, student’s answers belonging to the control group showed a sign of being too passive and no sign of enthusiasm, unlike the first group. They showed limited involvement through these statements: “Our religion doesn’t allow us to wear tattoos.” Another student said, “I have seen somebody wearing a tattoo which contains the name of Allah.”

3) Do you know anybody who has a tattoo? Describe it

As a response to this question, most of the participants state that many people wear tattoos regarding several myths and beliefs. For example, some of the participants described the emblems of their grandmothers like a symbol of the sun on the cheek. Another participant refers to his foreign friend Allen from America, who has a tattoo of a musical note, and he is studying music technology.

4) What is your general opinion of tattoos? Do you find them attractive, ugly…etc?
Based on this question, EFL participants revealed that visible tattoos are rarely widely accepted in the Algerian society, unlike other communities. Besides, each student has his/her vision of tattoos. A category of them (boys and girls) find symbols as something attractive to decorate their bodies. However, other participants find it ugly and consider tattooed people as risk-takers, promiscuous, heavy drinkers. According to participant’s responses, we see two different views (positive and negative perspective).

5) Why do people have tattoos done? The respondents react towards this question, referring to several reasons such as holding the attention of others, personal freedom like drawing the initial letter of their beloved one, and self-expression, visual display of political or religious affiliation.

**Descriptive Statistics**

Tables 1, 2, and 3 showed the distribution of data and their frequencies of the while-reading task and post-reading tasks among control and experimental groups.

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The participant’s while-reading task scores were analyzed through the use of SPSS to see whether there were differences among the experimental group and control group according to their gained scores. After the results of SPSS revealed that there were differences across the results.

Tables 1 and 2 demonstrates descriptive statistics giving the mean scores gained by each treatment group included in the study. As seen in the table, the experimental group had a higher
mean score than control group regarding the text of tattoos in the while-tasks (experimental mean = 18.20, control mean = 17.30 for correct answers), incorrect answers (experimental mean = 1.80, control mean = 2.70). Furthermore, in the third while-reading task (experimental mean = 16.00, control mean = 14.40 for correct answers), incorrect answers (experimental mean = 4.00, control mean = 5.60). It is clear from the comparative tables that the means of experimental group participants who received a pre-reading task outscored the highest mean scores. However, the participants who read the text without pre-reading tasks scored lower results. Although the students are familiar with the topic of tattoos, schema-based activities resulted in improving their comprehension of the reading materials. This result provides an affirmative answer to support the claim that schema activation can enhance comprehension ability among EFL learners. Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4 show the charts based on the results from the Tables above.

**Figure 1** Mean Differences for Task 2 in Experimental Group

**Figure 2** Mean Differences for Task 2 in Control Group

**Figure 3** Mean Differences for Task 3 in Experimental Group

**Figure 4** Mean Differences for Task 3 in Control Group
The mean score of the experimental group on the post-reading task was 16.00 and 4.00. However, in the control group, most of the student’s scores fell between 11.57 and 8.25 in the post-reading task. This table indicates statistically significant differences between groups. The results point out that the mean values of the treatment groups gained in the study are not the same.

The statistical information showed evidence that activating learner’s cultural schemata via pre-reading activity instruction was successful. One can notice from the successful performance of the experimental group in the post-reading questions, which indicate that the participants benefited from pre-reading instruction in developing their reading comprehension.

The present study investigates the effect of cultural schemata on the reading comprehension ability of EFL students. In general, the results indicate that reader’s cultural background knowledge plays a significant role in their comprehension of culturally-loaded texts. It is noteworthy that the results of the current study are in line with those of Anderson (1979); Johnson (1982); Carrel (1987); Grabe and Stoller (2002), and Alptekin (2006) who point out that schema theory is valuable in helping learners to improve their reading ability. Every act of comprehension
The Effect of Cultural Schemata on EFL Learners’

The concept of the schema has been a significant theoretical construct in reading comprehension.

The difference between the control and experimental group’s performances in comprehension proposed a strong probability that the students whose background knowledge of the reading text is activated, EFL learners can understand the content of the topic easily. Moreover, one assumed reason could be that the pre-reading task enables experimental group readers to activate their suitable schemata more efficiently than the control group readers. Furthermore, the experimental group who received a pre-reading task could likely recompense for the absence of cultural familiarity, and possible vocabulary deficiencies by relying on prior knowledge to deduce the meaning of the unknown words or expressions. This claim strengthened in the light of the empirical research of Pulido (2004, 2007), who claimed that the background knowledge of readers, can enable lexical inferencing during reading.

It is worthwhile concluding from the outcome of our reading comprehension test experiment that activating the background knowledge of readers can improve their reading comprehension ability of culturally-loaded texts. This conclusive evidence, in turn, confirms our hypothesis that helping learners activate their cultural schemata successfully reinforces their reading comprehension ability of culturally-loaded texts.

Conclusion

According to the results of this research study, we deduced the following summary. First, cultural schemata affect the reading process. If readers are familiar with the content of the topics, they will read the text easily. Second, activating learners’ background knowledge is the initial step leading to comprehension. For that reason, the use of pre-reading activities prepares students for the content of the text, and while-reading activities contribute to reading comprehension. In the final step, post-reading activities enable readers to confirm and clarify any vagueness.

Despite that, reading activities enhance and facilitate the act of reading comprehension. The relevance of cultural schemata is an essential component for ensuring comprehensible input. In short, the results of this study give the impression to answer the research questions positively and firmly back up and validate the stated hypotheses. The outcomes of this research study suggest a positive relationship between reading comprehension and students’ cultural knowledge. In other words, the student's comprehension ability will increase, and they will perform better if their background knowledge about western customs, attitudes, and ways of life is strongly activated.

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Appendix A

**Task 1:**
1. Do you like tattoos? Why, why not?
2. Do you have a tattoo?
3. Do you know anybody who has a symbol? Describe it.
4. What is your general opinion of tattoos? Do you find them attractive, ugly, etc.

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5. Why do people have tattoos done?

Task 2: Match the vocabulary word with the best synonym or definition.

1. Peers   A. Rank or level in society.
2. Stranger B. People in a similar group usually based on age or status.
3. Identify C. People who are interested in issues related to protecting the environment.
4. Status   D. To be cut with a knife or sharp object.
5. Beliefs   E. A persons’ values of right and wrong.
6. Media    F. Something that is unique to each person.
7. Bravery   G. A person that you don’t know.
8. Environmentalists H. Sources of communication such as TV, radio, or the internet.
10. Individuality J. To show, or name, who or what something is.

Task 3:
   a) Read the text and answer the following questions,

1. According to the text, what are the three most common reasons why a person gets a tattoo?
   A. pressure from their peers
   B. it is healthy
   C. influence from the media
   D. a way of personal expression

2. According to the text, which of the following are common ways that people show they belong to a particular group?
   A. wearing a tattoo
   B. wearing special clothes
   C. wearing a distinctive uniform
   D. wearing a special kind of socks

3. According to the text, media images are linked to __________. Choose all that apply.
   A. wealth
   B. status
   C. success
   D. debt

b): Read again and answer the following questions.

1) Why do people get tattoos?
2) How does Jack think about people who get tattoos?
3) What are the possible artistic reasons for getting a tattoo?

Task 5:
1. What are your personal beliefs about tattooing?
2. What has influenced your ideas on tattoos?
3. How does your particular cultural group view tattoos? (Ethnic, Religious, Youth vs. Adults,
4. Express your opinion: You work at a music store. Everyone dresses very stylishly. Most people have piercings and tattoos. You start to make new friends; they suggest you get a tattoo. You don’t like tattoos. What do you say.
Difficulties in Pronouncing English Morphemes among Saudi EFL Students at Albaha University. A Case Study in Almandag

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Almandag, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Abstract
This study attempts to investigate difficulties in pronouncing English morphemes among Saudi EFL students at Albaha University, in Saudi Arabia. The researcher tries to answer different questions in this study. Do students pronounce English morphemes correctly? Do they pronounce correct morpheme adds to verb present? Do students pronounce the right morpheme adds to verb past? The significance of this study the researcher tries to let students correct their mistakes on the pronunciation of English morphemes. Also, to let students practice more pronunciation about English morphemes nouns and verbs. The main aim of this study is to fill the gap of pronunciation problems in pronouncing English morphemes. The participants were twenty-five students reach level five. The researcher used Descriptive Statistical Method and the data were collected by one mean of data collection oral recorded tests. The data were analysed by (SPSS) program. The study arrived at the following results: Saudi students faced problems in showing the correct pronunciation of English morphemes for both nouns and verbs. Students face difficulties to distinguish between which morpheme is correct. They ignored the rules of using English morphemes in general and there is a lack of practising them. The recommendations of this study are (1) Students need to revise the rules of English morphemes of nouns and verbs. (2) They need more concentration about using morphemes of both nouns and verbs. (3) Students need more practice about the pronunciation of English morphemes of plural nouns and verbs (present and past tense) in conversations and classrooms.

Keywords: English Foreign Learners, English morphemes, first language, pronunciation, second language

Difficulties in Pronouncing English Morphemes among Saudi EFL

Introduction
Correct pronunciation nowadays is very crucial to English foreign learners. Pronunciation studies become very high demand for ELF learners. Students as EFL face many pronunciation problems. These problems are mispronunciation of morphemes when they add to plural nouns or verbs present and past tenses. English morphemes pronounce differently depending on their context. When we add morphemes to plural nouns we have three different ways of pronunciation according to what nouns they attach to. For example, there are three morphemes add to nouns for example [s], [z], or [iz] as in cats [s], bags [z] and buses [iz]. Present tense also has three forms of morpheme in case of third person singular. They take the same form of noun morpheme and follow the same rules; for example, [s] as in stops [z] as in plans and [iz] as in passes. English Past tense morpheme has three different ways of pronunciation according to the last sound of the verb. For example, [d] as in verb arrived, [t] as in looked and [id] as in added. This study aims to answer these questions: Do students pronounce English morphemes correctly? Do they pronounce correct morpheme adds to verb present? Do students pronounce the right morpheme adds to verb past? 
Also, the following hypotheses have been formed: 1- Students pronounce English morphemes of plural regular nouns and verbs correctly. 2- They differentiate between which morphemes add to present simple tense. 3- Students know which correct morphemes add to past simple tense.

Significance of the Study
The researcher tries to investigate the problems of using the correct pronunciation of English morphemes. These problems face some Saudi university students in Almandag, Faculty of Sciences and Arts, at Albaha University. The researcher wishes that students correct their mistakes and concentrate on the pronunciation of English morphemes correctly. Also, to let students practise more pronunciation about English morphemes (nouns, verbs present and past). This study also needs to fill the gap of other studies, which concentrated on pronunciation in general, consonants, vowels, stress and intonation.

Literature Review
English language speakers can face difficulties in pronunciation; unless the speakers pronounce the words of their communication accurately. Pronunciation is less area of investigation for EFL in many countries and Saudi Arabia is one of them.

Hewing (2004) stated that “pronunciation is treated as a low priority area of study” (p.11). To solve pronunciation problems for EFL learners they need to master speaking and listening skills. Burger and Spencer (2000) claimed: “understand pronunciation in the process of language learning as linked to two skills: speaking and listening” (p.91). Once this study investigates into the correct pronunciation of English morphemes it is very important to show the definition of pronunciation. Roach (2009) defined pronunciation as “pronunciation is an act of producing the sounds of language” (p.64). According to, Nunan (2003) defined:

Pronunciation is the way certain sounds are pronounced that speakers of a language make while speaking and perceived by the hearer to be able to understand each other with relative ease. (p. 113).

Other researcher like Hornby (2005) states:
Pronunciation is the way in which the language or a particular person pronounces the word of a language, especially in speaking skill. Slight different in pronunciation may have different meaning. (p.1164).

English language as an international language has many different branches. The most important branches relate to this study are phonetics and phonology. The study of pronunciation consists of two fields, called phonetics and phonology.

Many scholars defined these two branches Phonetics and phonology. According to, Alkhuli (2002) defines:

Phonetics is the study of the production and perception of speech sounds. It is concerned with the sounds of language, how these sounds articulate and how the hearer perceives them. Phonetics relates to the science of acoustics that uses much the same techniques in the sound analysis that acoustics do. (P.17)

Roach (1992) defines phonetics as: “The scientific study of speech sounds… the central concern in phonetics is the discovery of how speech sounds are produced, written symbols, and how we hear and recognize different sounds” (p.81). Kelly (2000) declared that:

The study of pronunciation consists of two fields, namely phonetics and phonology. Phonetics refers to the study of sounds. A phonetician usually works in one or more of the following areas: physiological phonetics, articulatory phonetics, acoustic phonetics, auditory phonetics and perceptual phonetics. (P.9)

Yule (2006) maintained that “phonetics is the general study of the characteristics of speech sounds” (p. 30). Yule (2006) said that:

Phonology is essentially the description of the system of patterns of speech sounds in a language. It is, in effect, based on a theory of what every speaker of a language unconsciously knows about the sound patterns of that language. (p.43).

Also, Yet, Sloat, Taylor & and Hoard (1978) introduced phonology as “the science of speech sounds and sound patterns” (p.1).

Once this study talks about English phonology it is very important to define morpheme, because they deal with sounds. A morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit. Morphemes can give different meaning, grammatical as a part of the word is plural or singular the tense of the verb; as a part of speech. Bloomfield, (1933) defined: a morpheme as “a linguistic form which bears no partial phonetic- semantic resemblance to any other form” (p.161).

Morphemes are divided into two main parts free and bound. The free morpheme can stand alone; pen cat, dog, tree and house. Bishop (2009) defined: “free morphemes are those that can stand alone as words”. (P.161). The bound morpheme cannot stand alone.
As a word, according to Bauer (1988), “Inflectional morphemes are those which do not create new meaning. These morphemes never change the syntactic category of the words or morphemes to which they are attached” (p. 12). A morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit of a word that has grammatical meaning or function. For example, like, liked, likes, liking.

Besides, allomorph is any different morphemes that take the same purpose or function but written or spoken differently. English plural nouns have three different ways of morphemes’ pronunciation either to pronounce it [s], [z] or [iz] and these are called allomorphs. According to the end sound of the noun, the morpheme pronounces [s] after voiceless nonsibilant segments (p, t, k, f, s, sh, ch, ʃ and θ). The voiceless sound in English is when there is no vibration in your throat and the sound comes from the mouth area easily without vibration.

Also, English morpheme pronounces [z] when it attaches to voiced nonsibilant segments [b, d, g, v, ð, m, z, ʒ, n, η, l, r, h, y, dʒ, and all vowel sounds]. The voice sound in English means when you pronounce a sound there is vibration or humming sound in your throat. Morpheme pronounces [iz] at the end of sibilant segments sound for example [s, c, x, z, ss, ʒ, ge,ʃ, dʒ and tʃ] sibilant sound is produced by forcing air out toward your teeth and characterized by hissing sounds (ssss or zzzzzz). See table (1) below are some examples for each case.

Table 1. English nouns the three main ways of pronunciation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>morpheme pronunciation</th>
<th>[s]</th>
<th>[z]</th>
<th>[iz]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hats</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cliffs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cats</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pronunciation of present simple tense has three different ways of pronunciation to present tense; [s], [z] and [iz]. We usually pronounce [s] after voiceless sounds (f, k, p, t, th, sh, ch and ʃ). We usually pronounce [z] after voice sounds (b, d, g, l, v, z, l, ʒ, dʒ, m, n, dʒ r, and vowel sounds). The pronunciation of [iz] in case the verbs end in (sh, ch, o, x, s, or ss) below are some examples clarify these rules. In the case of irregular verbs (have, go, and do) they pronounce [z], for example (has, goes and does). Table two below shows some examples about the main ways of morphemes’ pronunciation attach to present simple.
Table 2. Present tense the main ways of pronunciation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[S]</th>
<th>[z]</th>
<th>[iz]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>reefs</td>
<td>learn</td>
<td>fishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eats</td>
<td>feels</td>
<td>fixes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speaks</td>
<td>reads</td>
<td>passes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stops</td>
<td>calls</td>
<td>watches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pronunciation of English past tense morpheme has three different ways of pronunciation according to the last sound of the verb. We pronounce the last verb morpheme [d], [t] and [əd] depending on the last sound of the verb. The final (ed) pronounces [d] in case the verb ends in all voiced sound we pronounce it [d] unless (d) to make past simple. English consonant voice sounds are (b, v, g, z, j, th, l, m, n, and r) and all vowel sounds are voiced. We pronounce the final (ed) [t] to get the past simple tense in case the verb ends in any voiceless sound except (t). English voiceless consonant sounds are (p, f, k, s, sh, ch, th). We pronounce [əd] in case the verb ends in (d) or (t) we pronounce it [əd] to get past tense. In table three below, there are some examples clarify these rules.

Table 3. Past tense the three main ways of pronunciation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[d]</th>
<th>[t]</th>
<th>[əd]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>called</td>
<td>typed</td>
<td>heated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lived</td>
<td>fished</td>
<td>succeeded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>studied</td>
<td>checked</td>
<td>attempted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>claimed</td>
<td>walked</td>
<td>lasted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cleared</td>
<td>snatched</td>
<td>hunted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listened</td>
<td>laugh</td>
<td>avoided</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Previous Studies about English Pronunciation.

Many researchers and studies have been done in the field of pronunciation to EFL in different countries. Here are some international and local studies about pronunciation problems to Second Language Learners or FEL.

In their study Hago (2015) used the recorded test, teachers’ questionnaire and document collections. The researchers arrived at the following conclusion: the first five consonant sounds out of twenty-nine sounds, which show a considerable percentage of mispronunciation in order of difficulty were; /p/ at all positions, /ʒ/ in word-final position, /r/ in word final position, /tʃ/ in word medial position, /ŋ/ in word medial position. However, the last five consonant sounds that show a less percentage of mispronunciation, in this study were /d/ in the final position, the light /l/ sound in medial position, /k/ in the final position, and /k/ in medial position. Nevertheless, the least mispronounced sound by the participants of this study was the sound /d/, especially when it occurs in word medial position.
Difficulties in Pronouncing English Morphemes among Saudi EFL

In his part Zhang (2009) used an experimental method (Microphone and Recorder). To learn English well, the second language learners should pay attention to the importance of pronunciation learning. The factors mentioned above influencing Chinese students pronounce English, which is the first language interference by interference of mother tongue in learning English pronunciation, learners’ age, attitude, psychological factor and prior pronunciation instruction and the learners’ insufficient knowledge of phonology and phonetics to a large extent affecting the acquisition of the English pronunciation. On the other hand, the presentations of distinctions between Chinese and English phonological systems may raise our awareness of the differences of the two sound systems to avoid errors in pronunciation. Imitation, listening and speaking, reading aloud are good suggestions for pronunciation improvement of English learners.

In her research, Hassan (2007) used classroom observation and questionnaire and arrived at the following: Sudanese Students of English whose language background is Sudanese Spoken Arabic had problems with the pronunciation of English vowels that have more than one way of pronunciation in addition to the consonant sound contrasts e.g. /z/ and /ð/, /s/ and /θ/, /b/ and /p/, /ʃ/ and /tʃ/.

Ahmed (2011) employed an experimental Method (Microphone and Recorder). The researcher concluded that certain English consonant sounds are difficult to pronounce for Saudi learners. Most of the participants faced problems while pronouncing the consonant sounds, /p/, /d/, /v/, /tʃ/, /ʒ/, and /ŋ/. 2- They pronounce /p/ as /b/ when it appears in the initial and final positions of a word. They pronounce /p/ as /b/ when it appears in the medial or final positions. 3- According to his data /v/ is replaced by /f/ when it appears in the medial and final positions. 4- Most of the participants pronounce /tʃ/ as /ʃ/ when it appears in all three positions. 5- The /ʒ/ sound is sometimes replaced by /ʃ/, /s/ or /z/, when it is in medial position, and when it is in final position it is pronounced as /ɡ/.

Ali (2010) used Experimental Method recordings and arrived at the following conclusion: 1- Sudanese students' curriculums were empty of pronunciation exercises. 2- Most of EFL in Sudan face problems in pronouncing English words correctly especially English Vowel Sounds. 3- There are problems in pronouncing English Affricate Sounds /tʃ/ and /dʒ/. 4- There are problems of pronouncing Fricative Sounds, /f/, /v/. 5- Students face problems in pronouncing Bilabial Sounds /b/ and /p/. 6 There are difficulties face Sudanese students when pronouncing English Dental Fricative Sounds, /θ/ and /ð/. /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ etc.

To sum up, the researcher finds out that most of the studies arrive at the following: - There is a problem in different English consonant sounds e.g. Bilabial /b/ and /p/. Dental fricative, Affricate, Labial fricative, /θ/ and /v/ and palato Alveolar /ʃ/ and /ʒ. Most of the participants pronounce /tʃ/ as /ʃ/ when it appears in all three positions. The /ʒ/ sound is sometimes replaced by /ʃ/, /s/ or /z/, when it is in medial position, and when it is in final position it is pronounced as /ɡ/. There is a problem in English and Arabic vowel sounds, that relates to the differences between English and Arabic. This study fills the gaps of some of these studies by tackling the pronunciation problems of English morphemes. By concentrating on plural nouns, present and past verbs.
Methodology
In this study, the researcher used Statistic Analytic Method and the data were collected by oral recorded test. The data were analysed by (SPSS) Statistical Package of Social Sciences Program.

Population
The population of this study consisted of twenty-five Saudi university students who study the English language as their major subject. They studied at English department level five in Almandag, at Albaha University in Saudi Arabia. Their ages average between twenty to twenty-two years old. All of the students speak the Arabic language as (L1) and English language as L (2).

Instrumentation
The researcher used one tool to collect students’ data. The tool was oral recorded test. In the oral recorded test; students asked to pronounce different English nouns and verbs present and past correctly. See appendix (1) sample of the oral recorded test. The tool recorded test wrote on a sheet students asked to pronounce the correct morpheme. The researcher will correct the results according to the English morphemes’ rules.

Procedures
The students asked to pronounce different plural regular nouns, verbs present and past forms in a sheet. Also, the researcher corrected students’ results and analysed the results by (SPSS) Social Package of Statistical Sciences Program.

Limitation
This study limits for some students at English department, Faculty of Sciences and Arts in Almandag, at Albaha University. It takes place in the second semester in the academic year 2019-2020.

Data Analysis
The data of this study collected from twenty-five Saudi students in the second semester in 2019-2020. The researcher collected the data from Saudi university students at the English department, Faculty of Sciences and Arts in Almandag. The researcher used Descriptive Statistical Method which is a method that analyses, describes and organizes collective data in different graphs, tables, and charts. In this study, the researcher used one tool oral recorded test to collect the data. The data analysed by (SPSS) program. The researcher corrected the students’ tests out of 90. Each correct answer got 6.666 marks. The following were the data collection results.

Plural Nouns’ Results
The researcher applied twenty-five students to show the correct pronunciation of five plural nouns end in (s sounds).These nouns are books, cups, cliffs, graphs and students. Their results as follow; the plural nouns books 11% correct and 14% are incorrect which means 44% of the students pronounced the noun correct and 56% incorrect. The plural noun cups 5% correct and 20% were incorrect, which means 20% of the students pronounced the noun correctly and 80% incorrect. The plural noun Cliffs 9% correct and 16% were incorrect, which indicate that 36% of...
the students’ results were correct and 64% were incorrect. The results of the plural noun graphs were 6% correct answers and 19% were incorrect; these results can analysis as 24% correct results and 76% incorrect. Lastly, the results of the plural noun students 10% of the students got correct answers and 15% were incorrect, which means the total correct answers were 40% and 60% were incorrect (See table one).

Table 1. Plural nouns students’ results (s sound).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>books</th>
<th>cups</th>
<th>Cliffs</th>
<th>graphs</th>
<th>students</th>
<th>(S) sound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrong</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The plural nouns fans about 11% got correct answers which means 44% and 14% answers were incorrect that means 56%. Also, buses 13% correct answers which means 52% and 12% were incorrect that means 48% of the total. The plural noun wolves 10% of the answers were correct which means 40% of the total and 15% were incorrect answers that mean 60% too. The noun bags the students’ results were 8% incorrect answers which equal 32% of the total and 17% which equal 78% were incorrect answers. The plural noun boys 11% which means 44% of the total answers were incorrect and 14% which mean 56% of the students’ answers were incorrect. (See table two).

Table 2. Plural nouns students’ results (z sound).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Fans</th>
<th>buses</th>
<th>wolves</th>
<th>Bags</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>(z) sound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrong</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The students’ answers of plural nouns of (iz sounds) as follow; quizzes 10% which means 40% were correct answers and 15% which means 60% were incorrect answers. Also, the noun churches scored 10% which equal 40 % correct answers and 15% equal 60% were incorrect answers. The plural nouns nurse 11% of the students’ answers were correct which means 44% the answers and 14% were incorrect answers which mean 56% of all students. The plural nouns watches result 9% which means 36% were correct answers and 16% which means 64% were incorrect students’ answers. Lastly, the noun boxes result in 11% which mean 44% of the students’ results were correct and 14% which indicate 56% were students’ results were incorrect. (See table three).
Table 3. *Plural nouns students’ results (iz sound).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Quizzes</th>
<th>churches</th>
<th>Nurses</th>
<th>watcges</th>
<th>boxes</th>
<th>(iz)sound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrong</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The plural nouns’ overall results were the overall nouns’ results (s sound) the correct answers were 36.8% and 63.2% were incorrect. The (z sound) 42.5% were correct answers and 57.5 were incorrect. The (iz sound) 40.8% of the students got correct answers and 59.2 were incorrect answers (see figure one below).

**Verbs’ Present Results**

There were five present verbs end in S sound, mainly eats, stops, likes, reefs and harms. Their results as follow; the verb eats 16% correct and 9% are incorrect which means 64% of the students pronounced the noun correct and 36% incorrect. The present verb stops 6% correct and 19% were incorrect, which means 24% of the students pronounced the noun correctly and 76% incorrect. The present verb likes 8% correct and 17% were incorrect answers, which indicate that 32% of the students’ results were correct and 68% were incorrect. The results of verb reefs were 8% correct answers and 17% were incorrect; these results can analysis as 32% correct results and 68% incorrect. Lastly, the results of the verb harms 11% of the students got correct answers and 14% were incorrect, which means the total correct answers were 39.2% and 60.8% were incorrect. (See table four).
Table 4. Verbs present students’ results (s sounds).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>eats</th>
<th>Stops</th>
<th>likes</th>
<th>reefs</th>
<th>harms</th>
<th>(s)sound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrong</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were five verbs end in (z sound) knows, owns, calls, plans and harms. Their results as follow; the verb knows 11 % correct and 24% are incorrect which means 44% of the students pronounced the noun correct and 56% incorrect. The present verb owns 17 % correct and 8% were incorrect, which means 68% of the students pronounced the noun correctly and 32% incorrect. The present verb calls 6% correct and 19% were incorrect, which indicate that 24% of the students’ results were correct and 76% were incorrect. The results of verb plans were 11% correct answers and 14% were incorrect; these results can analysis as 44% correct results and 56% incorrect. Lastly, the results of the verb harms 9% of the students got correct answers and 16%were incorrect,which means the total correct answers were 43.2% and 56.7.8% were incorrect (see table five).

Table 5. Verbs presents’ results (z sound).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>knows</th>
<th>Owns</th>
<th>calls</th>
<th>plans</th>
<th>harms</th>
<th>(z)sound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrong</td>
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<td>56</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
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<td>76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the last part of the present, there are five verbs end in (iz sound) fixes, passes, brushes, watches and finishes. Their results as present verbs end in (iz sound) as follow; the verb fixes 11 % correct and 14% are incorrect which means 44% of the students pronounced the noun correct and 56% incorrect. The present verb passes 12 % correct and 13% were incorrect, which means 48% of the students pronounced the noun correctly and 52% incorrect. The present verb brushes 7% correct and 18% were incorrect, which indicate that 28% of the students’ results were correct and 72% were incorrect. The results of verb watches were 11% correct answers and 14% were incorrect; these results can analysis as 44% correct results and 56% incorrect. Lastly, the results of the verb finishes 8% of the students got correct answers and 17%were incorrect, which means the total correct answers were 39.2% and 60.8% were incorrect (See table six).
Table 6. Verbs present students’ (iz sound) results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Fixes Freq</th>
<th>Passes Freq</th>
<th>brushes Freq</th>
<th>Watches Freq</th>
<th>finishes Freq</th>
<th>(iz) sound Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>11 44%</td>
<td>12 48%</td>
<td>7 28%</td>
<td>11 44%</td>
<td>8 32%</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrong</td>
<td>14 56%</td>
<td>13 52%</td>
<td>18 72%</td>
<td>14 56%</td>
<td>17 68%</td>
<td>60.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25 100%</td>
<td>25 100%</td>
<td>25 100%</td>
<td>25 100%</td>
<td>25 100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall present verbs’ results (s sound) the correct answers were 39.2% and 60.8% were incorrect. The (z sound) 43.2% were correct answers and 56.7 were incorrect. The (iz sound) 39.2% of the students got correct answers and 60.8 were incorrect answers.

Verbs’ Past Results

These are five verbs in the past ends in (d sound) form loved, called, studied, advised and lived. Their results as follow; the verb loved 7% correct and 18% were incorrect which means 28% of the students pronounced the noun correct and 72% incorrect. The past verb called 8% correct and 17% were incorrect, which means 32% of the students pronounced the noun correctly and 68% incorrect. The past verb studied 11% correct and 14% were incorrect, which indicate that 44% of the students’ results were correct and 56% were incorrect. The results of the verb advised were 12% correct answers and 13% were incorrect; these results can analysis as 48% correct results and 52% incorrect. Lastly, the results of the verb lived 13% of the students got correct answers and 12% were incorrect, which means the total correct answers were 40.8% and 59.2% were incorrect (See table seven).
Table 7. Verbs past students’ (d sound) results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>loved</th>
<th>called</th>
<th>studied</th>
<th>advised</th>
<th>lived</th>
<th>(d) sound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrong</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are five verbs in the past form end in (t sound) typed, checked, finished, danced and crashed. Their results as mentioned below; the verb typed 12% correct and 13% were incorrect which means 48% of the students pronounced the noun correct and 52% incorrect. The past verb checked 6% correct and 19% were incorrect, which means 24% of the students pronounced the noun correctly and 76% incorrect. The past verb finished 10% correct and 15% were incorrect, which indicate that 40% of the students’ results were correct and 60% were incorrect. The results of the verb danced were 8% correct answers and 17% were incorrect; these results can analysis as 32% correct results and 68% incorrect. Lastly, the results of the verb crashed 17% of the students got correct answers and 8% were incorrect, which means the total correct answers were 68% and 32% were incorrect. (See table 8).

Table 8 Verbs past tense students’ (t sound) results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>typed</th>
<th>checked</th>
<th>fished</th>
<th>danced</th>
<th>crashed</th>
<th>(t)sound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrong</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are the last five verbs in the past form end in (id sound) which are attempted, succeeded, sounded, cheated and heated. Their results of these past (id sound) verbs as follow; the verb attempted 9% correct and 16% were incorrect which means 36% of the students pronounced the noun correct and 64% incorrect. The past verb succeeded 12% correct and 13% were incorrect, which means 48% of the students pronounced the noun correctly and 52% incorrect. The past verb sounded 14% correct and 11% were incorrect, which indicate that 56% of the students’ results were correct and 44% were incorrect. The results of the verb cheated were 16% correct answers and 9% were incorrect; these results can analysis as 64% correct results and 36% incorrect. Lastly, the results of the verb heated 6% of the students got correct answers and 19% were incorrect, which means the total correct answers were 24% and 76% were incorrect (See table nine).

Table 9 Verbs past students’ (id sound) results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Attempted</th>
<th>succeeded</th>
<th>sounded</th>
<th>cheated</th>
<th>heated</th>
<th>(id) sound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The overall past verbs’ results (d sound) the correct answers were 40.8% and 59.2% were incorrect. The (t sound) 42.4% were correct answers and 57.6 were incorrect. The (id sound) 45.6% of the students got the correct answer and 54.4 were incorrect answers (See figure three).

![Figure 3. Past verb overall results for (d, t and id sounds).](image)

**Results and Discussion**

The researcher arrived at the following results, in all students’ separate results Saudi students in Almandag did not reach the target mark which is 50 marks in the following: Plural nouns’ overall results were the overall nouns’ results (s sound) the correct answers were 36.8% and 63.2% were incorrect. The (z sound) 42.5% were correct answers and 57.5 were incorrect. The (iz sound) 40.8% of the students got correct answers and 59.2 were incorrect answers.

The overall present verbs’ results (s sound) the correct answers were 39.2% and 60.8% were incorrect. The (z sound) 43.2% were correct answers and 56.7 were incorrect. The (iz sound) 39.2% of the students got correct answers and 60.8 were incorrect answers.

The overall past verbs’ results (d sound) the correct answers were 40.8% and 59.2% were incorrect. The (t sound) 42.4% were correct answers and 57.6 were incorrect. The (id sound) 45.6% of the students got the correct answer and 54.4 were incorrect answers.

To conclude, all other nouns and verbs students did not reach the target which is 50 marks, except one noun and six verbs. For example, the noun ends in (z sound) buses 52%. Also, present verbs end in (s sound) in word eats 64%, (z sound) in owns 68%. Further, the past verbs (d sound) lived 52%, (t sound) crashed 68%, (id sound) in verbs sounded 56% and crashed 64%.

By looking to overall students’ results Saudi students failed to show the target marks in all tests. They faced problems in showing correct pronunciation of English morphemes of nouns.
verbs present and past tense correctly. Students faced difficulties to distinguish between which morpheme was correct. They ignored the rules of using English morphemes in general and there is a shortage of practice.

The first hypothesis in this study is students pronounce English morphemes of plural regular nouns and verbs correctly. In this hypothesis, the English plural noun has three different ways of pronunciation [s, z, or iz]. Students gave five nouns for each morpheme most of them did not know the rule and confuse in their answers between which morpheme was correct. For example, they didn’t know that [s] is added after voiceless sounds (f, k, p, t, th, sh, ch and j). Instead of that they added [s] to words end in voice sound e.g. wolves bags and boys. Also, they added [z] to some words end voice sound like (graphs, cliffs and cups). Lastly, concern [iz] the result clarified that [iz] was very difficult to distinguish between [s, z and iz] . The rule said that [iz] added to sibilant segments sound, for example at the end of (s, ss, sh.ch o, x). They added to voice and voiceless end sounds (books, bags and graphs). The overall nouns’ results (s sound) the correct answers were 36.8% and 63.2% were incorrect. The (z sound) 42.5% were correct answers and 57.5 were incorrect. The (iz sound) 40.8% of the students got the correct answer and 59.2 were incorrect answers.

The second hypothesis in this study they differentiate between which morphemes add to present simple tense. It has three different ways to pronounce [s], [z] and [iz]. Morpheme [s] adds after voiceless sounds (f, k, p, t, th, sh, ch and j). Students added these after bushed, owns, plans and harms. The morpheme [z] pronounces after voice sounds (b, d, g, l,v, z, l, ʒ, m, n, ʒ, r, and vowel sounds. Most of the students pronounced it after (eats, laughs and stops) The pronunciation of [iz] after verbs end in (sh, ch, o, x, s, or ss). Majority of them used it after (calls, harms and some after watches and finishes). The overall present verbs’ results (s sound) the correct answers were 39.2% and 60.8% were incorrect. The (z sound) 43.2% were correct answers and 56.7 were incorrect. The (iz sound) 39.2% of the students got the correct answer and 60.8 were incorrect answers.

The third hypothesis in this study is students know which correct morphemes add to past simple tense. It has three different ways of pronunciation; [d, t and ed ].The allophone [d] is added after all voice sounds and vowels (b, v, g, z, j, th, l, m ,n ,and r). They added allophone [d] to finished, typed and danced. Concern morpheme [t] instead of adding it to verbs end in voiceless sound (p, f ,k, s, sh, ch, th) except (t) they added it to voice and voiceless. For example, heated, attempted, fished and cheated. The morpheme [əd] is added in case the verb ends in (d and t). They were not sure about this rule they added randomly; to voice and voiceless sounds e.g. crashed, loved checked and finished. The overall past verbs’ results (d sound) the correct answers were 40.8% and 59.2% were incorrect. The (t sound) 42.4% were correct answers and 57.6 were incorrect. The (id sound) 45.6% of the students got the correct answer and 54.4 were incorrect answers.

By looking at the previous studies tackled this research area, this study supports other studies and tries to fill the gaps in the areas of pronunciation problems. Also, it attempts to reflect some points of pronunciation problems of English morphemes to EFL in Saudi Arabia.
Conclusion

To conclude, this research aims to show the problem of pronouncing correct English morphemes to some Saudi university students. The study reflected the shortages of pronouncing correct English morphemes by the students’ results. This study achieved that Saudi university students face problems in pronouncing correct English morphemes in nouns, present and past verbs. Also, the study answered the main questions of which has been designed in this study.

Recommendations

According to the results and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are set forward:

- Students need to revise the rules of using English morphemes of nouns and verbs present and past.
- They need to do more practice about using morphemes of nouns and verbs.
- Students need more concentration on the pronunciation of English morphemes of plural nouns and verbs (present and past tense) in conversations and classrooms.
- Curriculums designers need to put a series of lessons lead to solving the pronunciation problems in general and morphemes in specific.

Suggestions for Further Research

The researcher suggested the following points: 1. To what extend EFL curriculums solve the problem of practising English morphemes? 2. Compare and contrast between English and Arabic morphemes. 3- How far the rules of using morphemes in English and Arabic are similar or contrast?

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References


Interpretive Reading as a Strategy to Construct Meaning in EFL Reading Comprehension: 
A Case Study at King Khalid University

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Abstract
This study aims to investigate interpretive reading; as a strategy to construct meaning among English as a foreign language (EFL) beginner level students at the Faculty of Languages and Translation, King Khalid University (KKU). It will also suggest ways in which instructors can incorporate this strategy into their teaching. Reading appears to be one of the challenging skills for EFL Saudi students for various reasons; among them, the primary one can be that students are usually less motivated towards self-reading. The Interpretive reading strategy could go a long way to bridge the gaps in understanding comprehension passages, as it is a performance/rhetoric-related strategy and lies at a more intuitive level. Engaging and motivating students in learning requires a few essential factors, such as exciting tasks, the sociocultural background of the learners, and people who manage the delivery of the course (Marshall, 1992). An experimental and control group of students will be selected, enrolled in the reading course, at level 1. The test group will get training in the interpretive reading techniques through their EFL instructors, having excellent in-depth knowledge of the skill of interpretive reading techniques. After teaching for more than eight weeks, a proficiency test will gauge student's performance. The obtained results are compared using SPSS software to see the significant achievements and suggestions, and necessary recommendations are made.

Key Words: EFL Reading comprehension, ESL interpretive reading, self-reading, Saudi beginner level

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Introduction:
Most Saudi students have difficulty in extracting the meaning of written texts for several reasons. There are many contributing factors, such as student's; lack of English vocabulary, lack of training in English phonics, unfamiliar documents, different grammatical constructions in English, and above all, lower interpretive techniques required to unravel the hidden meanings of literary texts. To overcome this hindrance, they need training in a more practical reading skill technique called Interpretive Reading. Most of the research; on the interpretive reading technique took place outside the Saudi context, emphasizing on second language learners or native speakers of the English language. For this reason, we can say it would be unprecedented research in the Saudi context. We also assume that it will be an assisting tool, for both the learners and the instructors, which should make the reading task not only enjoyable, but would also develop an excellent self-reading habit. It will show that interpretive reading techniques eventually leads to higher achievement in their English course at large.

Statement of the problem
This study aims to investigate interpretive reading; as a strategy to construct meaning among EFL beginner level students at the Faculty of Languages and Translation, King Khalid University. It will also suggest ways in which instructors can incorporate this strategy into their teaching. Interpretative reading strategy techniques investigated in this research; mean loud reading; by the instructor in such a manner, that it should help students understand the text. Students will eventually achieve higher-level thinking through building fluency and freedom in their interactions with books; this, in turn, will facilitate teaching students navigational skills, which will enable them to extract essential information with greater ease. The interpretive reading approach will have several practical implications not only for the students but faculty members too. It will have a width rather than depth. Instructors will focus on breadth, rather than intensity-covering more books, without treating each one in-depth. Secondly, texts don’t; need to be complicated and broad but somewhat relevant. It will help to avoid over-detailed explanations. It will cut down on introductory material in the textbooks, sometimes skipping it altogether and coming up with own one by the instructors.

Objectives:
1. To determine whether interpretive reading; has a significant impact on the student's reading comprehension.
2. To investigate the efficacy of interpretive reading; in various types of texts.
3. To compare the effect of interpretive reading; with that of silent reading and loud reading, respectively.
4. To suggest ways in which teachers can go about using interpretive reading; in their teaching.

Literature Review:
In one of the studies conducted about exploring context closely related to reading instructions and reading strategies, indicated that non-proficient first language(L1) and second language(L2) readers either do not possess knowledge about approaches or mainly engage in bottom-up strategies as referred by Alsamadani (2009). In other related studies on reading speed, the researchers concluded that reading comprehension is one of the core areas for EFL learners. Reading skills can be described as a process of identifying written symbols and follow the intended
message according to Siddiqui and Rab, 2014, beginner level students must develop the ability to identify written letters, group of words, and read simple sentences. The articulation of the interpretive reading technique teaching style of texts in classroom contexts is the aim of this research. Among the necessary skills of English, both second and foreign language learners have often shared their experience that, reading is the most essential skills to acquire. Reading helps in building learner's vocabulary, which eventually leads to improvement in other language skills.

As EFL instructors, we emphasize that forcing students to read is not as effective as teaching them how to develop a passion for reading. We argue that through constant drilling and practice in and outside the classroom; reading can become a habit. Once they develop an interest in it, they tend to explore more themselves and try to read as much as possible since it becomes a part of their love and passion for the language. A competent English language user is one who can comprehend and interpret written texts. Reading text should be systematically introduced to the learners from lower to higher cognitive levels; this may involve empowering the learners to read before introducing them to comprehension (Al-Jarf 2002). Some of the studies stress on the efficient teaching of reading skills that have, in recent times, dwell on the use of computers for the same purposes (MacGregor, 1988; Knaack, 2003; Johnson, Perry & Shamir, 2010) or at times internet can be used as the source of information technology (Laborda 2007). Similarly, English as a second language (ESL) and EFL learner's, main intention in acquiring competency in the English language is to be successful at the university level. The same is true for EFL and ESL learners as they know that student's; reading ability in English is also of particular importance primarily as much of the available professional and academic materials relevant to their chosen professions are available in English (Alderson, 1984). Thus, if students have an excellent interpretive reading ability, they will be able to fulfill all the tasks mentioned above, with ease and to the satisfaction of their instructors and guide in their respective areas of specialization. If one is competent in reading, it will enable him/her to undergo the process of understanding and to construct meaning from a piece of text (Zhao, 2009).

Language instructors play a significant role in the quality of learning (Sanders & Rivers, 1996). Arguably the text is the most essential medium that enables us to see the value of our acts of interpretation, our reading processes. We can argue the difference between product and process, between our conceptualization and separation of knowledge, as fact or artifact and knowing, as a meaning-making process. We can say with confidence that the above discussion leading to our research on interpretive reading techniques finds support, as it relates to issues in linguistics, psychology, or educational theory (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Most of the above researches on interpretive reading techniques took place outside the Saudi context. We believe that conducting a similar investigation in the Saudi context would help both the learners and instructors to make the reading task exciting and would develop a good self-reading habit.

**Research Methodology:**

The study will have a pre-post control group design. The pre- and post-tests of the interpretive reading performance will be judged in terms of student's; achievement of higher-level thinking, building fluency, facility, and freedom in their interactions with texts, navigational skills, which enable them to extract essential information with greater ease. Such points will be used by the researchers to examine the participants performance in comprehending the given texts.
proficiency test in English (prepared by the researchers) will assess the student's level of proficiency in English.

The objective of the proficiency test is to evaluate the English language comprehension ability of the two groups in this study. Developing reading competence among Saudi EFL beginner graduate students has been a matter of concern for most of the faculty members, teaching skill-based courses. Most of them try to incorporate the strategies best suited to their level of students. On our part, we embarked on this research; as we realized that for Level 1 EFL students at the department of English KKU, there were some missing gaps in comprehending a given text, which hindered their self-paced learning of the given English text. We decided to incorporate interpretive reading techniques with the sole purpose of generating enthusiasm in comprehending a given set of reading materials. Our past experiences suggest that the majority of them ignored basic text structures, which could have helped them to understand the text and theme of the assigned documents. We experimented with discussing the possible difficult words that may come across while reading the books, thinking it could facilitate understanding. Some brainstorming techniques like allowing the students to guess the possible vocabularies that may come across by looking at the title and suggestive pictures across the book acted as a warm-up technique. We have noticed that this technique not only generated interest in the text, but it also helped some students to come up with exact words that were included in the book, thereby building their confidence. The researchers used many other techniques like pair work among peers. The researchers and students applauded the student pair with the unique word list as a mark of recognition and to boost their self-confidence. At times students were asked to prepare synonyms and antonyms of the list of words they wrote in their peer work exercise; such activities served two purposes, picking the expected vocabularies in the text and preparing them for the interpreting reading task that may follow soon. The researchers observed that those peer groups that didn't pay due attention to the given clues in the text in the form of pictures, ideas, ads, etc. were unable to grasp the vocabulary list and even faced a little difficulty in interpreting the text. The researchers wrote difficult words in bold on the white-board and also on white papers at the beginning of the class. The purpose for this was to help students focus on the captions, graphs, tables, and footnotes that should help them to understand the underlying theme of the text and to pick related words from the book, which, in the long run, will help them to decipher the meaning of the given text. It had a very positive effect on the group at large, as they enthusiastically participated in hunting the correct themes, and ideas they came across. Once the warm-up exercise was over, and the students were ready to take a plunge in the actual reading exercise, they had to have another look at the content of the given text. After that, they answered several open-ended questions about general understanding, sometimes one-liner or true or false statements were put across to check their preparedness for the given exercise. The researchers noticed that the funnier activities generated more interest among the whole group, and even the less involved ones showed positive results. Alloting points for each correct answer during review exercises led to more intense participation in the activity. Such fun activities in the form of a game have shown positive results, as many students asked the researchers to repeat such activities. We have also noticed that the majority of students were able to comprehend the text better through interpretive reading techniques and were able to answer follow-up questions with much confidence, primarily through fun-filled exercises. Still, some of those students who were unable to comprehend the theme or central idea of the text, were requested to look for few content words from the book itself that may suggest the central argument or signify
the main purpose of the text. Students pointed to vocabularies they had no clue of as the content words that may be part of the central theme, clarification from the researchers led to the discovery of new vocabularies and even the primary purpose of the text. Discussing their likes and dislikes about the book that they studied led to very active participation by one and all. Many fun-filled activities in the post-reading activities helped us to involve the class, and student's showed great eagerness to finish the job about their food activities, favorite means of travel, hobbies, and related activities they would love to do in their free time, from the texts they studied. The texts used in these activities come from the Well-Read series by Oxford. One positive thing about this series is that each chapter comprises of four different paragraphs with similar themes and concepts, this has helped the researchers to focus on related ideas and topics for an extended period, thus allowing them to introspect upon the interpretive reading techniques for a longer duration and making the activities more enriching. Following Strategies were adopted by the researchers during interpretive reading class for Visual Impact: More use of body language, gestures and eye contacts, use of graffiti, charts, photos, etc. was encouraged in the classroom, multimedia use representing the essential areas of the text that may help the learners to create their ideas, occasional pictorial representation or drawings by the teachers and even by the students on the white-board about the content of the text.

The Instructional language was kept simple, clear, and appropriate to the level of students. The instructors repeated sentences that seemed complicated for the students. Initially, students were encouraged to rephrase or paraphrase as per the need. The literal translation was discouraged; instead, the instructors explained complicated sentences with examples; they would raise their tone of voice during the active lesson to emphasize on the essential messages they wanted to convey with no over-exaggeration.

A Model Lesson had the following features: / short pause, // longer pause rising, intonation { } different intonation to signify complementary information CAPITALS = words to be stressed for instance; Restaurants / A HUNDRED years ago / were VERY different / from restaurants.

Results and Discussions:
Reading comprehension in the control group is 67.500. The table below shows that the standard deviation equals 18.3329, which is less than the mean of the data. The skewness of student's; results equals -.749, which is a negative value, indicating a better level of student achievements for the control group.

The correlation coefficient between the pre and post-tests equals .613, which shows a statistically significant relationship between these tests. The correlation coefficient between the pre-and post-tests equals .625, showing a statistically significant relationship between these tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Control Group Parameter and Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67.500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Experimental Group of students:

As shown in the table, the mean of experimental group student's marks is 73.11, and this indicates the right level of achievement for the students who studied this course. The table shows that the standard deviation equals 14.278, which is less than the mean of the data set. The skewness of student's results equals -.323, which is a negative value, indicating a high level of student achievements. The correlation coefficient between the pre-and post-tests equals .657, showing a statistically significant relationship between these tests.

The correlation coefficient between the first and second tests equals .712, which shows a statistically significant relationship between these tests.
Table 2. Experimental Group Parameter and Value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Pre test</th>
<th>Post Test</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>73.11</td>
<td>14.278</td>
<td>.323</td>
<td>.657</td>
<td>.712</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion:**

Considering the mean of the experimental group students (i.e., 73.11), it clearly shows a right level of achievement for the students who enrolled in this course. The standard deviation for the experimental group is 14.278, whereas that of the control group is 18.3329, which shows less variation. The skewness, is -.323, which is a negative value, and that indicates the high level of student achievements for the experimental group. Also, looking at correlation, minimum, and maximum score, suggests a better result. The above results show significant improvement in the student's achievements in the test group, whose average mean is 73.11, compared to the control group, which has 67.5, as the mean score.

As this study was done over a short period, and included beginner level male students only, we recommend having a more extensive investigation with a more varied group of students to have a better view of the interpretive approach. The above results also show a remarkable improvement in the average test scores of the experimental group students who practiced interpretive reading techniques. The result indicates that interpretive reading; had a very positive effect on student's scores. In the individual survey conducted to observe student's feedback on the interpretive teaching technique majority of students expressed a positive impact on them. Among the control group of students, the faculty members used mostly silent reading techniques to help them to comprehend the given texts. On the contrary, most of the test group students got practice in loud reading techniques. The results obtained indicate that for beginner level students, interpretive, loud, or lively reading techniques are more effective. This study has provided a detailed outline stressing on the ways, which interpretive reading may help the interested faculty members to incorporate them in their reading class. We assume that several limitations should form the basis of future research. First, the experiment was conducted in one environment: in KKU. To strengthen our findings, a similar experiment must be replicated outside KKU. The second limitation concerns the level of EFL students targeted by this experiment (i.e., beginner level). This research can be applied to more advanced students at EFL, KKU, or other Saudi universities. Several in-service teacher training workshops to train instructors on the interpretive reading techniques, will be helpful. The obtained results can be verified by following the interpretive approach in all the reading skill courses at EFL, KKU, and outside. A longitudinal study to track student progress through Level 1 to Level 4 and beyond is necessary to document whether the interpretive approach contributes to student's academic success in the long term. Finally, pedagogical strategies designed to develop EFL student's command and use of academic language will encourage the use of the current approach.
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Book Review

Beyond “Listen and Repeat” Investigating English Pronunciation Instruction at the Upper Secondary School Level in Slovakia

Author: Rastislav Metruk
Title of book: Beyond “Listen and Repeat” Investigating English Pronunciation Instruction at the Upper Secondary School Level in Slovakia
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Reviewer: Yevgeniya Karpenko
English pronunciation instruction may be difficult for some reasons. Teachers are often left without clear guidelines and sometimes are faced with contradictory practices for pronunciation instruction. As a result teachers may often be not very comfortable in teaching pronunciation in their classes. The review of literature shows that if teachers want to teach pronunciation accurately and effectively they should be trained in pronunciation instruction (Gilakjani, Sabouri 2016). Texts often used to prepare teachers to teach pronunciation typically include discussions of the basics: segmental features (vowel sounds, consonant sounds, and their transcription) and suprasegmental features (connected speech, word stress, sentence stress, tonic stress, rhythm, and intonation) ((Avery & Ehrich, 1992; Kenworthy, 1987; Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2010). Topics that further develop the prospective teacher of pronunciation include discussions of speech, common learner errors, and pedagogical techniques (such as chants, drills, and drama) at different educational levels and in the national context of schooling (Metruk, 2020; Pokrivčáková, 2015).

Namely, the monograph by Metruk R. “Beyond “Listen and Repeat” Investigating English Pronunciation Instruction at the Upper Secondary School Level in Slovakia” (Metruk, 2020) provides an overview of pronunciation teaching and learning practices in secondary schools in Slovakia, providing insights into secondary school learners’ needs, motivation and expectations regarding the importance of learning English pronunciation. The book presents a summary of the research on English pronunciation acquisition, teaching techniques and factors affecting the learning process as well as the results and conclusions of a longitudinal study conducted in a Slovak secondary school.

In the introduction, the author elaborates the role of teachers in teaching English pronunciation and formulates the research objectives. The actual book consists of eight chapters: (1) teaching pronunciation, (2) factors that affect pronunciation, (3) research on English pronunciation carried out in the Slovak context, (4) methodology of research, (5,6,7) the research methods of content analysis, questionnaire, and interview, (8) conclusions and recommendations. The book contains a list of references, and concludes with three appendices. They include examples of erroneous pronunciation at a segmental level, questionnaire and interview.

Chapters 1 and 2 clarify some concepts fundamental to the ensuing discussion: the phonological competence, intelligibility, pronunciation models, motivation, exposure to the target language, fluency vs accuracy, etc. Furthermore, the segmental versus suprasegmental debate is mentioned as well as technological affordances in relation to pronunciation instruction. It is concluded that the accurate pronunciation and being fluent during the production of both segmental and suprasegmental categories are equally important in teaching and learning English pronunciation. (Metruk, 2020, P.20). Among factors that affect pronunciation special emphasis is placed on the attitudinal and motivational aspects of learning pronunciation, and on the fact that each and every learner can learn and improve in their own way. So teachers ought to appreciate the strengths and possibilities of every learner and encourage them (Metruk, 2020, P.39). The author also briefly offers advice on which methods and techniques to use in order to make the process of English pronunciation acquisition more effective (jazz chants, drama, drills, songs, tongue twisters, visual aids, etc).
Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 describe the research on English pronunciation carried out in the Slovak context, its methodology, methods of content analysis and results, conclusions and recommendations. To collect the data, a survey was conducted among in-service teachers at higher secondary schools in Slovakia. The questions focused on the respondents’ beliefs about pronunciation instruction, teachers’ competences regarding pronunciation and pronunciation teaching. The results depict that both students (prospective English language teachers) and in-service teachers of English at secondary schools consider pronunciation a crucial component of learning English and a predictor of successful communication. Moreover, it shows that importance of teaching both segmentals and suprasegmentals is highly valued by teachers and students, and that systematic and regular pronunciation instruction has the potential to improve learners' communicative competence and their confidence as speakers of English.

This book reviews some of the important issues of English pronunciation instruction, emphasizes the immense significance of pronunciation instruction as this area still appears to be rather neglected in the context of English language teaching in Slovakia (Metruk, 2017, Metruk, 2018). The book contains terminology related to the area of teaching and learning pronunciation, as well some useful activities to use with students for in-service training sessions. I would recommend it to pre-service and in-service teachers who are interested in a), the matter of teaching and learning pronunciation at the upper-secondary school level in Slovakia, b) the role motivation and attitude play in the study of pronunciation, and c) the incorporation of drills, chants and drama, aimed at the phonological competence formation, into English teaching and learning.

**Reviewer:** Yevgeniya Karpenko

Yevgeniya Karpenko, PhD. Associate professor at Department of the English Language and Primary ELT Methodology (Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University, Zhytomyr, Ukraine). She lectures on general linguistics, ELT methodology (primary level included). She completed research stays at the university of Zilina, Slovakia (2018) and the university of Nyiregyhaza, Hungary (2019). She is publishing and dealing with the methodological issue of professional training of prospective foreign language teachers, FLT methodology in Europe, etc.

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